

THE EVOLUTION OF CHURCH AND STATE
IN ARGENTINA: 1892-1960

by

JAMES MALCOLM AYE
B. S. in Foreign Service
Georgetown University, 1950

A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History, Political Science and Philosophy

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1963

Approved by:

James C. Corey
Major Advisor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	111
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. BACKGROUND OF CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS:	
1810-1892	20
The Independence Period	
The Rivadavian Reforms	
The Rosas Tyranny	
Alberdi and the Constitution of 1853	
The Church-State School Controversy	
II. NEW DIRECTIONS OF CHURCH AND STATE	52
Aspects of Change	
Conflicts Under the Alvear Administration	
Catholic Action	
Ideological Polemics	
III. YEARS OF REACTION: 1942-1952	76
The Ramírez Retrogression	
The Peronist Ascendency	
The Peronist Nirvana	
IV. THE CHURCH'S CONFLICT AND AFTERMATH:	
1952-1960	100
The Peronist Armagedon	
The Peronist Reprieve and Deposition	
The Post-Perón Period	
V. PAST AND PRESENT	130
The State	
The Church	
Church-State Relations in Retrospect	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	152

PREFACE

The original purpose of this thesis was to trace the development of Argentine Church-State relations from their inception down to the Perón era in order to see what implications history had in the Perón period.

The increased complexity encountered in the Church as well as the State, rather than diminishing the areas of conflict between the two, has led to an increase of areas where conflict might arise since each touches upon the other to a greater degree than formerly. The climax of the Church-State struggle was reached during the Perón regime when friction between the State and Church reached a maximum and resulted in the final coup d'état against Perón.

During the course of this research, it was discovered that both the Church and the State were involved in a continual process of change, each acting upon the other with varying degree. The Church, for its part, had shifted its emphasis from a paramount concern with the political aspects of society in the nineteenth century to the social aspects of society as it related to the individual in the twentieth century.

An attempt has been made to prove the hypothesis that the Church changed its direction as did the State, which was witnessed by the proliferation of the centers of power of which the State

is composed. The changing Church and the changing State interacted one upon the other, leading to an intensification of friction between the two traditional power centers. This struggle was climaxed during the Perón era, when the Church became one of the primary factors motivating the ouster of Perón.

It was necessary to draw upon the past, upon men, upon ideas, upon events, and upon a chronological recitation of recent events that led up to the present mid-twentieth century Argentina. All of these factors contributed toward gaining some insight into the whole of Argentine Church-State relations as manifested in the Perón administration. In addition, it was necessary to investigate the precepts, both religious and non-religious, held by many Argentine theorists in order to arrive at some comprehension of the complexity of the Church-State problem during the Perón tyranny. The strengths and weaknesses of the Argentine Church, the position it held regarding marriage and education and how national patronage had been used by the State to further its own nationalistic goals, were included in this thesis. Additionally, the organization of the Church was examined, as well as the new centers of power which had arisen within the State--such as the political parties, the university students, and labor--to bring order out of chaos and to arrive at some concept of the interrelation between Church and State in present day Argentina.

The necessity of obtaining a maximum of source material in Spanish editions--most of which were not available in English --has not severely handicapped the composition of this thesis,

although it did involve much extra time and work in reading. Additionally, contemporary Argentine periodicals were not readily available, which, had they been, would have aided the writer in obtaining a clearer understanding of Church-State relations during the Peronist dictatorship. The author had to rely largely upon periodicals and pamphlets for source material dealing with the Perón era and felt that a chronological handling of that period would best illustrate the magnitude and complexity of the problem as it developed.

From this thesis, the writer has obtained a clearer and more comprehensive idea of the weaknesses inherent in Argentine democracy, aside from the main thesis that the Church has changed, and why these weaknesses have come to exist. If time had permitted and the source material could have been obtained from an on-the-spot survey, this writer would have undertaken a study of the religious practices and habits of the significant Argentine centers of power, particularly the Argentine military class and the oligarchy, and attempted to relate them more completely to the Church and to the State. Unfortunately, this survey could not be made at this time. Therefore, the significance of this thesis depends upon showing how the Church-State problems of the Perón period developed against the intellectual backdrop.

INTRODUCTION

Nature of the Church

It is highly essential for the reader of this paper to have a basic comprehension of the terminology involved, particularly with regard to the Church and Patronato. In as much as the vocable "Church" is used repeatedly throughout the text, the reader should understand that this term refers to a specific creed--that of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church.

During the greater part of the 19th century, there was such a unanimity of Argentine religious belief that the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church or more simply, the Catholic Church, was referred to as "the Church." For the purposes of this paper, then, when reference is made to "the Church," it will be construed to mean the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church. However, as religious diversity in Argentina increased toward the last decades of the 19th century, a change in terminology was necessitated in order to arrive at a more precise definition due to changing circumstances. Therefore, for the purpose of making ordinal distinctions and since the former unanimity of religious belief was no longer in evidence, valid reference will

be made to the Roman Catholic Church or Catholic Church, rather than simply to "the Church" as formerly.

Having at the outset, established the particular Christian creed to which this paper refers, it will be useful to define what the prerequisites and qualifications were for membership in the Roman Catholic Church and what the visible signs of the Church in society were.

The Roman Catholic Church held that any person who had been baptized by a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic automatically became a member in the mystical body of Christ--the Roman Catholic Church--being the visible sign of His existence in this world. Unlike most other Christian creeds, where actual confirmation was required before an individual could be considered as a church member, baptism alone was sufficient for membership in the Roman Catholic Church. The individual thus became a member of this particular creed, as a general rule, while still in infancy before the reasoning abilities of the mind had become developed. The practical result of this led to the growth of a diversity of opinion among other creeds as to just what did constitute membership in the Roman Catholic Church. In order to equate church membership between the other Christian sects and the Roman Catholic Church, many considered Catholics only those who were "practicing" --that is those who affirmed their continued adhesion to the church by manifesting the outward signs of membership, which consisted of receiving the Sacrament of Communion at least once a year.

