8 Perón, Perón, How Great You Are

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The Career A photo shows the open car of the coup leader Uriburu in 1930, with the 35-year-old Perón sitting in the back. He is a military man and is learning the tools of the coup d'état. The liberal General Justo also joined the nationalist Uriburu in the coup. Perón was disappointed by the Uriburu faction's inability to work conspiratorially and switched to Justo, but fell victim to Uriburu's purge and had to give up his new position as private secretary to the Minister of War. At least Perón was transferred to the War Academy as head of the Department of Military History. There he learned the rhetorical clarity and persuasiveness that he would later need in his speeches from the balcony of the presidential palace. When Uriburu died in 1932, Perón was back in the right place on the side of the new president, Justo. Learning the twists and turns and power games of palace intrigue would prove useful for his later career.

He spent several years as a military attaché in various countries, including Germany, and finally travelled to Italy to complete his mountain infantry training. There he witnessed the Duce's ability to mobilise the masses. He was enthusiastic about fascism as a third way beyond liberalism and communism, which had many supporters in the Argentine military.

He wrote to his sister-in-law from Italy: "Contrary to what many people think, I don't believe that we have anything to learn from Europe in terms of material order, but we must honestly admit that we have a lot to imitate in terms of spiritual order." He considered fascism to be "a great contemporary spiritual movement, a logical reaction to a century of 'communitarian' materialism. "The great material values are on the side of the Allies, but the great moral values are on the side of the Germans," he states. And he admires Mussolini as a "great man who knows what he wants and knows exactly how to achieve his goal."

Perón is ultimately convinced that fascism is the best form of government for balancing the interests of capital and labour. And like most Argentinians, he considers Argentina to be an immeasurably rich country that must overcome the mismanagement of its resources.

After his return in 1941, he founded the secret lodge "G.O.U." with other officers. They developed plans for cooperation with Nazi Germany and the achievement of supremacy in South America. G.O.U. initially stood for "Organization and Unification Group," then "Working Group for Unification," and only later "Group of United Officers." There was no hierarchy within the G.O.U., but rather a community of military personnel who were committed to the common cause with an ethos of dedication. The programmatic basis of the G.O.U. states that "the military in a state must analyse the plans of politicians that endanger the existence of the state and the army. This is the modern duty of the military; it would have prevented communism in Russia and the civil war in Spain." This requires an army with a high level of readiness, imbued with a single doctrine and determined to act with the utmost unity, determined to enforce order as soon as a disturbance arises.

In the meantime, Mussolini had been overthrown, and Perón had discovered the compatibility of mass mobilisation and democracy that does not smack of fascism and totalitarianism.

The British ambassador at the time, David Kelly, confirmed this: "From my very first conversation with Perón, I came to the conclusion that he was a brilliant improviser with a keen political instinct and great personal charm, but with no interest in Nazism or any other ideology."

Perón effortlessly combined such disparate issues as global and social policy. In a private meeting in 1944, he explained:

> Argentina's problem today is to solve the social question. In the face of communism, only one of the following attitudes can be adopted. First, to destroy every communist organisation by force. Second, to make promises to the workers that will be kept and not broken as they have been in the past. Thirdly [...] to meet the workers' demands fairly. That is the path I have chosen: I have always believed it better to eliminate the causes than to destroy their effects.

This meant eliminating abuses, increasing union membership and raising the standard of living. It also meant working preventively and not waiting until serious conflicts arose. In the newly created Secretariat of Labour, Perón developed regulations for the modern world of work that were previously known almost exclusively in Europe – almost, because Chile and Uruguay already had social welfare laws. Perón established labour courts, enacted a statute for agricultural workers, set a minimum wage and improved the food, housing and working conditions of agricultural workers. He introduced compulsory social insurance, Christmas bonuses and paid an-

nual leave for all workers, compensation for accidents at work and, finally, the eight-hour working day. Trade union membership doubled, health care was significantly improved and illiteracy declined rapidly.

In an interview with El Mercurio de Chile, he made an extremely positive impression. "Colonel Perón welcomes us in a simple and familiar manner. He is a young, tall, handsome man, extremely friendly and cordial. Far from being serious, he gives the impression of a 45-year-old with the spirit of a laughing child who is constantly joking, but is careful in his choice of words." He conveys political skill, passion and a kind of social democratic agenda and closeness to the people, explaining:

> Our movement is essentially an intellectual one. All officers who hold civilian posts receive only a military salary and have waived all other benefits. Personally, I am a trade unionist par excellence and, as such, an anti-communist; but I believe that work must be organised by trade unions so that it is the workers, and not the agitating leaders, who really benefit most from their work. For this reason, I attach great importance to the National Ministry of Labour, which I have taken over. […]. In the few days since I started work, I have been able to end labour disputes that have been going on for years. […]. I am truly committed to ensuring that the country's wealth remains in Argentina so that every Argentinean can benefit more and better from their work.

Labour disputes should be non-violent and peaceful, leading to satisfactory results through negotiation. These are largely unknown words in Argentine history. The interviewer says "I pointed out to him in the interview that, according to the information available to me, the situation of the workers was not as calm and secure as he claimed. He replied immediately and emphatically:

> That is all wrong. The situation of the workers in the country is completely under control, not through the use of force, but through arbitration between the parties. Go to the Ministry of Labour tomorrow, and if you wish, I will invite you to a meeting with the leaders of the Argentine workers; but, to be clear, with the real workers and not with the social agitators. Another participant in the interview "sometimes smiles at the outbursts and frankness of Colonel Perón, who says what he means in a very definite, very confident manner, with deep conviction and with the certainty that comes from a clear mind and high ideals."

However, Perón's goal of forming a grand coalition of social forces failed due to resistance from conservatives and large landowners. This led to Perón's radicalisation. From his perspective, the age of the masses and the end of bourgeois society now seemed to require new forms of politics. With the emergence of Peronism, as it had

been called since the 1943 coup, the influence of Marxism declined, but tensions in society between Perón and the conservatives and within his own ranks increased.

The Third Way The age of worldviews responded to unforeseeable economic and social upheavals with correspondingly radical upheavals in existing ideologies. The liberation of people from their dependencies created freedom for the individual, the entrepreneur and the worker, but also created wealth and poverty, exploitation and isolation, migration and stability through political parties and the nation state. The question of where one belongs gives rise to existential philosophy, which offers the alternative of a way of life as a space-filling individual or a vanishingly small element of a collective.

The third way offered itself as an alternative to the individual and the collective, idealism and Marxism, the USA and the Soviet Union. The community should offer people bonds and solidarity. Perón saw his hour had come. As a minister (1943–46) with groundbreaking social legislation, he quickly became popular. He made contact with the trade unions and mobilised them. In 1943, he came to power in a coup and won the elections in 1946. He founded the Peronist University of the People and gave lectures. He knew that, like a cadre party, he had to build a doctrinaire, principled and quick-witted party. This was achieved with the help of the university. For the election campaign, he founded the Labour Party, which was then renamed the Peronist Party and finally the Justicialist Party, a party of justice. Above all, Perón knew that the working class and the rural poor had no political representation.

After years of strikes and electoral fraud from 1930 to 1943, it was easy to give the lower classes political and parliamentary representation for the first time in Argentina's history, representation that was not excluded by fraud and violence but was based on the social improvements that had already been made. Perón now appeared on the balcony of the Casa Rosada, the presidential palace. All his activities together offered more than the programme and activities of a normal party. Everything was subject to the world view of Peronism. Through his work at the Peronist university, Perón gathered material for the formulation of a world view, which was disseminated in various writings and encompassed the essential aspects of doctrine, community and leadership: "Doctrina peronista" (Peronist Doctrine, 1948), "La comunidad organizada" (The Organised Community, 1949) and "La conducción política" (Political Leadership, 1951).

Perón appeared at the first "Congreso Nacional de Filosofía" (National Philosophy Congress) in Mendoza in 1949, giving the closing lecture on "Comunidad organizada" (The Organised Community). Among the 216 speakers were Ernesto Grassi, Nicolai Hartmann, Karl Löwith, Gabriel Marcel, Luigi Pareyson, José Vasconcelos, Eugen Fink, Ludwig Klages, Benedetto Croce, Karl Jaspers, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Ludwig Landgrebe and Bertrand Russell. Karl Jaspers was unable to attend for health reasons and had concerns about whether his text would be presented accurately.

Luigi Pareyson from Italy promised to make sure it was, Jaspers reported to Arendt on 1 March 1949. She replied on 18 April 1949: "People there are disproportionately more interested in philosophy than here, and as long as you print what and how you write there, in a dictatorship, but not in a totalitarian one, I think concerns are superfluous. "Perón's writings convey a harmonious image of a community based on social justice and offering protection. The organised community is on the third path, i.e. not in one place, but in motion, in a reformist society focused on the future. The third path is not so much of political-philosophical interest as of organisational interest. "Our government's actions do not represent a political party, but a large national movement with its own doctrine that is new on the world political stage."

It responded to the crisis of humanity in a changing world. The "radical upheavals of modern life" must "create the appropriate orientations to compensate for the violent transition to the collective spirit that has shaken humanity."

This involved overcoming "the resentment and hatred that rage in the world today, which are unleashed between peoples and between brothers and sisters, are the logical result not of a cosmic path with a fatal nature, but of a long sermon against love."

It is an undertaking similar to the transition from medieval thinking to the Renaissance, in which "material progress must be reconciled with spiritual progress in view of human expectations. […] When the Thomist school says that the goal of the state is to educate people to live a virtuous life, one senses the enormous significance of this bridge built over the shadows of the Middle Ages."

But this contradicts modern state theory. "Something is wrong in nature," writes Perón, "if it is possible to imagine, as Hobbes does in Leviathan, the '*homo hominis lupus*', the state of all against all." Therefore, people need an ethical basis for their actions, but they must acquire it themselves. Hence, there are "peoples with or without a sense of ethics; civilised or savage politics; the projection of orderly progress or delirious mass uprisings. The difference between achieving social victory and drowning in disorder corresponds to the dose of ethics one possesses."