Theoretically, all those individuals who had been baptized were once considered members of the Roman Catholic religion in Argentina as elsewhere. In recent times, the Roman Catholic Church itself has begun making a distinction between the active members and the nominal members of the Church. However in Latin America and in Argentina in particular, the classification of members of the Catholic Church has been broadened to include not only active and nominal members, but also the expressions of Catholicism, which make up a part of the whole. Accordingly, a brief outline of the various types of Catholics and Catholicism is given as follows:

1. Formal Catholicism: Those individuals who have professed Catholicism by means of the Sacrament of Confirmation and those who practice and accept the doctrines and discipline of the Church, as imparted to them by the clergy, are classified as "formal" Catholics. In certain other parts of the world these individuals would be categorized as "active" or "practicing" Catholics.

2. Nominal Catholicism: An individual who had acknowledged membership in and who makes some minor manifestation of allegiance to the Church, but makes little effort to follow the rites and prescriptions of the active Catholic, is classified in this category. This group cannot be compared to the "fallen-away" Catholic since many nominal Catholics, and, more specifically, those in Argentina consider themselves to be "very Catholic," even though they are not active or practicing Catholics.

3. Cultural Catholicism: This category can be defined as a form of social Catholicism or as a way of life. If the entire environment of an area is permeated with Catholic thought in most fields of human endeavor--such as the political, philosophical, religious, economic and institutional spheres--then a Catholic culture can be said to obtain.

4. Folk Catholicism: This type of Catholicism is expressed through "indigenous practices and customs," which while not in conflict with the teachings of the Church, are only distantly related to the formal and intellectual aspect of the Church.¹

Now that we have enumerated the various types of Catholics and the forms of Catholicism, how can the Argentine nation be classified? The Argentine people, or the majority of them, have inherited a traditional or cultural Catholicism from the past, which was limited to certain nominal sentiments and pious practices, but one in which little influence has been exerted upon the individual, the family, or the professional life of the nation.² As a consequence, a religious heterogeneity had developed --a religious characteristic not extraordinary to the Latin world, but one quite alien to the tenets of Anglo-Saxon Catholicism. In Argentina, there existed a deep devotion and piety to the

¹William J. Coleman, "Latin-American Catholicism," World Horizon Reports, XXIII (1958), 3-4.

²Tercera semana interamericana de acción católica, Documentos (Lima-Chimbote: 1953), p. 60. Cited hereafter as Tercera semana. Unless otherwise indicated it may be assumed by the reader that all quoted excerpts from Spanish language works used in this paper have been translated by this writer, James M. Aye.

Virgin and a monomaniacal concern for the Sacrament of Baptism; however, paradoxically, the Sacrament of Marriage was cynically regarded, if at all, and attendance at Mass or the practice of the other sacraments has been viewed as only an annoyance. Since the principal of the sacrament was supreme in the internal structure of the Church as to its frequency and devotion, the heterogeneity of Argentine Catholicism is readily apparent.³

Nominal Catholicism in Argentina may be attributed to two primary causes--that of absolute ignorance and that of relative ignorance. In the former, the individual never received any clear religious education or instruction, and he based his religious practices upon a great deal of superstition and fanatical sentiments. In the latter, the individual received only a superficial form of religious instruction at home or in the college, with the result that his concern for religious matters has been sublimated to the desire for improving his material and professional position in life.⁴

Argentine Catholicism was thus a cultural Catholicism or a way of life that started at birth and continued throughout the life of the individual.⁵ Most Argentines were influenced by the ethics of the Church in varying degrees--either consciously or unconsciously. Visible reminders of the Church's presence were encountered everywhere--from the black-robed priests to the small statues of the Virgin in corner niches. The exterior signs of

³Coleman, p. 5.

⁴Tercera semana, pp. 60-61.

⁵James Bruce, Those Perplexing Argentine's (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1953), p. 174.

the Church may have been quite deceiving, since a rather deep schism has always existed between the rural dwellers and the city inhabitants--an age-old division that has been found among all sectors of society, a division that may be traced back to the foundation of the nation.⁶ This division, this chasm, has resulted in a continuing struggle between the forces of la barbarie, as represented in the rule of caudillos and despots, and those of la civilización, as masterfully portrayed in the classic Argentine novel, Facundo.

In the hinterlands Argentine Catholicism was more rigid, more devout, more pious. It was a cultural and traditional Catholicism based upon superficial beliefs, and it derived its strength from the past and from tradition.⁷ Which of the two, the rural traditional or the modern urban and intellectual Catholicism, best represented the Argentine faith? The answer to this would be that both forms of Catholicism were representative of Argentina. However, in recent years that of the rational, the educated, the urban Catholicism would seem to have been in the ascendency.⁸

⁶Ibid., p. 174. Bruce seems more concerned with judging the strength of Catholicism by its outward manifestations than by actual beliefs and practices. He states that "outside of Buenos Aires the Church's influence is ever stronger . . ." The reason he gives for this value judgment is that "in every block of staunchly conservative Córdoba, a priest may be found." His observation apparently was based upon an urban area, Córdoba, which is comparable to Buenos Aires and therefore not relevant to the rural-urban problem.

⁷Ibid., p. 177.

⁸George I. Blankston, Perón's Argentina (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 230.

A transcendental question that has confronted all chroniclers of Church-State relations and one that still has defied a definitive solution, has been: who represents the Church and what are its spokesmen? Officially, the hierarchy acting collectively enunciates the official position of the Church through the issuance of joint pastoral letters. In other words, the lesser clergy and, particularly, the parish priest can not authoritatively speak for the collective body of the Church. Their ideas may coincide with that of the official position of the Church, in which instance they could be considered as representatives of official church policy. On other occasions the homilies of the lower clergy may differ considerably from those opinions held by their immediate superiors--in which instance they do not represent the Church and have been frequently disavowed. Unofficially, a number of eminent Catholic laymen, from time to time, have spoken in the name of the Church and have defended certain Church interests. They may be regarded only as unofficial spokesmen of the Church, although their persuasions might be identical with that of the Church. Public disavowal has been the principal method by which the Church has disassociated itself from various heterodox doctrines of its unofficial spokesmen. Later confusion will be avoided, especially during the Perón tyranny, if the aforesaid concepts are born in mind.

Church-State Spheres of Influence

Many Argentine intellectuals traditionally believed that there existed two primary spheres of influence in society --the temporal and the spiritual. Casiello has succinctly defined the spiritual realm of society as that in which

the Church, independently of all human power, has the facility to act in order to fulfill its ends and to employ the choice of adequate measures to advance itself.⁹

This interpretation generally coincided with that expressed by the Roman Catholic Church, but it may necessarily differ from that upheld by some other Christian creeds. In the temporal sphere of society the State was looked upon as "a perfect civil society of the natural order with its sphere of action in its sovereign structure."¹⁰ Catholics, being the subjects of one society, were at the same time the subjects of the other, and since both temporal and spiritual powers were exercised over one person, harmonious collaboration between the two was needed.¹¹ If harmonious collaboration was not effectuated between the temporal and the spiritual powers, the results were schizophrenic, since the individual in the final analysis might at some time be forced to make a choice between one or the other. Theoretically, the temporal and the spiritual orders of society each had its own sphere of activity, but in practice there were certain areas

⁹Juan Casiello, Iglesia y estado en la Argentina (Buenos Aires: Imprenta López, 1948), pp. 17-18.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 18.

¹¹Ibid., p. 19.

of society where coterminous jurisdictions between the two existed. It is in these areas that the Church and State usually worked together in an effort to harmonize the nature of things. However at times, as in the Perón era, harmony did not prevail.

In reality an absolute wall of separation between the temporal and the spiritual powers could not be erected, since in certain areas of imbricated jurisdiction the exact limits of each were not delineated. In these areas of imbricated jurisdiction, conflicts have arisen in the same social organism; for there existed where both powers held a coincidental competence, a permanent linking of the juridical with the moral order. When conflicts arose, some Argentines believed the State should "not subordinate itself to the Church nor the Church to the State."¹² Throughout Argentine history however, the Church has affirmed its right of spiritual sovereignty which it claimed was over and above that of the State. Yet, as noted later, patronato has limited this implication of sovereignty.

The freedom and independence of the Church and the stability of the State could best be obtained, according to José Manuel Estrada, "Cuando se da a Dios lo que es de Dios y al César lo que es del César."¹³ The difficulty with this lay in defining which orders pertained exclusively to the spiritual and which belonged exclusively to the temporal order of things. The coincidental

¹²Grandes escritores Argentinos, Vol. XXVII, José Manuel Estrada, "La iglesia y el estado" (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo Press) 1929, p. 20. Cited hereafter as Estrada.

¹³Casiello, p. 20.

areas of power--areas of overlapping jurisdiction where conflicts have arisen--were usually settled through a mutual cooperation of the two powers when a bona fide desire to adjudicate disputes was present. Otherwise, areas of friction between the two--the Church and the State--might continue over a long period of time, resulting in tense and unsettled conditions.

In theory, the Church occupied a position high above the passions of conflict, the struggles of politics and the machinations of man, but at times, it has felt compelled to enter into the political fray. On occasion, it has subjected itself to sacrilegious outrages and vilifications from the temporal order. From time to time, areas of conflict have arisen in matters pertaining to patronage, education, and marriage as these are spheres of coincidental jurisdiction, and the Church and State have not always worked together in a spirit of harmonious cooperation. In the educational field, the foremost Argentine religious thinker of the last century, José Manuel Estrada, believed that the State should not educate, but that if it did, it must inculcate certain religious principles into its subjects; otherwise education without religion was sterile and contained the fecundity of atheism.¹⁴ The Church admitted that the State had the right to educate, but only if religious principles were taught along with and included in the regular curriculum. Where the State has not obliged itself to impart religious education in the public schools, the Church has protested unceasingly and

¹⁴Estrada, p. 63.

countered by providing the facilities for a separate, but equal, education based upon religious principles. As this problem is treated at length in Chapter IV, it will suffice to make only brief mention of it now.

Contrary to a majority of Argentine opinion, Estrada held that the separation of Church and State in Argentina would be highly desirable, since it would benefit the Church and free it from political interference by the civil authority. He opined that in the long run, the Church would be stronger and more able to concentrate on carrying out its mission of education, and thus would be better adapted to the developing of a high moral tone among the people.¹⁵ Other leading Argentines have advocated a separation of the Church from the State, but to date, all such attempts have proved fruitless. It is conceivable that a future generation of Argentines will witness this separation, but until such a time, any prediction along this line would be pure conjecture.

Nature of Patronage

A clear understanding of Church-State relations in Argentina is possible only through some knowledge of patronato and, later during the national period, of patronato nacional. Patronato or patronage may be defined "as the power to nominate or present a cleric for installation in a vacant benefice."¹⁶ Some

¹⁵Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁶J. Lloyd Mecham, Church & State in Latin America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), p. 2.

Argentines regarded it as the intervention of the civil power into ecclesiastical matters. This right of intervention by the temporal power into the realm of the spiritual gradually evolved in Spain prior to the Middle Ages, but reached its zenith only after the Reconquista, when the Spanish Crown was granted or conceded the right to present prelates to all vacant sees newly recovered from the Moors by the Holy See.