For Perón, justice is the basis of all social action. All other concepts derive from this, such as freedom, ethics, morality and politics. Where democracy can be strengthened in the universal understanding of general freedom and the common good, the individual can fulfil himself, find his spiritual euphoria and the full justification of his existence. Perón remarks, "that of all the good I have done for Argentine society, one thing is undeniable: I have developed a social conscience in the Argentine people."

This required the insight of Thomas Aquinas: "Freedom of will is a prerequisite for all morality." Perón concludes, "only free actions that arise from rational consideration are moral. […] For the same reason, it is impossible to imagine a free life without ethical principles, just as moral actions cannot be taken for granted in a regime of thoughtlessness or unconsciousness."

Egoism is incapable of such a moral foundation. "It is primarily a denial of values, it is the absence of other values; it is like coldness, which means nothing other than the absence of any warmth. Fighting egoism does not mean taking up an armed stance against vice, but rather a positive attitude aimed at strengthening the opposite virtues." Not resistance or violence, which offer no alternative to the logic of egoism, nor altruism, which always points to its opposite and keeps it alive, but rather the position between the I and the you that mentions both: the we. This requires "the preparatory or theoretical stage of realising the 'I' in the 'we'.

This does not involve forcing the concept of 'we', but rather recognising that the transition from the 'I' to the 'we' does not occur suddenly, as an annihilation of individualities, but rather as a revival of these in their collective function. Violence has no place in this process. "The persistence of violent motives offers the spectacle of a progression towards disintegration through attrition or towards the acceptance of sterile formulas."

The 'we' in participation and cooperation changes the sensory experience. "There is work without joy, pleasure without laughter, virtue without grace, youth without gentleness, love without mystery, art without splendour. […] Why? This terrible question perhaps still hangs over life today. But it can affect our future if we fail to correctly classify and defend the categories and values of the subject of all life, our concerns and interests, namely human beings." It is the "we".

In Perón's judgement, materialism "leads to Marxism, and idealism, which no longer emphasises man and, in the followers and interpreters of Hegel, leads to the deification of the ideal state, inevitably leads to the insectification of the individual."

In 1950, Perón proclaimed the twenty "fundamental truths" of Peronism, including:

> 1. True democracy is that in which the government does what the people want and defends only one interest, that of the people.
> 2. Peronism is popular in nature. Any political circle that is hostile to the people is therefore not Peronist. […]
> 6. For a Peronist, there can be nothing better than another Peronist. […]
> 9. Politics is not an end in itself for us, but only a means to the good of the fatherland, which consists in the happiness of its children and national greatness. […]
> 15. As a political doctrine, Justicialism achieves a balance between the rights of the individual and those of the community. […].
> 19. Let us create a centralised government, an organised state and a free people.

The doctrine and view of humanity include the special role of the leader, further elevated by Evita, the unsuccessful actress who presents herself as the representative of the Descamisados, the poor and oppressed, and adds to Perón's already emotional discourse an intensification of anger and indignation. In her book *La Razón de mi*

Vida (The Reason for My Life, 1951), which is required reading in all schools, the outrage and the path to justice and thus to Peronism are masterfully described in short chapters with carefully chosen words:

> The issue of the rich and the poor was the theme of my loneliness. I don't think I ever talked about it with anyone else, not even my mother, but I often thought about it.
> But I had to go one step further on my path of discovery.
> I knew that there were poor people and that there were rich people; and I knew that the poor were more numerous than the rich and that they were everywhere. I was still missing the third dimension of injustice.
> Until I was eleven, I believed that there were poor people like grass and rich people like trees.
> One day, I heard a worker say for the first time that there are poor people because the rich are too rich; and this revelation made a very strong impression on me."

And of course Evita includes propaganda for Juan Perón:

> I know that people are divided into two groups; one, large and innumerable, is that of those who strive for vulgar and ordinary things; and who do not move except along well-trodden paths already trodden by others. They are content with success. The other group, small, very small, is that of people who attach extraordinary value to everything that needs to be done. They are satisfied with nothing less than fame. They strive for the air of the next century to sing its praises and live almost in eternity. [...] The man I met belonged to this class of people.

He was a man of action, which became clear to everyone during the coup and social legislation. "I also learned from him to make everything happen. He is always constructive, both in his conversations and in his behaviour. He always says to me: 'And those who speak so fervently about their teachings never forget to add: Great teachings are worthless if they do not have someone to put them into practice.'"

Perón conceals biographical details. His age is falsified by several years in his youth so that he can begin military training. His place of birth is also not entirely accurate; he also conceals the fact that he was once married and, finally, that his mother was a member of the Tehuelche people.

Despite all the harmony and non-violence, there is also violence in the staging of the doctrine itself. For example, when Evita speaks of the sinister forces that want to destroy her project: "At the same time, he fought against the evocative forces of antipatriotism and the foreign powers that were determined to continue exploiting the good faith and generosity of our people."

The moralisation of a community can also turn into conformity and oppression, and mass gatherings can turn into revolts or, conversely, into resignation. Perón

therefore advocates the training of middle and upper-level leaders of the Peronist movement in order to counteract possible disorientation.

To stabilise and strengthen Peronism, Perón advocates a fusion of state, party and movement through a kind of unity party and a movement that unites society, trade unions and government into a unified state in the form of an organised community. The principle of plurality is significantly restricted in this context. Freedom of expression, elections, movement and strikes are subject to the organised community and a conformist, anti-liberal communitarianism. If resistance grows against this organised restriction of plurality, the organised community defends itself by restricting democratic, constitutional rights.

Perón still sees this fusion only in its early stages.

> We have created an organisation that makes it possible to pursue politics in agreement with the government, because we cannot separate the two completely, as the government is part of politics and politics is part of the government, but each in its own sphere.
> Each under its own leadership and both in agreement.
> This is, of course, easier said than done. But with practice and respect for these broad guidelines, we will come to carry them out mechanically, without anyone imagining that they can do what they should not.
> If everyone participates, in a few years—say twenty—we will have educated the masses, the leaders and the rulers.
> The masses are subjects and objects of the actions of the state and government. They need goals and education.

To this end, Perón compiled his book "Political Leadership," a tome with unsorted short entries, similar to Machiavelli's "Discorsi." But while Machiavelli compares his own political experiences with those of Titus Livius in his ten-volume history of Rome, Perón reflects primarily on the practice and tasks of his populist actions, which have no theoretical precursors. Although Perón transfers his military dedication and goal-oriented approach to the political arena, he knows that he cannot act there with commands and execution, but only with rhetorical conviction and a great deal of emotion. "His argument was simple. Perhaps too simple to be conceived by ordinary people, who, as they say, go in flocks like sparrows and fly low."

To help readers find their way around, the texts are divided into 877 entries and assigned to 85 keywords, from "acción" (action) to "valores espirituales" (spiritual values).

> There is no leadership of the masses, no matter how well they may be organised in material terms, unless solidarity has been created through indoctrination.
> This can be seen every day in the little 'caudillitos' who are still active in Peronism. They do not act in solidarity, they have no sense of justice or Peronist conscience,

> nor do they have a social conscience.
> Without these two states of consciousness, politics is a very difficult thing.
> Legalism and Peronism are like a big sack into which everyone puts a little of what they have conquered and what they possess, so that when things are put into this sack, no one can fight for them.
> They fight when something 'living' reaches into the sack and tries to take something out.
> It should be noted that solidarity is reinforced by this political conscience and in this social conscience.
> Those who have no virtues 'should not lead, and they cannot lead, even if they want to or should.'

As far as the masses are concerned, "organising is not about pigeonholing people; it is much more about giving them a sense of purpose and a sense of community. Material organisation is useless without spiritual organisation. If a mass is spiritually organised, its material organisation is of little importance."

Of course, there is also a deformation of leadership, "either through the deformation of leaders who become tyrants when they take power, or that of the middle cadres who develop an appetite and deform their leadership level; but there is also a deformation of the masses, who enter a phase of anarchic mood, as all masses do when they are dissatisfied and not well guided or led by the leadership's auxiliaries."

A look at a teaching unit shows what the leadership is taught in order to stabilise the party, the state and the community:

"The sixth exam topic is the theoretical part. There we discuss and study:

> a) The leader, the vital part, his moral, intellectual and partisan prerequisites;
> b) The theory, i.e. the inert part of leadership. The list of its essential principles, information, secrecy, surprise, unity of conception, unity of action, all factors of leadership. Party discipline, obedience, initiative, economy of forces, continuity of effort, local or circumstantial control, etc.
> Forms of implementation: preparation, public relations, propaganda, means of action, strategic implementation, tactical implementation, agents of implementation, methods of implementation. The struggle, its general and limited goals. Strategic and tactical approaches in political leadership.

In 1949, Perón brought about a constitutional amendment that was in line with his policy of justice. A Senate statement said:

> The new National Constitution of 1949 placed the people at the centre of the legal system and emphasised the state's obligations in the area of social rights, based on its active role in the nation's economic development and its regulatory and distributive role. Furthermore, the inclusion of new social areas made it possible to

> extend citizens' rights by giving the people political sovereignty through the direct election of the President of the Republic, universal and regional free education, and the promotion of culture, social welfare, workers' rights, the family, the elderly, children and other political, social and economic rights.

These changes were reversed by the coup d'état of 1955.

From a socio-cultural perspective, in a lengthy analysis of Peronism in his book "Qué es esto? Catilinaria" (What is this? Catiline's Orations), the writer Ezequiel Martínez Estrada also points to the cultural heritage that Peronism exploits:

> The weariness of the people in the face of the ignorance and venality of those in power and, consequently, of the political parties. The discouragement of the workers and the poor, who are homeless, outcasts in a country of cattle ranchers. The degeneration of the army, fattened by idleness, transformed by inaction, active in the armed bureaucracy. The confusion between judicialism and social justice, between the justice of the people and the justice of bandits, between Peronism and communism. Or a heterogeneous conglomerate of angry and desperate people. The bankrupts, whom Cicero and he called the "lost."