During the medieval period two schools of thought were formed as to the exact nature and origin of patronage. One school of thought, the regalist, held that royal patronage was laical in origin and, consequently, inherent in temporal sovereignty. The regalists claimed that since patronage derived its source from its possessor, that, if the possessor was laical, then it pertained to the temporal sphere and not the spiritual. The other school of thought, called canonist or ultramontanist, on the other hand, maintained that patronage pertained to spiritual matters and derived its origins from the early pontifical concessions to the Spanish Crown. The latter believed that patronage, which had originated with the Papacy and was likewise rescindable by the Holy See, was non-transferrable.¹⁷

Universal patronage by the 15th century had so evolved that the Papacy held exclusive claim to it and the right to concede it to whomever it willed. As such, through a series of papal bulls, specific patronal rights were granted to the Spanish Crown, represented at the time by los reyes católicos. First,

¹⁷Ibid., p. 2.

the Pontiff ceded to the Spanish Crown the right of nomination of ecclesiastics in the kingdom of Granada and the privilege of collecting perpetual diezmos, or tithes, from the newly converted Moors. After the discovery of the Indies, the "Spanish Crown petitioned the Holy See to grant Spain possession of the recently discovered lands and in turn, they would extend the dominion of the Roman Catholic faith."¹⁸ Accordingly, the Holy See issued the now famous bull of Inter Caetera, in which title to all lands west of a line drawn from pole to pole, a distance of one hundred leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands was granted on condition that the Spanish Crown would prosecute missionary work in the new lands.¹⁹ As the Papacy, due to lack of communications, was unable to Christianize the new lands, the Spanish Crown, which alone was capable of establishing a transatlantic Church, was given the power to carry out the mission.

Papal recognition of the heavy expenses born by the Spanish Crown in the carrying out of its spiritual mission in the new territories was acknowledged in 1501, when Pope Alexander VI issued another bull, granting the Spanish Crown "the right to levy tithes upon all the inhabitants of the Indies and the explicit right of building churches and erecting dioceses."²⁰ Finally, in 1508, Pope Julius II issued the bull entitled Universalis Ecclesiae, which granted the Spanish Crown the legal right to exercise civil jurisdiction over the Church in the New World.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 12

¹⁹Ibid., p. 14.

²⁰Ibid., p. 16.

This last bull, explicitly and incontrovertibly, conceded the right of patronage to the Spanish Crown through the motu proprio of the Supreme Pontiff. The Church claimed that the civil authority could not intervene in matters of a spiritual nature, as those matters were its exclusive concern unless it expressly consented to this intervention.²¹ The Corpus Juris Canonici, 1448, of the Roman Catholic Church was quite specific on the patronal concept when it stated that

patronage is the relating of privileges with certain offices that, by the concession of the Church, compete for the Catholic establishing of a church, chapel, benefice or assigns.²²

The act of founding a church, according to the canonists, did not carry with it the right of patronage, for the origin of patronage was the Holy See, as previously mentioned, which had supreme jurisdiction over the Universal Church. The regalist claim of patronage, which later became predominant in Argentina, was based upon the inherent rights of sovereignty and its nature derived from the possessor, not from the Papacy. The Argentine nation, thus, as the temporal power possessed the right of patronage as inherited from the Spanish Crown, and as such it belonged to the temporal sphere. Accordingly, the State had the right of presentation to vacant sees and could restrict or expand the diocesan boundaries of the Church.

Within the short span of one hundred years, partially due to the Papal concessions of patronage and partially due to the

²¹Casiello, p. 45.

²²Canon Law 1448, cited by Casiello, p. 45.

energy of the Spanish monarchs, the Spanish Crown had so thoroughly and completely established civil control over the Church in the New World that the Supreme Pontiff, made virtually impotent in dealing with the ecclesiastical affairs of the Church, had even been limited in his right to promulgate bulls and other pronouncements. The Papacy could not even construct religious edifices without the prior approval of the Spanish Crown nor exercise full discipline or control over the clergy in the New World. The union of throne and altar in Spain and in the Indies was so complete that the temporal could barely be distinguished from the spiritual. However, reciprocal understanding was not always maintained between the Holy See and the Spanish Crown, and frequent disputes over the rights of patronage occurred.²³ For over three hundred years most conflicts were settled amicably. The regalists' concept of patronage did not assume any measure of great importance until after the Independence Movement.

National Patronage

The advent of Argentine independence ruptured all religious and political connections with the Spanish Crown. The new leaders of the nascent republic immediately came to grips with the problem of patronato nacional. Mariano Moreno, the first secretary of the governing junta of 1810, asserted the Argentine regalist claim that the rights of national patronage were inherent

²³Casiello, p. 54.

in sovereignty. He based this claim on the fact that the junta was merely a substitution of the viceroy and, as a consequence, assumed the same powers and jurisdiction over the new nation that the viceroy had retained, including the vice-patronage.²⁴ Presently the local caudillos and jefes, contained within the incumbent government, made use of national patronage as an instrument of governmental policy and as a means to further their own particular ends.²⁵

Upon Bernardino Rivadavia's accession to power in the decade of the 1820's, the regalistic concept of national patronage began to flourish. Rivadavia found it easy to assert the dominance of the State and to relegate the Church to a subservient position, for the Church was incommunicado with the Holy See, and the last of the Spanish ecclesiastics had died. He pursued his religious reforms so that the Church--stripped of most of its property, legislated against by the regalists and weakened by the loss of leadership--practically reverted into a national church.²⁶ The Church neither received its independence nor its freedom, but instead was subjected to the regalistic concept of patronage--a national patronage far more direct than the former royal patronage had ever been.

²⁴Faustino J. Legón, Doctrina y ejercicio del patronato nacional (Buenos Aires: Imprenta nacional de Lajouane y Cia., 1920), p. 229.

²⁵Coleman, pp. 14-15.

²⁶John Joseph Kennedy, Catholicism, Nationalism and Democracy in Argentina (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958), p. 17.