The culture is poor, "a conglomeration of exportable remnants of the great European culture," so that the intelligentsia could offer no protection to the "ignorant masses." Thus, "some gave in out of delusion and greed, others out of stupidity."

The Peronist March In addition to the leadership duo of Juan and Evita, the balcony speeches and theoretical writings, the all-encompassing Peronist world also has its own song, "La marcha peronista." It can still be heard today in Buenos Aires at the restaurant "Perón, Perón" every hour on the hour. There are also mugs and T-shirts with prints like in a museum shop.

The march is based on the song of a football club, Club Atlético Barracas Juniors, founded in 1912. It was written by Muffarregui, known as "Turkish Mufarri", and set to music by his friend Ricardo Streiff:

> Vamos muchachos unidos / todos juntos cantaremos / y al mismo tiempo daremos / un hurra de corazón. / Por esos bravos muchachos / que lucharon con fervor / por defender los colores / de esta gran institución.
>
> (Come on boys, united / we'll all sing together / and at the same time / shout a heartfelt hurrah / for those brave boys / who fought so hard / to defend the colours / of this great club)

The anthem is sung at club celebrations, during carnival and on every other occasion. Until 1948, when a member of the printers' union changed the lyrics:

> The Peronist printers / all united we will triumph / and at the same time we will give / a heartfelt cheer / Long live Perón! Long live Perón! / For that great Argentine / who knew how to win over the masses / fighting against capital / Perón, Perón, how great you are! My general, how much you are worth! / Perón, Perón, great leader! / You are the first worker.

The Minister of Education only changed "gráficos peronistas" to "muchachos peronistas" (Peronist boys) and "hurray" to "grito" (cry), and the Peronist anthem was ready to be sung at every rally.

The lyrics were distributed everywhere, the march was recorded with the actor Hugo de Caril and was played for the first time on 27 October 1949 from the balcony of the Casa Rosada, accompanied by the Domingo Maraflotti orchestra.

"Perón did not rise as a demagogic orator, despite his outstanding abilities in this regard, but as a demagogic military man." And he "inspires the people as a military man and the military as a demagogue. All this through words." But he was less successful as an orator than as an actor, if one considers his ability to generate sympathy, his art of acting and his ability to make what he portrayed tangible and visible. The actor plays a role, not himself, unless he acts out his own self.

17 October is, alongside 1 May, the second annual occasion for a Peronist mass rally. The date commemorates the resistance Perón encountered after his successful coup from numerous military figures and social circles such as large landowners, conservatives, the Church and the petty bourgeoisie. On 9 October 1945, the military forced him to resign, and on 12 October he was arrested and deported to the prison island of Martin García along with other unpopular politicians. This was preceded on 19 September 1945 by a huge demonstration of the united opposition with more than 200,000 people, the "March of the Constitution and Freedom" against "despotism" and demanding "Perón's head". Perón declared a state of emergency, and the prisons filled with non-Peronist military personnel, democratic journalists, university professors and opposition politicians. In order to limit the protests against the military dictatorship, the military dismissed Perón on 9 October 1945.

The military did not anticipate what happened next. The CGT announced a general strike for the 18th, without mentioning Perón, while the residents of the suburbs of Buenos Aires began gathering in large numbers at the Plaza de Mayo in front of the Casa Rosada on the 17th, demanding Perón's release. The military realised that they were powerless against the crowd and released Perón. He spoke from the balcony and calmed the crowd. In 1946, democratic elections were held, in which Perón was elected with 55 per cent of the vote. 17 October becomes a Peronist holiday ("Day of Loyalty") in memory of the first public appearance of the poor and marginalised sections of the population.

In 1951, Perón won the elections again, but the following year Evita died of cancer, and in 1955 he was overthrown by the military. The "Revolución libertadora" (Liberation Revolution) eagerly erased the visibility of Perón, Peronism and thus the poor with Decree 4161. "Images, symbols, signs, significant expressions, doctrines, articles and artistic works representative of Peronism" were banned. Words such as "Perón," "Evita," "Peronism" and "Justicialism" were not allowed to be mentioned. Naturally, the Peronist march was also banned.

Repression and Criticism What remains hidden behind the shining façade of Peronist humanity and justice is the centralisation of power and the dismantling of fundamental democratic rights. Above all, it is about influencing and controlling public opinion and spreading partisan propaganda.

Evita bought the newspaper Democracia in 1947, followed by the state takeover of the newspapers El Mundo, El Hogar, Mundo Argentino and the afternoon papers Crítica, La Razón, Noticias Gráficas and La Época. An empire of 13 publishing houses, 17 newspapers, ten magazines and four news agencies emerges, all of which are essentially characterised by the same news and photos in a similar style. Critical newspapers such as La Vanguardia, Provincias unidas, Qué sucedió en 7 Días, Argentina Libre, Tribuna Democrática and El hombre libre are forced to close for sometimes absurd reasons, such as excessive production noise. Press outlets that remain independent are restricted by paper quotas. By the end of 1951, La Nación has only six pages. This approach and the arguments used to justify it are reminiscent of authoritarian regimes or the early stages of a dictatorship. Competition and innovation are excluded and journalists are condemned to conformism.

Censorship is also extensive. For example, the tango Cafetín de Buenos Aires (1948), which is still popular today, had verses which were considered immoral and its distribution was banned. This is surprising because its poet, Enrique Santos Discépolo, was one of Perón's most prominent supporters, who continued to speak out in his favour on the radio in 1951.

Education and training were controlled in all areas, including schools, universities and institutes. Professors and lecturers who did not sympathise with Peronism were suspended from universities. The writer Martínez Estrada compared Perón's interventions with those of the dictator Rosas. Means of imparting knowledge such as printing houses and libraries were also closed. Public schools become places of intellectual corruption. Those under the age of 25 "know only a world of deceit and bribery. […] It is the people of tomorrow whose behaviour is not corrected but encouraged in its indignity."

Numerous employees resign from their posts in solidarity. In the course of 1946, at least one third of the academic staff at state universities is replaced by government supporters with dubious academic qualifications. The new University Act of 1947 prohibits students and teachers from engaging in any political activities; rec-

tors are appointed by the government, and student co-administration and faculty participation are abolished.

The new constitution of 1949 even enshrined indoctrination in higher education. "Universities shall establish compulsory and common courses for the political education of students in all faculties, with the aim of ensuring that every student acquires a basic knowledge of Argentina, the intellectual, economic, social and political reality of their country, the development and historical mission of the Argentine Republic, so as to develop an awareness of the responsibility they have to implement and safeguard the goals recognised and enshrined in this Constitution."

At the heart of this policy was a popular culture for the masses, conveyed through the mass media and the film industry. Perón used quotes from music, literature and colloquial language in his speeches, for example from Martín Fierro and Lunfardo.

In 1952, the right of assembly was restricted. Events could no longer be held, and lectures or classes had to be approved by the police.

Handbooks were written for school teachers on topics such as justicialism, Evita, social justice and the new era in which work was no longer hard but pleasant, the country was no longer associated with gauchos but with progress and the fatherland, the people were heroes, Rosas was not a tyrant and Perón was mentioned in the same breath as the liberator San Martin.

As early as 1944, freedom of assembly and the right to strike were restricted. Protests required a permit; if one was not obtained, they were banned, and the police had to take action against the protesters. The military was immediately deployed against strikers in 1945 and 1946.

Since the movement, the party and the government were intertwined, it was only natural that Evita divided the world into Peronists and anti-Peronists: "I ask the workers to denounce the anti-Peronists," she proclaimed at a rally, "because they are traitors to the fatherland, and I also ask them (the workers, WH) and the officials to take action, because if they do not, we must assume that they too are traitors to the fatherland." Potentially, thousands would be denounced.

Peronism in the 1940s and 1950s was not just a populist movement that conquered part of the population as well as the state and government, but had previously developed from a sect. Martínez Estrada follows Scipio Sighele's distinction between sect and caste. A sect has a common goal, forms a community based on belief rather than ideas, and develops spontaneously. Simmel and Caillois examine secret societies, their primitive stages and their relationship to violence. Sects operate on the fringes of society and against it. They justify their use of violence. The military in Argentina, which only temporarily promotes democratisation processes, stands at a distance from politics and government as an organ of armed violence. Thanks to long-standing sympathies with a political model à la Mussolini, parts of the military are open to sealing themselves off as a secret society or sect.

The G.O.U. is a sect that prepared the 1943 coup but then went public. However, the sect's mentality remained part of the authoritarian structure of society as an organised community, which included leaders and their creed. Thanks to the lack of the rule of law, the organs of repression were used, sometimes illegally, to stabilise power, with arrests and torture, the existence of which Perón denied, as expected. In 1946, Interior Minister Angel Borlenghi had the largest police force in the country at his disposal, with 25,000 men. He had numerous opposition figures imprisoned. The most stubborn among them are taken to a basement of the newly expanded Ramos-Mejía Hospital, one of the largest hospitals in Buenos Aires, where torture became routine. The names of the victims are listed page after page in Gambini and Kocik's book *Crímenes y mentiras* (Crimes and Lies).

If populism defines who belongs to the people in whose name political action is supposedly taken, then this logic also defines who does not belong and is therefore inevitably an enemy of the people. In this case, it was communists and members of the lumpenproletariat, including the indigenous population. Since the institutions were weak and the police and judiciary were not subject to any control, illegal violence was widespread.

In 1951, children playing on an empty lot next to Avenida General Paz found human remains. The disappearance of people had already alarmed the neighbourhood, but it was hushed up by political representatives. Suspicion fell on Roberto Miguel Nieva Malaver, head of the police station, whose job it was to cleanse the area of "elements of bad life." This involved night-time raids with numerous arrests, humiliation and torture. People also disappeared in other places. Sixty years after the events, witnesses spoke out in the report, including Argelia Reyes, daughter of trade unionist Cipriano Reyes, who explained that "there were disappearances during Perón's time." Or Juan Ovidio Zabala, who was tortured in 1951. At the time, they were referred to as "people whose whereabouts are unknown and whose legal status is unclear," according to MP Santiago Nudelman. The young Yolanda J. V. de Uzal, a member of the liberal UCR party, was taken to the Department of Political Order and then disappeared. She was only released thanks to the intense protests of a party colleague.

The report also points out that police terror is being perpetrated in the provinces, and that "specialists" were even being made available to the torturers at the third police station in the capital. Sergeant Ricardo Aguilera was known as "the doctor" because of his specialisation in cruelty. The police chief of Boulogne, Juan Simón Etchart, tortured people while drunk, which led to the death of more than one victim, as his victim Juan Ovidio Zabala recalls. The boxers Alberto and Guillermo Lowell tortured people in the capital, and in Quilmes, Corporal Toledo, Rasseti and Santoro tortured workers such as the merchant Juan Alberto Lanutti, the brewer Mario Aldo Rodríguez and the two construction unionists Ernesto Carlos Borras and Jac-

into Saltó. In 1945, 65 farmers were brutally tortured in the Chaco gendarmerie by its head, Guillermo Solveyra Casares, and five of them were killed.

Finally, Malaver once again. He is assisted by a wild dog named Tom, who was used to commit unimaginable acts of cruelty. Malaver later admitted to using the dog, but tried to excuse himself by saying that Tom was "wild, but not cruel." There are Dantesque descriptions of the night-time activities of the animal and its henchmen in the ravines of the northern zone, very close to the president's Quinta in Olivos. According to El Laborista, the animal was also used to torture prisoners who were tied to trees behind the police station. Agent Moratello, a dog trainer, says he has never seen such a cruel dog. Research has identified several dozen people who were murdered in 1951/52; there are probably many more victims.

The weaknesses of the institutions allow illegal violence and excesses. Peronist MPs were indifferent to the torture denounced in parliament, the press was controlled and the judiciary was under pressure. Felipe Pérez declared in 1954 that "judges who do not agree with Peronist doctrine cannot work in the judiciary." In 1958, President Arturo Frondizi granted a "broad and generous amnesty" in return for the military allowing elections, in which Peronists were banned from participating.

Perón antagonised the Church by banning the Catholic newspaper El pueblo and simultaneously legalising divorce and prostitution.

After the failed coup attempt in 1951 by General Luciano Benjamín Menéndez, the Minister of Political Affairs and friend of Perón, Román Subiza, drafted an electoral reform that granted fewer seats to the opposition. He secretly distributed a repression plan to the governors to destroy the "traitors to the fatherland" who opposed the internal state of war that had been introduced after the failed coup attempt (a workers' strike, for example, was considered a challenge). Subiza headed the Secretariat for Political Affairs, which coordinated "domestic policy" with the main goal of ensuring that "all inhabitants of the fatherland should be Peronists," as stated in a "Political Action Plan" drawn up in the last years of Perón's government.

Evita described how deeply she felt the division in the country in a final message in 1952:

> It was true that Perón, a military leader, attached fundamental importance to the workers of his people. And while the workers organised themselves into the strongest force in the country, the oligarchy, which had also infiltrated the armed forces, prepared the reaction. I witnessed Perón's hard struggle against the privilege of violence, as hard as the struggles against the privilege of money or blood. I know what he suffered, even though I had the rare and wonderful privilege of being something like the shield against which the attacks of his enemies always shattered.

In mid-April 1953, the mood deteriorates and Perón needs support. In front of a large crowd, he explains his position on the economic crisis, which did not exist in the 1940s, and calls for a fight against those responsible. He begins by flattering those present: "A president who gives advice is more than a president, he is a friend, and that is exactly what I want to be for my people: a friend." He flatters them in a practically unrealistic and politically intolerable manner: "I have always adhered to the first truth of our Peronist catechism, which states that true democracy consists of the government doing only what the people want and defending only one interest: that of the people."

He then names the enemies, the speculators and corrupt officials. To bring them to justice, the government, the state and the people must work together. It is a matter of "demanding justice for all Argentinians" and enforcing it with all severity:

> The honest must be defended by all means; the dishonest must be put in prison as quickly as possible [...] If, in order to put an end to evil from within and evil from without, if, in order to put an end to the dishonest and the evil, I must bear the title of tyrant before history, then I will do so with joy. Until now, I have used persecution; from now on, I will use repression, and God grant that circumstances do not force me to apply the most terrible punishments.

In the middle of his plea for comprehensive price controls, an explosion is heard. "Comrades," Perón continues, "these people who spread rumours every day seem to be spreading even more rumours today and want to plant a bomb on us." At that moment, another explosion is heard. "You see," says Perón, "when I announced from here that this was a premeditated plan that was being carried out, I had good reason to say so. Comrades: you can throw many bombs and spread many rumours, but we are determined that you will not get away with it, and in this case, comrades, I assure you that you will not get away with it. We must identify every single person responsible for these acts and apply the appropriate sanctions against them."

Finally, he appealed to nationalism, which is always good for stirring up emotions: "Go home with the thought that almost ten years ago we decided to secure the happiness of our people and the greatness of the nation. Think that we will achieve these goals through economic independence, social justice and political sovereignty."

A little later, on 1 June 1953, he strikes a propagandistic tone that is both trite and violent. He speaks as an ideologue and a military man. The focus is on the bomb attack, for which he blames the liberal UCR party:

> You do not know the Argentine people; you do not know the peoples. The lesson that this wonderful people of the fatherland has to teach its own and foreigners will live on in the memory of those who feel worthy of it. When a people is pre-

> pared to die for its dignity, it is an invincible people. And, dear comrades, what is at stake at this moment is the dignity of the fatherland itself. Just as we made Braden (US ambassador, WH) bite the dust of defeat in the times we still remember, so will we make all the Bradens who show their faces bite the dust of defeat.
> Comrades: The social consciousness of the Argentine working class has awakened before the admiring eyes of the world, which regards it either with sympathy or with fear, because it sees in it the example of the liberation of millions of slaves suffering under the whip of capitalism or communism.
> Comrades: We must not slacken in our efforts. I have often said that our slogan is clear, and clear slogans are defended with our lives on the battlefield. Every Argentine worker is at his post to consolidate the liberation of the Argentine working people and, if necessary, to fight for the liberation of all the working peoples of the world…
> Comrades: We know where the blow is coming from. In light of these ideas, all peoples know where the coup is coming from. But we stopped it, and now we will respond. […] When it was necessary to strike hard, you let me do so. Now, as always, I ask my people for "la bolada" (the opportunity). I must strike where it hurts, and when it hurts. […] I ask you, comrades, not to set anything else on fire, not to do these things anymore, because when the time comes to do so, I will go out at your head to burn. But then, if it should be necessary, history will remember the greatest fire that humanity has kindled to this day. […]
> Let us make a place in our memory for all the workers who have died in world history in the struggle for the cause of the proletariat; let us erect in every proletarian heart a monument in the form of an altar to those tenacious, courageous and idealistic men who understood how to give their lives for their comrades."

Five people were arrested as perpetrators of the bombing. One of them, Roque Carranza, became a minister in Raúl Alfonsín's democratic government after the end of the dictatorship in 1955. According to historian Félix Luna, who was himself tortured in 1951, he and Carlos Alberto González Dogliotti confessed to their crime under torture. He had distributed leaflets in support of a railway strike.

Unpopular Intellectuals The bomb attack provided Perón with an opportunity to crack down on the intelligentsia, whom he despised. He had 200 writers, publishers and artists imprisoned for a month, mostly without explanation and without trial. Among Peronists and their supporters, the anti-intellectual slogan "*alpargatas sí, libros no*" (espadrilles yes, books no) was widespread. Students responded with the slogan "*No a la dictadura de las alpargatas*" (No to the dictatorship of the espadrilles). Intellectuals were filled with aversion to Peronism. This only changed with the Cuban revolution from 1959 and the liberation movements of the 1960s.

Among those arrested were the editor of the famous bi-monthly magazine Sur, Victoria Ocampo, and the writer Jorge Luis Borges. Ocampo had met Mussolini dur-

ing a visit to Italy and, like many Argentinians at the time, had been very impressed by him. However, when she asked him what role women played in fascism, he replied that a woman's primary duty was to bear children for the state, whereupon she asked him, "But could women also work with men in other ways?" He replied curtly, "No." As an emancipated woman, this abruptly ended any sympathy she had for him.

Her magazine was an opportunity for young writers to establish themselves in the literary world: Julio Cortázar recalls how "[…] she helped us students who were trying to find our way in the 1930s and 1940s, hesitating between so many mistakes, so many miserable institutions and lies." For Octavio Paz, Sur is not just a magazine or an institution: "It is a tradition of the spirit… [Victoria] did what no one had done before in America."

Now she was accused of storing weapons for opponents of the regime in her house in Mar del Plata. Apparently without evidence.

She was released through the direct intervention of the writer and 1945 Nobel Prize winner Gabriela Mistral, international pressure, protests by Roger Caillois, Nobel Prize winners François Mauriac and Roger Martin du Gard, writers André Maurois and Jules Romain, and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. On 14 June 1953, the New York Times published a letter from the writer and friend Waldo Frank. Together with Aldous Huxley, he headed an international committee for the release of the Argentine woman. When she was finally released, her passport remained with the authorities. She did not regain her freedom of movement until the dictatorship ended in 1955.

At the end of 1955, after the military coup, she reported on her days in prison and the solidarity and humanity among her fellow prisoners in Sur. The magazine celebrated Perón's fall with a special edition entitled *Por la reconstrucción nacional* (For National Reconstruction), in which numerous authors called for a renewed reform of the education system and the restoration of the liberal political system.