The Holy See rejected the Argentine pretensions to national patronage and reasserted its claim to concede patronage to whom it willed. The canonist viewpoint held by the Papacy was completely ignored by the Argentine governmental leaders, for non-communication with Rome was to remain a fait accompli for twenty-five years. The Papacy's basic objections to a unilateral assertion of the rights of presentation were disregarded.²⁷

After the Rosas tyranny, when the furor caused by national patronage had subsided, the regalists secured the government's right to continue the exercise of the national patronage through its incorporation into the Constitution of 1853. Article 83, Sections 8 and 9, specified that the Argentine president exercised the right of national patronage through the presentation of bishops for the cathedral churches as proposed by the Senate from a list of three names.²⁸ The Church, for its part, was awarded a permanent representation in the Senate in the person of a bishop and three minor clergy. In addition, the episcopacies were placed on an equal footing with the highest civil functionaries and, like them, subject to accusation for crimes against the nation. They were required to take an oath to uphold and observe the Constitution.²⁹

Catholic opinion, led by José Manuel Estrada, was unalterably opposed to the regalist position and believed that the

²⁷Estrada, pp. 27-28.

²⁸Argentine Constitution of 1853, Sec. 8 & 9.

²⁹Mecham, p. 275.

civil authority had seriously transgressed into the religious sphere. Estrada was especially critical of the decree of 1815, denying admittance to monastic communities of all persons unless they had attained their thirtieth birthday. He held this regulation violated the individual's freedom of choice and selection; therefore, it was unconstitutional.³⁰ Not only was the individual's freedom negated in the exercise of national patronage, but "the patronized creed is subject to a tutelage which violates equity and denies religious freedom."³¹ Estrada continued his struggle against national patronage until near the end of the century. For him the "sovereign power did not have a religious capacity"³² and the Argentine Constitution of 1853 denied the ecclesiastical fueros or privileges.

Although the struggle against the regalist concept of national patronage met with failure, a modus vivendi was agreed upon. The Holy See acquiesced to the right of presentation as exercised by successive Argentine presidents, if somewhat reluctantly, but it steadfastly refused to recognize the inherence of patronage in sovereignty.³³ The result of this modus vivendi has been beneficial to both the Church and the State, since rarely have conflicts arisen between the two opposing parties. Nevertheless, on rare occasions when conflicts have occurred, such

³⁰Estrada, pp. 27-28.

³¹Ibid., p. 34.

³²Ibid., p. 34.

³³Kennedy, pp. 15-17.

as during the Alvear and Perón administrations, the need for a concordat has been evidenced. This exigency has been recognized by different political leaders at various times, although all attempts to conclude a concordat between Argentina and the Holy See have thus far ended in failure.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS: 1810-1892

The Independence Period

The Church, from the very outset, was intricately involved in the struggle for independence from Spain. Fully ten per cent or twenty-six clerics participated in the first open meeting or cabildo abierto of May 22, 1810--a meeting destined to set the Viceroyalty of La Plata onto the road of independence.¹ Manuel Lué y Riega, the senior bishop of La Plata, was included among that fateful gathering. An ardent royalist, as were the majority of Argentine clergy at the start of the independence movements, he had opposed the overthrow of the last Spanish viceroy, Liniers, by voting against his subsequent deposition. Bishop Lué's direction was not followed by the majority of the clergy in attendance, as they, like most members of the lower clergy, harbored strong feelings of Creole resentment against the favoritist and exclusive policies of Spain. They endorsed by acclamation the lead of General Pascual Ruiz Huidobro, who had voted in the affirmative for viceroy Liniers' displacement.²

¹Ricardo Levono, A History of Argentina, ed. & trans. William Spence Robertson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), p. 156.

²Msgr. Augustín Piaggio, Influencia del clero en la independencia Argentina (Barcelona: Lué Gil ed., 1912), p. 19.

The resulting dichotomy was an attendant consequence of contradictory views held within the Church, but as the War of Independence progressed some of the clerics formerly opposed to independence altered their views and resigned themselves to the inevitable. By 1813, death and exile of all the higher prelates satisfactorily resolved the antithetical schools of thought.³ Meanwhile the lower clergy had contributed substantial amounts of support to the independence struggle, not only of a pecuniary nature, but also through their voluntary enlistment as chaplains and spiritual advisers in the revolutionary army of General Manuel Belgrano. Honorable mention was granted by Belgrano to a number of clerics who had served their country beyond the call of duty. Two of these patriotic priests were the Reverend Miguel Araoz, rector of the cathedral church at Salta, and the Reverend Juan Ignacio Gorriti, the Chaplain-Vicar of the Belgrano army.

Clerical duties did not prevent Araoz from recruiting a volunteer army of 2,000 men to assist in the demise of Spanish sovereignty. Abandonment of the city of Salta had originally been considered, but the appearance of the 2,000 volunteers under the leadership of Araoz and his brother renewed the lagging spirits of General Balcarces' armed forces, and the united forces decided to make a stand. The result of this action led to the containment of ex-vice-roy Liniers' troops and was followed by the decisive battle of Tucumán, where the Spanish armies were fatefully defeated.⁴

³Hecham, p. 68

⁴Plaggio, p. 72.

A second patriotic priest, the Reverend Juan Ignacio Gorriti, was one of the fathers of Argentine independence. Holding the post of spiritual adviser to all of General Belgrano's armies, Gorriti gave unstinting encouragement to the battle weary forces and played an important role in the ultimate outcome.⁵ The rising tide of caudillismo forced him into Bolivian exile--a happy circumstance for posterity, for without being exiled, his memorable work entitled Reflecciones might not have been written. This "foremost philosopher of the Revolution" believed that a free society, based upon Christian ideals, should be constructed and that this society would inspire a public morality which would make freedom possible.⁶ Attainment of these ideals could be reached only through a universal system of popular education, according to Gorriti.⁷ His educational ideas were rather advanced for the time, and he might be regarded as a harbinger of the foremost advocate of universal education at a later period, Sarmiento. Guaranteeing the personal freedom of the individual might best be assured in a federalized nation, where a division of power operated. The visions of Gorriti, in spite of their immediate failure, became the political ideals of the Argentine nation at a later date and accorded him a permanent place among the great political and religious thinkers connected with the independence struggle.

⁵Ibid., p. 138.