"As far as I am concerned," Ocampo writes,

> […] it could have been worse – I was imprisoned for 27 days in 1953 without being told why. They searched my house twice (and my magazine once); they searched my cupboards, my drawers; they read my papers, my letters (which referred to the government and had no direct connection to politics) […] I knew then that the only thing they were after, the only thing they were punishing me for, the only thing they wanted to destroy in me, was freedom of thought. And this realisation seemed all the more serious for the country. During my stay at Buen Pastor, I had discovered, among other things, that material imprisonment is less painful, even less morally dangerous for the innocent than the other prison: the one I had come to know in the houses, in the streets of Buenos Aires, in the air I breathed. This other invisible prison arises from the fear of prison, and dictators know it well.
> The prisoner is spied on even when he is asleep. I remember one of the endless nights at Buen Pastor. There were eleven of us women in one room. As I couldn't

> sleep – I suffered from insomnia, which manifested itself in a concert of snoring – I wondered what time it was. When one of my fellow prisoners saw me sitting up in bed and covering my ears, she was kind enough to come over and ask if I was feeling ill. […]
> It was a gesture of humanity whose gentleness I will never forget and which still brings tears to my eyes. […]
> In prison, at least you had the satisfaction of knowing that you had finally reached rock bottom, that you were living in *reality*. Things had materialised. That was my first reaction: "I am now out of the zone of false freedom; at least I am now in the *truth*."

Criticism from intellectuals had been expressed long before the repression of 1953. In 1946, Julio Cortázar wrote the enigmatic story "Casa tomada" (The House Taken Over). It is about the creeping occupation of a house whose inhabitants give way without resistance. Is the theme here the takeover of one's own free space by politics, or the poverty that is increasingly migrating from the countryside to the city and from the suburbs to the centre?

> As I stood in front of the bedroom door (Irene was knitting), I heard a noise; it came either from the kitchen or the bathroom; the bend in the corridor muffled the sound. Irene had been alerted by my sudden pause and followed me without saying a word. We listened and heard very clearly that the noises were coming from this side of the oak door, from the kitchen, from the bathroom or perhaps even from the corridor, where it bends, very close to us. […] "They've occupied this part too," said Irene, and the narrator asked shortly afterwards: "Did you have time to take anything with you?" […] "No, nothing." […] "I locked the front door and threw the key into the gutter so that no poor devil would think of stealing and breaking into the squatted house at that hour.
> "My interpretation of this story," Cortázar explained to Spanish television in 1977, "[…] is the result of a nightmare. […] There was this feeling of terror that you get in nightmares, without anything being defined. Fear in its purest form. Now, this interpretation, that I perhaps translated my reaction as an Argentinean to the political events, cannot be ruled out. It seems to me to be a possible explanation, but it is definitely not mine."

Borges wrote the text "La fiesta del monstruo" (The Feast of the Monster) together with Bioy Casares in 1947. It depicts a day in the life of a "*cabecita negra*" (black head, a discriminatory term for migrants from the interior of the country, WH). Although Perón is the "monster," the story is not only about dictatorship. The "monster" is more than a human being; it is a state in which humanity itself experiences violence and all values are suppressed. It is about the barbarism that still prevails in the provinces

in "Facundo," but is now advancing on Buenos Aires and dominating the language and perception of reality.

Borges belongs to the "anti-Peronists," like most intellectuals. He explains his hatred of the government, which he always refers to as "the dictatorship." Democracy, he says, is impossible in Argentina. He finds neither Peronism nor communism attractive; instead, he is an anarchist in the style of Spencer. He believes in the individual, not the state. And one might add that he detests a movement that gives little space to the individual and abuses language with platitudes and mass emotions. Whether this is accompanied by a disregard for the poor is anyone's guess. Perhaps it is blindness when he declares in a long conversation with Ernesto Sábato that "we have neither natives nor blacks." He detests politics. "I believe that no politician is honest. A politician is always looking for voters, and he says what they want to hear. In political discourse, the listeners believe it even more than the speakers. The speaker is a kind of mirror or echo of what others think. Otherwise, he would fail." Perón thinks so too. Borges considers politics to be what Perón does and what he despises about Perón, and so, along with Perón, he also despises politics.

In the literary magazine "Sur," November-December 1955, Borges published a mocking reckoning under the French title "L'illusion comique":

> The dictatorship despised capitalism (pretended to despise it), but copied its methods, as in Russia, and dictated names and slogans to the people with the same tenacity with which companies impose razors, cigarettes or washing machines on the market. This stubbornness, which was obvious to everyone, was counterproductive; the excessive number of images of the dictator led many people to despise him. We have moved from a world of individuals to a world of symbols, which is even more passionate than the former; the conflict no longer exists between supporters and opponents of the dictator, but between supporters and opponents of an image or a name. […] Even more curious was the political handling of the drama or melodrama. On 17 October 1945, it was pretended that a colonel had been arrested and kidnapped and that the people of Buenos Aires were rescuing him; no one bothered to explain who had kidnapped him or how his whereabouts had been discovered. There were also no legal sanctions for the alleged culprits, and their names were neither mentioned nor suspected.

But his personal involvement pains him more. "In 1946, a president came to power whose name I do not wish to remember," Borges writes in his autobiography. "Shortly afterwards, I was honoured with a promotion to inspector of poultry and rabbit markets." Allegedly because he had sided with the Allies during the Second World War. "The next day I resigned." When Perón returned to Argentina in 1973, Borges was forced into retirement.

The treatment of his family was also painful. On 8 September 1948, his mother and sister took part in a demonstration on Florida Street. The national anthem was

sung, the constitution was celebrated, and leaflets with the initials RUL for *Resistencia, unidad y libertad* (Resistance, Unity and Freedom) were distributed. Resistance against Perón and freedom from the so-called "dictatorship." Almost all of them were women, many of whom were arrested and accused of "public scandal." His mother, Leonor Acevedo, well over 70 years old, was placed under house arrest, and his sister Norah, 45, ended up in the Buen Pastor prison.

In 1960, Borges published the story "El simulacro" (The Simulation), which is somewhere between grotesque and circus and is about the staging of a theatre performance with a funeral. The play takes place immediately after the death of Evita, who is portrayed in the production by a blonde doll. She is accompanied by an actor (or simulator) who claims to be Perón. People greet him and pay a fee of two pesos into a piggy bank. The boundaries between theatre and reality become blurred, Perón and Evita are simulacra, no one knows their true identity.

Unlike Borges, Ernesto Sábato believes that everyone bears responsibility for what happened:

> Many of us were already ashamed to be Argentine, ashamed to the point of pain and tears. For just as every person, once they reach a certain age, has the face they deserve (since it is shaped not only by their flesh and blood, but also by their spirit, their courage and their cowardice, their greatness and their misery), so too does every nation have the face it inherently deserves, because we are all guilty of everything, and in every Argentine there was and is a piece of Perón.

In his long letter to Mario Amadeo, published as "El otro rostro del peronismo" (The Other Face of Peronism), Sábato laments the crimes of Peronist rule, but differentiates in his assessment of the measures taken. Achieving social justice is a fundamental requirement, he argues. A single observation suffices to prove this:

> On that September night in 1955, when doctors, landowners and writers were loudly celebrating the fall of the tyrant in the hall, I saw the two Indian women who worked there standing in a corner of the anteroom with tears in their eyes.
> And although I had spent all those years thinking about the tragic duality that divided the Argentine people, at that moment it appeared to me in its most poignant form.
> For what could better characterise the drama of our country than this almost exemplary double scene? Many millions of dispossessed and working people shed tears in those hard and dark moments. The two crying indigenous girls in a kitchen in Salta were the symbol of a large number of humble compatriots.
> Instead of trying to understand the national problem and decipher what was real, inevitable and just in this confused movement, most of the parties and the *intelligentsia* had given themselves over to the scorn, ridicule and *bon mots* of society. This was an underestimation that in no way corresponded to reality, for

> while there was much in Peronism that could be despised or ridiculed, there was also much that was historically justified and fair.

Who could disagree with Sábato when he states:

> In this complex movement, there was – and still is – something much more powerful and profound than the mere desire for material goods: there was a legitimate longing for justice and recognition in the face of a selfish and cold society that had always forgotten them.

He thus addresses the indispensable importance of feelings, which not only exist alongside rationality in every human being, but also permeate and shape rationality. It is poets and writers who know this world and, like Sábato, notice how much "there was not only base passions and purely material desires in the Peronist movement, but also a genuine spiritual passion, a para-religious belief in a leader who spoke to them as human beings and not as outcasts." Sábato, who knew how closely civilisation and barbarism are linked, knew that ideologues, as ardent followers of reason, would fail in their attempt to establish a rationalist culture. In Germany, the Enlightenment and totalitarianism operated in a common environment.

It follows that politics should take the same path that 20th-century philosophy has already taken with existentialism and phenomenology: "a return to concrete human beings, to flesh and blood, a synthesis of the scattered limbs that rationalist dissection has left us. A political synthesis that, if necessary everywhere in the world, is particularly necessary in our country: both because of the barbaric character of our immediate tradition and because of the excesses of our newly rich enlightened class, who, as is always the case with imitators, emphasise the master's faults instead of passing on his virtues."

Borges, on the other hand, condemns any attempt to understand Peronism like Sábato and Martínez Estrada as indirect praise of the "tyrant."

The past is not yet past. Time and again, one encounters former prisoners in the same prison in San Telmo. The journalist Inés Menéndez Hopenhayn learnt quite by chance from her grandmother that she had been arrested in the autumn of 1954 and imprisoned for six months. She was interrogated but given no information as to why she was in custody. Based on the questions she was asked, she suspected that it was her anti-Peronist stance that an informant overheard. She was not organised and has never been involved in anti-Peronist activities.