⁶Kennedy, pp. 50-51.

⁷Ibid., pp. 53-54.

The Dominican friar, Justo Santa María de Oro, another great Argentine thinker of this early period, has been remembered for his opposition to a monarchical form of government. In an impassioned plea before the Congress of Tucumán in 1816, the partisans of independent monarchy were decisively beaten, and the way was paved for a republican form of government--a form of government which has continued, with minor interruptions, down to the present day.⁸

Dean Gregorio Funes, dean of the cathedral church of Córdoba and rector of the renowned university of the same name, was one of the most influential of the patriotic priests. An active supporter of the independence movement from its inception, Funes promoted a succession of uprisings in his native city which impelled the Spanish ex-vice-roy, Liniers, to convoke the provincial militia. The tumult created by Funes, coupled with the news that a revolutionary army under General Manuel Ocampo was approaching from Buenos Aires, led Liniers to flee without giving battle--thus ending Spanish resistance before it had begun.⁹ Many years later, Dean Funes made eloquent use of his pen for the purpose of molding public opinion during those first critical years of freedom.¹⁰ Clerical dissemination of the ideas of independence among the masses was possible since "the convent was the school . . . and

⁸Edwin Ryan, The Church in the South American Republics (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Book Shop, 1943), pp. 45-46.

⁹Plaggio, p. 51.

¹⁰Walter M. Langford, "The Role of Catholic Culture in Argentina," The Catholic Historical Review, XXVI, No. 1 (April, 1940), p. 59.

the pulpit was the first grandstand."¹¹ Notwithstanding the contributions to the independence movements made by the aforementioned prelates, the clergy as a whole were "conservative and reactionary, eager to maintain their ancient prerogatives, functions, and influence, and even desiring to increase their power at the expense of the civil authorities."¹² Profoundly influenced by the ideas of the French philosophes, most of the revolutionary leaders complained of the clergy's attitude as being too conservative and reactionary. Many desired to curtail the functions of the clergy, but were fully aware of the clergy's influence upon the masses and handled the issue with caution.¹³

The two most critical problems confronting the Church after independence were the question of national patronage and the total lack of communication with the Holy See, both of which were to defy an easy solution. Did the nascent government inherit the patronal authority from the Spanish Crown, as the regalists claimed, or was this a usurpation of the Holy See's rights? Did the lack of communication with the Holy See threaten the continued existence of the Church as part of the Universal Church? The answer to the first question depended upon which side or position had been taken. From the regalist point of view, the patronal rights were inherent in sovereignty, but from the Church's view-

¹¹ Piaggio, p. 33.

¹² J. Fred Rippy, Percy Alvin Martin, Issac Joel Cox, Argentina, Brazil and Chile since Independence (Washington, D.C.: The Geo. Washington University Press, 1935), p. 70.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 70-71.

point, they had been usurped by the State, unilaterally. The answer to the second proposition must be given in the affirmative, since the Church in Argentina was in real danger of becoming a separate and national church. The effect of these early problems were to be observed long after their presentation. The rupture between the Argentine state and the Holy See, on the advent of independence had left the Church virtually incommunicado--a division that would witness the demoralization of a great part of the clergy in view of the lack of hierarchical leadership, and the flight of the Spanish born clergy and religious orders during the Wars of Independence.¹⁴ Those few seminaries which were extant before independence were first sequestered and nationalized by the government and finally included as part of the State controlled university system.¹⁵ Disintegration of authority, with the consequent rise in moral laxity, and the acute shortage of clergy practically halted the Church's christianizing mission.

After independence, and prior to Rivadavia's administration, no conscientious attempt was made by the State to reduce the Church from its former high position under the Spanish Crown. The political leaders of that epoch dared not attack the official position of the Church for they needed a maximum of support. Nevertheless, the Constitution of 1819, with its incorporation of national patronage, laid the basis for future Church-State conflicts. The Church was recognized as the official State religion,

¹⁴Levene, p. 363.

¹⁵Coleman, p. 15.

but an important point of departure occurred when liberty of conscience was guaranteed to all.¹⁶ The Church, as a corollary of the Constitution of 1819, became partially subjugated to the State--a subjugation which would reach its apogee during the long Rosas tyranny.

The Rivadavian Reforms

The principal minister to Governor Rodríguez and the power behind the government, Bernardino Rivadavia, aspired to purge the Church in Buenos Aires province from the moral laxity into which it had fallen because of the dirth of ecclesiastical supervision.¹⁷ Abolition of tithes and ecclesiastical courts, restriction of the number of religious houses, secularization of the cemeteries by nationalization and abduction of the greater part of church property were effectuated when the Argentine Congress, on December 21, 1822, adopted Rivadavia's reforms. Henceforth, an annual accounting had to be made to the government by all remaining religious houses--a procedure designed to reduce the flagrant laxity and corruption, if not to eliminate it.¹⁸ The transgression of the temporal power into the realm of the spiritual was passively resisted by most of the clergy, the only notable

¹⁶Mecham, p. 275.

¹⁷Peter M. Dunne, S.J., "The Church in Latin America," The Catholic Church in World Affairs, ed. Waldemar Gurian (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1954), p. 406.

¹⁸Langford, p. 60.

exception being Dean Funes, who approved of the long overdue reforms, believing them to be necessary for the correction of abuses. The Rivadavian reforms were not an "attack upon the dogmas of the Church nor an attack against the religion, but only upon the external control of organization."¹⁹

The Constitution of 1826 further restricted the Church's power while enhancing the regalistic concept of national patronage by granting to the Argentine Supreme Court the power to censure all papal bulls, letters and communications. The Supreme Court, thus, was a censuring body as well as an interpretative organ of the government, and since it alone could recommend the admission of papal correspondence which it deemed fit, it became authoritative in religious as well as secular matters.²⁰ Church subordination to the State had made the Church an unwilling captive of the civil authority.

Normal relations with the Holy See had yet to be established; meanwhile, the necessity of refilling the vacant sees became increasingly insistent if the Church were to survive as an organization. Having no means to assess the true condition of the Church in Argentina, the Holy See pursued a policy of prudent expectancy throughout the entire Rivadavian period.

At long last the Pontiff named Mariano Medrano y Cabrera as Bishop of Aulon in partibus to the sede vacante of Buenos Aires.²¹ Unfortunately, the cathedral chapter of the diocese

¹⁹ Mechem, p. 278.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 279.

²¹ Ibid., p. 282.

of Buenos Aires refused the right of possession to Bishop Medrano, maintaining that his nomination had been canonical rather than patronal and was illegal per se. At the same time Pedro Agrelo, the Argentine fiscal or Attorney-General, concurred with the opinion of the cathedral chapter by refusing to grant the pase of the exequatur to Medrano's papal bull of institution.²² At this junction a special governmental commission composed of theologians and jurists was convoked to further elucidate the heretofore nebulous principles of patronato nacional. The commission's decision was rendered in the Memorial ajustado of 1834-- a determination that was destined to set the pattern for future Argentine Church-State relations. As might have been supposed, the commission's interpretation was a regalistic one, especially in view of the fact that the regalist school of thought had been in the ascendancy since independence. Particular attention to the Memorial ajustado's important points are listed as follows:

1. Reaffirmation of the right of national patronage as being inherent in sovereignty.
2. National determination of the admissability of papal documents and communications.
3. Governmental right of presentation to all ecclesiastical offices.
4. Episcopal adherence to patronato nacional and sworn allegiance to the government.
5. Curtailment of papal power to appoint to vacant sees or to alter the territorial limits of dioceses without the consent

²²Ibid., p. 280.

of the government.²³

Having now reasserted its right to national patronage in 1834, the government chose to recognize Manuel Medrano as the first bishop to occupy the see of Buenos Aires since the demise of Bishop Lué in 1812. Acceptance was conceded only because Pedro Agrelo, the Attorney-General, had some years previously proposed his nomination for the same benefice. This previous action by the government was sufficient testimony that Medrano's appointment by the Pope was not in violation of Argentine law as embodied in the rights of national patronage.²⁴

The Rosas Tyranny

Juan Manuel Rosas, despot, tyrant, and autocrat, was to emerge upon the Argentine political stage soon after the Rivadavian reforms. Under the guise of caudillo of la restauración--restoration signifying a return to the traditional Argentine concepts and ways of life--Rosas led the Argentine people down an infamous road to tyranny. The pillars upon which his dictatorship were to rest were the Army and the Church. Rosas used the Church to further his absolutism, on one hand, and protect it from its political adversaries on the other. The Church was quickly "converted into a servile instrument of the tyranny,"²⁵ and willingly submitted to his personal power--a natural reaction to the

²³Ibid., p. 283.

²⁴Kennedy, p. 20.

²⁵Mechem, p. 284.

Rivadavian reforms. The great majority of the clergy warmly endorsed the new regime in the beginning--an endorsement which would be duplicated a hundred years later and similarly regretted.²⁶ Wholeheartedly allying itself with Rosas from the start, the Church soon became caught up in a web of entanglement in support of La santa causa de la federación, from which it could not extricate itself.

The Jesuits and other religious orders, expelled during the Rivadavian period, were summoned back by Rosas, although this favor would exact a costly price. Sermons extolling the regime were demanded, as well as the display of the tyrant's portrait upon all church altars.²⁷ Once again, the union of throne and altar was manifested under la restauración, for everyone was obligated by law to hear Mass and to join into religious services.²⁸ Rosas himself was not a believer until it suited his political ambitions. He had been indifferent previously toward religion, if not outright atheistic, but now ambition drove him to adopt religion or at least the outward forms of it. He "needed a fanatical disguise--an alliance with men of the colonial spirit,"²⁹ and this he found in the Church.

Viewing the anarchical conditions that preceeded his triumph, the people understandingly enough hungered for law and order,

²⁶See Chapter III.

²⁷Ryan, p. 51.

²⁸Ingenieros, p. 284.

²⁹Ibid., p. 102.

but the price that they were compelled to pay exceeded the limits of comprehension. Church-State relations during the Rosas dictatorship were ignominious at best, since the Church in the final analysis was increasingly beholden to the State. Some authorities have suggested that the Church yielded to a greater force as it had previously been compelled to do after independence. A valid conclusion might be drawn from this argument with respect to the latter years of the tyranny, but this argument does not go far enough in presenting the entire picture during the Rosas tyranny, since the Church had undeniably aided and abetted Juan Rosas in the beginning. Rosas, needing an espionage system, employed the Jesuits as a tool of penetration--the target being the heart of the cultured classes reached through Jesuit sponsored education.³⁰ Near the end of the tyranny certain altercations, arising from the Jesuits' refusal of complete submission, resulted in a new expulsion of the Jesuits.

Once in power, the absolutist regime trapped its supporters and pursued its own political ends--ends which differed sharply from those of the Church. At this late date the Church was dragged along by powerful centrifugal forces and was unable to free itself from the despotism;³¹ thus becoming a silent, if unwilling, instrument of the Rosas absolutism.

³⁰Ibid., p. 142.

³¹Mechem, p. 284.

As the right of presentation was claimed by Rosas--a claim championed by the noted Argentine attorney, Dalmacio Velez-Sarsfield--the death of Bishop Medrano again brought the issue of national patronage to the fore. Sarsfield had but two choices:³² either to recognize Argentine supremacy over the Church, as conceived by the regalists, or to acknowledge, by virtue of his universal power over the Church, the supremacy of the Supreme Pontiff over all Argentine spiritual affairs. Sarsfield chose the former, and the incorporation of national patronage into the Constitution of 1853 followed as a logical consequence of his interpretation.³³

The year 1852 witnessed the long sought overthrow of the hated tyranny by General Justo José de Urquiza, thus ending twenty years of repression, of subjugation, and of dictatorship. Once again la civilización appeared to have triumphed over the forces of la barbarie in the endless seesaw struggle between the forces of restraint and the forces of violence which has characterized the greater part of Argentine history.