The guards were nuns from the Sisters of the Good Shepherd order. The female students were housed on the ground floor, while communists were kept on the upper floor, with whom all contact was forbidden.

During her imprisonment, the grandmother was allowed to continue studying medicine, and her parents provided her with specialist books. "The book on patho-

logical anatomy," says the granddaughter, which her parents had asked for so that she could study for free and take the exam, contained drawings of human bodies. When the nuns examined the book critically, they were horrified. "They considered the contents of the book immoral. As a result, she lost a year at school."

> They went in and came out again without warning. One fine day in March 1955, three female comrades (including my grandmother) were called and told that they were being released. At that very moment, the doors were opened and they were left standing on the street. No money for the journey home, no explanation and no notification to their parents. My grandmother went to a bar, where, according to her, other dismissed prisoners were already there to ask to use the telephone. The people in the bar knew what was going on. She used the telephone and her parents came to pick her up.

Some of the former female students still meet in the former prison, that has been converted into a museum. The grandchildren are trying to understand all the details. The terrible dictatorship that began in 1976 has pushed the events before 1955 into the background. "We are looking for fictional heroes or enemies," explains the granddaughter,

> … and forget that both those who were vindicated and those who were not vindicated existed side by side. Peronism was misused for many things, but the good thing about history and these biographies is that they allow us to move away from the reinterpretations that are made of history. Mistakes are denied in order to whitewash ideologies or contributions that have been made for the good of our society. Fortunately, in the history of our country, there is the life story of each and every one of us, which allows us to discover what the historiographies hide. The grey stories are perhaps the clearest.

Exodus Perón's power was not only used to nationalise the media and subject it to intensive control, but also to draw up blacklists of cultural figures who were banned from working if they did not sign a declaration of loyalty. Evita was responsible for compiling some of the names of people she had had dealings with, including Libertad Lamarque, Inés Edmonson, Nelly Ayllón and Iní Marshall. The procedure was not made public, but the public noticed that individual artists were dropped from a theatre play and then more and more, as was the case with the play "Prontuario" in autumn 1947. Since those who were dismissed did not want to sign the declaration of loyalty and could not find work, some of them emigrated, such as María Rosa Gallo, who went to Chile, or Oreste Vaiglia to Montevideo. Others went to Mexico, Europe and the USA. There is evidence that jealousy, love affairs and hurt feelings resulted in the exclusion of those concerned. The reasons are petty, the consequences dramatic.

Among the internationally renowned artists were the conductor, composer and musician Osvaldo Pugliese, who was not allowed to perform, and the musician Atahualpa Yupanqui, a supporter of the Justicialist Party, whose right hand was broken in his home so that he could no longer play his guitar. A gang of thugs also broke into Waldo Frank's hotel room and beat him up. The historian Felix Luna was arrested and tortured. The brilliant constitutional lawyer, advisor and confidant of Perón, father of the 1949 constitutional reform and probably also the author of "Comunidad organizada", Arturo Sampay, was accused in 1952 of unspecified crimes in connection with the governor of Buenos Aires, Domingo Mercante. He fled to Paraguay disguised as a priest. It remains unclear whether the young Astor Piazzola, musician and composer of innovative tangos, was on the list.

Perón and his followers' anti-science stance was spectacular not only with regard to the natural sciences, but also to Argentina's Nobel Prize winners. Argentina has had five Nobel Prize winners to date: Carlos Saavedra Lamas for peace policy (1936), Bernardo Houssay in physiology and medicine (1947), Luis Federico Leloir in chemistry (1970), Adolfo Pérez Esquivel for peace policy (1980) and César Milstein in medicine (1984). Peronists and the military were not shy about harassment here either. Houssay lost his research position at the university because of anti-Peronist statements and continued his research at his private institute. Esquivel was tortured by the military during the last dictatorship, and Milstein preferred to work in England, not only because of the good working conditions.

Serving the people and building an organised community for the good of all actually meant dividing society ever more deeply. The opposition was openly excluded. To achieve this, the ruling party had to resort to ever greater control and exclusion and, as discontent grew, to violence. Representation declined, anarchy increased, as did the propensity to violence.

In a comprehensive final lecture, Nobel Prize winner Houssay criticised the backwardness of the Argentine university system, whose principles can also be criticised in other countries: learning and teaching only for exams, lack of state support for research institutions, failure to stimulate curiosity and a thirst for research, enthusiasm and perseverance among students.

> Science can only flourish in an atmosphere of freedom, while in times of oppression it stagnates or regresses. Freedom of discussion, research and expression is essential. The university must be the most important centre for the discovery, coordination and dissemination of knowledge, while at the same time ensuring the intellectual and technical training of specialists and the majority of researchers. It must awaken in students the scientific spirit and the principles of research so that doctors can identify and solve the medical and health problems of their working environment.
>
> When I was dismissed from my post in 1943, hundreds of students asked me to give

> them advice. I immediately told them about some of the forces that had shaped my life: love for my country, love of freedom, personal dignity, a sense of duty, dedication to science, dedication to work, respect for justice and for my fellow human beings, affection for my patients, students and friends. Have high ideals and remember to achieve great things, because if life is always modest and only part of what you desire is achieved, if you dream big, you will achieve much more. Do not forget that all the great achievements of the present are only the realisation of youthful dreams.

After Perón's overthrow by the "Revolución Libertadora", persecution continued, this time by the anti-Peronists. People were not only persecuted, but also condemned to silence and invisibility. Decree 4161, passed in 1958 but not ratified until 1963, prohibited any public mention of Peronist leaders, which naturally included Perón and Evita. Shortly after the coup, the former presidential residence was demolished by those in power in an attempt to erase history.

Power and Values Literary scholar Beatriz Sarlo describes the significance of violence and mythologisation in the constitution of society using Borges' fantastic literature, in particular his story "El informe de Brodie" (David Brodie's Report, 1972). These stories present "a disturbing mixture of fictional reportage and philosophical commentary". It is a political philosophy in the realm of narrative, which possibly has a healing role through its distance from events and the creation of meaning. This is particularly true when politics and history are in crisis and no orientation can be gained from immediate experience.

In these stories, Borges observes that the ideological and cultural values of society are based on blind power, arbitrary decisions or myths. These are socio-psychological questions if one wants to determine the inner cohesion of society and thus the reasons for the stability or weakness of values, or rather the change in values. His stories are set on the outskirts of cities with a reworking of the gaucho tradition. In the absence of formal law, violence takes the form of a code of honour. This codified violence is thus deeply rooted in Criollo culture and is also considered to be part of South America's destiny. Duelling, for example, is an undisputed means of settling disputes or establishing justice.

This society conveys the image of a kind of heroic, primitive and rural dystopia. And, according to Sarlo's interpretation, it is governed by a catalogue of virtues consisting of personal dependencies and concrete services or obligations that are given contractual character through vows and culminate in personal loyalty to the *patron* or other leaders. "Without this kind of bond," explains Sarlo, "rural society would tend to disintegrate into anarchy."

For, and this is the second inseparable aspect, the representatives of the state have less power than the lords and therefore represent weak institutions. The mem-

bers of this social structure vainly reject urban modernisation and, in retrospect, heroize the now disappearing world of Martin Fierro, who is also bidding farewell to a world that is coming to an end.

With the change in the economy, living conditions and values also change. Since violence is not merely a form of action but, like all forms of action, is subject to moral evaluation, the change in social values and the opportunity to gradually replace anarchy and violence with strong institutions and deliberation are of interest.

Since there was no quantitative social research in the 19th century and well into the 20th century, literature is helpful. After the world of the gauchos and caudillos, pre-modern rural powers and legends no longer fit in with the emergence of a rural and urban proletariat. A period of hopeful immigration begins, but it leads to a second phase of disappointment and failure.

Anarchism, imported from Europe or brought with them, served as the political response to this. It continued the aversion to the state, but at the same time opened the way for world views, with liberalism being of only limited appeal.

The next point of reference was fascism, a fusion of caudillismo, movement, state and military, in the ideologically and organisationally weakened form of Peronism. Its ideological values of community as a people and the will of the people, social justice and unity of movement and leadership were the strongest movement ever seen in Argentina. Although the values of the people and justice continue to exist in "Kirchnerism," a social democratic form of Peronism, after the end of the dictatorship in 1983, it is now more moderate and more committed to the principles of a democratic constitutional state.

It is interesting to compare opinions and values. First, the results of opinion research conducted over 40 years by Voices and World Values. These showed that family and work remained the highest positive values, while the importance of religion declined sharply. Mistrust of institutions, especially those linked to the political system such as parliament, the judiciary and political parties, has increased, as has mistrust of the media, while the armed forces and universities continue to enjoy a high and even growing level of trust.

There is widespread support for democracy in general, but little approval of its performance. After decades of unfulfilled promises and a failure to listen, a wide gap has emerged between citizens and their representatives, leading to a confrontation between friend and foe. This has led to a rise in the popularity of hybrid forms of government, such as those with a strong leader, because they do not have to take parliament into account to the same extent. Similarly, governments led by experts are enjoying increased support, while military governments are largely rejected, which is interpreted as a strengthening of the parliamentary system. Ideologically, the right has gained ground, a trend that is more pronounced among young people. Unlike a few years ago, they valued freedom more than equality.

As for the future of the country, there is little hope for improvement. Rather, the widespread view is that the situation will worsen over the next 10 years in terms of poverty, insecurity, economic problems and employment.

According to Sarlo, a figure like Otto zur Linde in Borges's work is searching for orientation; he not only moves between the different levels of National Socialism, but also grapples with the arduous task of determining what is considered right and wrong in society.

However, questions about fundamentals and values remain unanswered. Therefore, the "Report of Doctor Brodie" about the Yahoos radically returns to square one in order to show the relativity of values.

The "Yahoos" have no internal conflicts like modern societies. They know no contradictions between nature and culture, do not know the distinction between cause and effect, are free from philosophical and scientific considerations, use only words that have general meanings and are free from strong definitions, which prevents them from discussing potentially conflictual topics such as government or religion. They have a legal system that, unlike ours, is not based on evidence and argument, so that judgements are made immediately after the crime is alleged. Compared to Christian nations, they are primitive, but at the same time they have solved the question of order in society once and for all.

However, alongside the relativity of values, there are also limits to the temptation of a perfect order, namely the terrible consequences it can entail.

Anomie So far, we have been talking about anarchy, the weakness or absence of rule. Argentinian President Milei describes himself as an "anarcho-capitalist" who wants to abolish government in favour of the economy. Anarchy means weak institutions, in the positive sense of anarchist movements, a far-reaching withdrawal of state institutions in favour of direct and federated democracy, and in the negative sense, the weakness of the rule of law and human rights, the separation of powers, democratic legitimacy and transparency. While anarchy refers to the political dimension of institutional weakness, anomie refers to the social world and the undermining of social norms, laws and binding rules. The French sociologist Emile Durkheim introduced the concept to describe the lack of clear standards to guide behaviour in times of social change, while the Robert K. Merton adapted it to refer to the strain on the behaviour of individuals when accepted norms conflict with reality.

The deep division in Argentine society has resulted not only in violence, but also in anomie and anarchy: Buenos Aires and the interior, large landowners and the landless, wealth and poverty, conservatives, populists and liberals, the population, politicians and the military. Such contradictions invite violence and occasionally dictatorial intervention when they come to a head.

On a macroeconomic level, Julio Godio explains the anomie with the coexistence of a productive culture and a pensioner culture, which have manifested themselves

in the three phases of economic development since 1900: the agricultural and export economy and the liberal state, the nationalist-industrial paradigm and state capitalism founded in the mid-1930s, which corresponded politically to Peronism, and finally the financial rentier economy with a minimal neoliberal state. The hope for economic advancement, if not alongside the United States, then at least alongside Canada, Australia or New Zealand, is fading.

This raises the question of what values accompany anomie. In Argentina, self-interest and opposition to authority are central. In an article in La Nación, Carlota Jackisch, programme director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Buenos Aires, examines anomie in Argentine society using a number of examples. She mentions the meeting between two diplomats in Berlin in 1938, the German von Weizsäcker and the Argentine ambassador Labougle. Von Weizsäcker asks his Argentine colleague how it was possible that groups of Nazi agitators were able to operate in Argentina for six years without any reaction from the Argentine authorities. He replies: "Because Argentina is a country where, in general, everyone does what they want." This is still true today, Jackisch says, citing traffic violations. Every driver runs a red light once a day, every bus driver twice an hour, and Argentina has the highest rate of traffic fatalities in the world.

Added to this are violations of building regulations, shoddy food and drug manufacturing, falsification of professional titles, failure to adhere to timetables, pollution of public spaces and the payment of bribes to circumvent regulations.

According to Gallup Argentina, Jackisch says, almost a quarter of the population is willing to bribe police officers to avoid a fine, not bill for work in order to pay less tax, and obtain fake sick notes. Half of Argentinians do not consider returning found money to its owner.

It is not the absence of norms that explains Argentina's "anomic" character, but rather the contempt for normativity on the part of large sections of society.
It is therefore common, Jackisch continues, for people to gather in front of a police station where someone has just been arrested to demand his release.

Solidarity exists with those who commit crimes. The spectators in a packed football stadium cheer a manager who has raped a minor. A drug-addicted footballer appears in an anti-drugs campaign; when he is besieged by journalists, he shoots at them with a shotgun. No sentence is enforced because those in political power believe that a majority of the population would vote for his acquittal.

It is not surprising that the judiciary is not perceived as independent and is therefore increasingly losing prestige. Anomie is on the rise.

For Peter Waldmann, the structural weakness of Latin American states is most evident in their monopoly on taxation and violence, which is being challenged by parallel activities. The most anomic state is one that neither relinquishes its claim to power nor is able to exercise it. The state becomes a source of disorder and insecurity, it confuses the issue of responsibilities, is weak in enforcing its authority,

is undermined by arbitrariness and deviations from norms, and is unable to guarantee public order and security. The problem is not so much the abuse of power as a general sense of insecurity. According to Waldmann, the states of Latin America are deficient in this respect, as measured by Jellinek's theory of sovereignty. Without equality before the law, there can be no unified national community; without state sovereignty, there can be no effective enforcement due to group interests and corruption; and without state sovereignty, there can be no raison d'état or orientation towards the common good due to pervasive partisanship.

The shortcomings cited by Waldmann also highlight the fundamental differences between the European and Latin American traditions. The latter are primarily characterised by the following deficits: no egalitarian justification for freedom; no absolutist bureaucracy; no internal unification enforced by external threats; no disciplinary institutions such as the military and factories; no pre-absolutist model of negotiation and contract; and, finally, the ambiguity of republicanism and personalism, as well as clientelism in politics.

According to Waldmann, there are also social factors, such as large areas with less contact between Creoles, greater social differences, the fear among whites of liberalisation, the lack of a leading bourgeoisie, the lack of political experience of the founders of the states, the insufficient authority of the constitutions and, finally, the practice of intolerance and particularism. From a legal perspective, an individual does not appear as a citizen, but as a person embedded in relationships; equality before the law is less important than integration into social obligations; the individual is part of a network; the public and private spheres are mixed; there is widespread mistrust of all authorities; and laws are ultimately understood as restrictions on individual freedom.

We have already examined some of these points and can wholeheartedly agree with Waldmann. This is particularly true of his reference to Tocqueville, who noted that the customs of a community are as important as its laws. The only thing missing from Waldmann's analysis is the phenomenon of violence.

Finally, in his "Five Theses on Argentine Political Culture," constitutional law expert Valdés cites not only the well-known discrepancy between social and political rules and legal norms, but also conscious, self-serving deviations from social norms, as well as passively experienced grievances such as disillusionment and hopelessness, resulting in increased emigration and fragmented solidarity, which in turn leads to feelings of humiliation. Finally, he summarises all the critical points into a fundamental behaviour pattern, which he calls Neanderthal society, in which people refrain from innovation and change and know about the wheel but not how to use it.

Mentality In a seven-part series of articles in 2001, the newspaper La Nación lamented a prevailing mentality that was the main cause of deficits in various

areas. While experts and the public continue to worry about how to overcome the ongoing economic crisis with special budget items and tax increases, it is not so much money that is needed, but rather the determination to enforce existing laws, improve education "and regain the values that Argentine society once had."

The series of articles laments that "one of Argentina's tragedies is not knowing that you don't know anything," that corruption favours the mafia, that there is a lack of decency and respect for others and for common property, the environment is being ruthlessly damaged, a misunderstood freedom after the dictatorship allows everything, from politicians to civil servants to entrepreneurs, including the ordinary people." Everyone "does what they want and stop doing what they should," while the promotion of education, science and research only serves election campaigns, otherwise it is considered an unnecessary luxury.

Furthermore, there is a prevailing frivolity, a tendency to avoid difficulties and focus on simple things. The extent to which a mentality influences economic, governmental and political action can be demonstrated by comparing regional differences and the use of corresponding metaphors (Acemoglu, Lakoff)

What does it mean to change mentalities? They encompass more than customs or behavioural norms; they include intellectual and emotional orientations, but also integrate customs and values. The historian and mentality researcher Philippe Ariès defines mentality as the collective unconscious.

> Collective because it is the common property of the entire society at a given point in time. Unconscious because it seems self-evident, like the platitudes of morality and conformism or prohibitions. These are expressions of feelings or fantasies. […] The history of mentalities would then be the underground search for nameless wisdom: not for wisdom or truth, but for the practical rules of reason that govern the everyday, familiar relationships of communities with each individual, with nature, with life, with death, with God and with the afterlife.

There are numerous examples of the power of mentality in everyday life and science. Looking at Russia, Eastern European scholar Martin Schulze Wessel points to the connection between state failures such as the disastrous "hostage rescue" in Beslan in 2004 and the Russian population's indifference to the Ukrainian Kursk campaign. This indifference is characterised by a lack of solidarity and a sense of belonging, as well as a lack of social and political integration. Without these, "the collective consciousness in Russia is an ideal breeding ground for imperial ideologies."

For Durkheim, integration and disintegration are crucial for stability or instability and anomie. Integration means the constant, dynamic, and essentially lifelong process of bringing together the members of a society. This applies not only to the members of a society who have been present for generations, which is always

undergoing more or less profound change, but also to the migrants who arrived in Argentina between 1880 and 1930.

The liberal Spanish philosopher and writer Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) also travelled to Argentina twice, in 1916 and 1928, to study the local mentality. His third trip took him into exile in Argentina after the victory of Franco's troops from 1939 until 1942.

His motto, "I am myself and my circumstances," points to his interest in a social-psychological view of society. In his essay "La nueva sensibilidad" (The New Sensibility), published in "La Prensa" in Buenos Aires in 1916, he describes the two most striking characteristics of the Argentine people: their ability to attract people from other countries, ethnic groups and cultures, and their ability to integrate them all.

When he returned in 1928, he immersed himself in the depths of the Argentine mentality and recorded his findings in *La Pampa… Promesas* (The Pampa – Promises) and *El hombre a la defensiva* (Man on the Defensive, both 1929). In the first essay, he draws on his experience of a trip to Mendoza through the vastness of the pampas. From its borders, it appears as a place of promise, so that the essence of Argentine life is perhaps a promise. The pampa is nothing but abundance, the wheels of the mechanical mills there appear as wheels of fortune.

But when the promises are not fulfilled, as we have already seen in the metaphors of failure, the Argentinean is stunned. The soul of the Creole is filled with broken promises and suffers from radical dissatisfaction. Ortega observes that the Creole does not care about his actual life, but spends it outside himself, in the other, in the promised life, and is therefore, perhaps more than any other human being, dominated by the feeling of a life that has slipped away unnoticed.

This contradicts the expectation of a great future as a nation, which is increasingly proving to be an illusion. "The Argentine people are not content with being just one nation among others: they want a sublime destiny, they demand a proud future for themselves, they do not want a history without triumph, and they are determined to rule. It will succeed or it will not, but it is extremely interesting to observe the historical development of a people with an imperial vocation." A pure illusion that can only be maintained by denying reality.

In his second essay, Ortega expresses his astonishment at the development of the state under Irigoyen's government. It appears to him to have grown stronger, as in Prussia, but at the same time rigid, disconnected from social spontaneity, that is, from the labour movement and its demands, which it seeks to enforce through strikes and demonstrations. A perfect state that has become a powerful machine, like the Roman Empire that fell in its time.

Ortega observes the self-image and self-presentation of the Argentinians, the mentality into which all new arrivals, the young generation and immigrants are integrated and integrate themselves. It is the image of the narcissist that the Argentinians create for themselves: "Argentinians live attentively, not 'for' what their lives

actually consist of, not 'for' what they are as people, but 'for' an ideal image they have of themselves. […] It is not a precise idea composed of such and such characteristics. […] They will rejoice in the self they have found and no longer seriously concern themselves with realising their potential."

It is not so much money that is lacking, but the determination to apply existing rules, better education and the restoration of values that Argentine society once possessed, according to the series of articles in La Nación.

Similarly, Ortega advocates working on oneself to make it possible to "change collective morality, the type of values we hold dear, the norms of virtue and ways of being." In response to the many criticisms of his image of Argentina, Ortega replies: "The point is that I owe a significant part of myself – situations, passions, profound experiences, thoughts – to Argentina." He is moved by the other within, a variant that confuses and fascinates him, both Ortega y Gasset, and the author of these lines.

Violence Football The anomic state not only exhibits institutional defects and deviations from the rules, but also allows more violence, which is anomic behaviour. In his dissertation "Figurations of Violence - A Civilisation Theory Comparative Study of Violent Football Spectators in England and Argentina," author Oliver M. Kossek concludes that the civilisational process (Elias) is more advanced in England than in Argentina.

According to this, violence by football spectators is closely linked to the respective social, political and historical developments. While football has immense social significance in both countries, the forms of fan violence differ considerably.

In England, violence in the context of football matches developed in particular through hooligans from the late 1960s onwards. These groups acted according to an internal code of conduct that allowed violence but restricted and regulated it to the immediate vicinity of football matches. These developments should be seen in the context of the stability of the country, which developed into a prosperous consumer society after the two world wars, where the state's monopoly on violence was largely accepted. This also applied to the requirement to respect the lives of others, despite all the brutality.

In contrast, in Argentina, violence by organised fan groups, the Barras Bravas, appears to be less regulated and often arbitrary. These groups use violence not only in a sporting context, but also for political and power-political goals. This uncontrolled violence reflects the country's unstable political and economic situation, which is characterised by frequent changes of government, military dictatorships and economic crises. The state security forces enjoy less trust, and violence is sometimes seen as a legitimate means of enforcing interests. The significance and development of anomie and violence can thus be clearly seen in behaviour in various areas of society. And, according to Kossek, just as with state institutions, the lives of opponents within the spectator ranks are not always respected, and deaths occur.

Perón's first phase in power integrated a large part of the population without resorting to dictatorial practices. However, hopes of overcoming violence faded. Society was so steeped in violence that it was hardly surprising that Perón's opposition was persecuted and his government was eventually overthrown in a coup. Until Perón's return from exile in 1973, the country was in an unstable situation moderated by the military, with the Peronists working to seize power.

Republican Customs This book repeatedly echoes criticism of and alternatives to the society of violence, without there being space here for a detailed examination. However, it should be pointed out that there are fascinating alternatives and that resignation is completely out of place.

Even if the structural and mental anchoring of anomie and behaviour is strong and changes only slowly – if there are any impulses for behavioural change at all – it still makes sense to ask how, from a political science perspective, the existence and symbiosis of anarchy and violence can be overcome, and with it the existing material interests in maintaining the structures of anomie, violence and anarchy.

The example of stable republicanism shows that this is possible, but rarely achieved. It is based on the two indispensable aspects mentioned at the beginning: strong institutions and a republican civil society. Since a desirable society cannot be "manufactured" without provoking excessive violence, we are left with only examples of republican communities that have apparently emerged by chance and by broad consensus.

An outstanding example of the emergence and principles of a civil society is the northern Italian city of Siena. In the 13th century the bourgeoisie abolished the rule of the nobility and introduced a republic that lasted for seventy years and increased the city's wealth. In the Hall of the Nine, where the city's affairs were conducted, there are still large frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti depicting good and bad government and the consequences (1338/39).

The frescoes depict the rule of justice alongside political rule, both of which are linked by a unifying rope representing the citizens. The virtues are also depicted, with peace (*la pace*) sitting in a relaxed pose. It is not individuality but community that is in the foreground, and it is not anomie that prevails, but virtues and laws that guide the actions of citizens and government. The consequences for town and country are visible in the form of prosperous town houses, lively trade and the arts.

The republican awareness that laws and virtues can easily be destroyed and therefore require constant practice is the reason for depicting bad government and its consequences in a drastic manner. Such a government has transformed itself into an inhuman, devilishly animalistic form, justice lies bound at her feet. The city houses are in a ruinous state, fraud and robbery are the order of the day, and the fields outside the city are burned.

Between 1200 and 1350, there were lengthy and detailed discussions about republican government in the early Renaissance, inspired by the ancient thinkers Sallust, Seneca and, above all, Cicero, and recorded by Brunetto Latini in his "*Livre du tresor*" and by other authors.

According to Quentin Skinner, all texts have in common the preservation of peace as the highest goal of good government, a life of harmony and tranquillity for everyone, the rejection of the pursuit of self-interest at the expense of the common good, the primacy of the common good over individual well-being, and two fundamental conditions: an elected government and a virtuous rule that places peace at the centre of communal life.

Under the painting is written:

> Where this sacred virtue (justice) reigns, / it leads the many souls to unity, / and these, thus united, / attain the common good for their lord. / He, in order to govern his state, decides / never to turn his eyes away / from the splendour of the faces / of the virtues that surround him. / Therefore, in triumph, taxes, tributes and dominion over the land are presented to him; / therefore, without war, every civil effect comes into being – useful, necessary and joyful.

About bad government it is said:

> Where justice is bound, / no one will ever agree on the common good, / nor will they abide by the law, / so that tyranny gains the upper hand. / This, in order to satisfy its wickedness, / never wants to and never will act in disagreement / with the filthy nature / of the vices that are here with it. It banishes those who are willing to do good and surrounds itself with all those who intend to do evil; it always defends those who coerce or rob and those who hate peace, so that its entire country lies neglected.

The Republic of Siena collapsed after a relatively short time, not through its own failings, but through the plague, which killed two-thirds of its inhabitants. With the subsequent re-feudalisation of the republics in Tuscany, crises and wars were the order of the day.

What is interesting here is the emergence of a civilising order. It was promoted by self-governing associations of free citizens and landowners as well as guilds, thus creating something like a corporate identity. Finally, municipal administrative offices were established for the first time. The institutionalised republic of citizens took over the state, monopolised power and changed customs. The "process of civilisation" described by Elias (1939) took place. Elias traces it from the Middle Ages to well into modern times and reveals the profound changes in personality and social structure that took place over this long period. In the case of Siena and Argentina, the time frame and potential for change have been much shorter since indepen-

dence. But Elias assumes a continuous process through which change takes place. This involves both values and mentalities that reveal individual ways of thinking, judging and behaving and become established in habitual patterns. They all develop under the influence of the socially prevailing values and behaviours, consolidate and then change again in part. In Siena, there have been 70 years of republican practice, certainly another 30 years of preparatory practice by individual civic institutions, as well as reading about antiquity. That is about three generations. But they were not enough to successfully counteract a return to feudalism.

In the United States, the republic was saved from the anti-republican forces of the Civil War and its aftermath. William James, the psychologist we have already heard about in connection with Argentina's independence, sees the reason for this in the dominant republican habits. In the speech already referred to, he explains the conditions for maintaining a stable republic:

> Our great Western republic had been a unique anomaly from the beginning. A land of freedom, as it proudly called itself, with slavery enthroned at its centre and ultimately dictating the terms of unconditional surrender to every other organ of its life – what was this but a lie and a terrible contradiction? For three quarters of a century, it nevertheless endured, held together by politics, compromise and concessions. But in the end, this republic was torn in two.

The consequences of the civil war have not yet been overcome, neither in William James's time nor today. "Democracy is still being put to the test," he explains:

> The civic spirit of our people is its only bulwark, and neither laws nor monuments, neither warships nor public libraries, nor great newspapers or booming stock markets, neither mechanical inventions nor political skill, nor churches or universities or civil service examinations can save us from decline if the inner secret is lost. This secret, which is both the secret and the glory of our English-speaking race, consists of nothing more than two common habits, two deeply rooted habits that have been transferred to public life – habits that are so commonplace that they do not require rhetorical expression, but are nevertheless perhaps more valuable than any others that mankind has ever acquired. They cannot be emphasised or praised often enough. One is the habit of maintaining good humour towards the opposing party when it has won fairly, resulting from practice and discipline; the other is the habit of meeting with fierce and merciless rejection any person or group of persons who transgress the legal limits of fairness or disturb the public peace.

Returning to Argentina, after reviewing the scenes and epochs of violence, the question arises of the potential for non-violence, for pacification. However, there are no indications of a far-reaching change in values and mentality.

However, there has been virtually no republican practice of politics and power in Argentina, as in Latin America as a whole. Instead, there is a fundamental propensity for violence. In the following chapter, we not only return to the world of violence, but also encounter its increase on both sides, that of the military and that of the guerrillas, until it reaches an unprecedented explosion.