Alberdi and the Constitution of 1853

The Argentine Constitution of 1853, which at present is the supreme law of the land, was largely based on the precepts of Juan Bautista Alberdi, the great Argentine jurist. Alberdi,

³²Obras, Vol. XIV, cited by John Joseph Kennedy, Catholicism, Nationalism, and Democracy in Argentina (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958), p. 21.

³³Ibid., p. 22.

while not a practicing Catholic, recognized that "religion is the basis of all society."³⁴ He firmly believed in populating the vast empty spaces of the pampa and held that atheism should not be promoted if moral and religious settlers were to be attracted to Argentina.

The Argentine nation must protect and maintain the religion of our fathers as the first necessity of our social order; but it must be protected by freedom, by tolerance and by all the means which are peculiar and proper of a democratic regime.³⁵

According to Alberdi, Catholicism should be the religion of the state, but other Christian cults should be accorded free practice and not be limited nor excluded from the nation if permanent settlements were to be effected. His most famous dictum was "gobernar es poblar"³⁶ and this axiom was to be the basis toward which later generations would aspire.

Prior to the adoption of the Argentine Constitution of 1853, Alberdi published his constitutional precepts, which he felt should be considered by the Constitutional Convention of 1852 then meeting at Santa Fé. In order for the reader to obtain a more accurate picture of how closely his precepts were followed and later incorporated into the Constitution of 1853, a partial list of his proposed articles--principally those referring to religious matters are presented below. Each proposal is followed

³⁴Juan Bautista Alberdi, Bases y puntos de partida para la organización de la república Argentina (Buenos Aires: Francisco Cruz Ed., 1914), p. 60.

³⁵Ibid., p. 110.

³⁶Ibid., p. 58.

by the present article as it exists in the Constitution, for the sake of comparison.

Article three of Alberdi's precepts proposed that "the confederation adopt and support the Catholic creed and guarantee freedom for all the rest."³⁷ Article two of the Argentine Constitution stated that "the federal government supports the Roman Catholic Apostolic Creed."³⁸ In addition Article 14 of the Argentine Constitution added that "all inhabitants shall enjoy, subject to the laws regulating their exercise, the right freely to profess their religion."³⁹ Article 85, section nine of Alberdi's precepts had proposed that "the president must present a list of three archbishops, bishops, dignitaries or prelates of the cathedral churches to the Senate"⁴⁰ and was followed by section 10 of the same article, which added that "He [the president] exercises the right of national patronage with respect to the churches, offices and ecclesiastics of the State."⁴¹ Article 83 of the Argentine Constitution, sections eight and nine, designating the rights of the president stated:

³⁷Alberdi, p. 285.

³⁸Argentine Constitution of 1853, cited by Alberdi, p. 318.

³⁹Argentine Constitution of 1853, cited by Mecham, p. 288. As it is worded, this article could be interpreted to restrict religious freedom since a condition has been attached.

⁴⁰Alberdi, p. 308.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 308.

He exercises the right of national patronage in the presentation of bishops for the cathedral churches as proposed in a list of three names to the Senate and concedes the pass or retention of decrees of the councils, bulls, briefs and rescripts from the Supreme Pontiff of Rome, with the accord of the Supreme Court.⁴²

In addition to the adoption of most of Alberdi's precepts, the Constitutional Convention of Santa Fé added Articles 62 and 73 in order further to clarify Church-State relations. Article 62 of the Argentine Constitution said "the regular ecclesiastics can not be members of the Congress, nor governors of a province"⁴³ and Article 73 of the federal document specified that

in order to be elected president or vice-president of the Confederation, he is required to have been born in the Argentine territory or be the child of a native citizen and . . . to belong to the Roman Catholic Apostolic Communion.⁴⁴

The Constitution of 1853, unlike earlier Argentine constitutions, made a notable departure in providing that the State "support" rather than "profess" the Catholic religion.⁴⁵ The resulting ambiguity has been interpreted by many to mean that the Catholic religion is not the State religion in Argentina, but "since it is the duty of the State to support the Catholic cult, it is the de facto state religion."⁴⁶ De jure recognition of the Argentine

⁴²Argentine Constitution of 1853, cited by Alberdi, p. 338.

⁴³Ibid., p. 329.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 335.

⁴⁵Kennedy, p. 288. Italics mine.

⁴⁶Mecham, p. 289.

national patronage has never been accepted by the Holy See, and although the conclusion of a concordat with Rome to settle this question has been frequently proposed, none as yet, has been effectuated. Many Argentine Catholics, the most notable being Fray Mamerto Esquiú, Francisco Durá and Estrada, have criticized the Argentine Constitution of 1853 as being too regalistic in concept and of placing an undue burden upon the Church.

Fray Esquiú, in spite of his reservations concerning the Constitution of 1853, urged its implementation for the sake of national unity. The friar of Catamarca, as he was known, sided against the majority of Catholic opinion of the time and pleaded for acceptance of the document, notwithstanding its defects:

Obey, sirs; without submission there is no law; without laws there is no country and no true freedom: there exists only passions, disorder, anarchy, dissolution, war and evils, from which may God free the Argentine Republic forever.⁴⁷

Heeding the eloquent words of Fray Mamerto Esquiú, the Argentine people avoided an armed contest, and their resistance to the Constitution was largely overcome. The Orator of the Constitution, as he was later called, realizing that stability could be achieved only by recognizing the supreme law of the land, exhorted the people from his pulpit to abide by it.⁴⁸ The cause of national unity had thus been served by one of its greatest spokesmen, and a fratricidal conflict had been avoided.

⁴⁷Fray Mamerto Esquiú, Sermones patrióticos, cited by Casiello, p. 20.

⁴⁸Kennedy, p. 95.

A more ardent critic of the Constitution of 1853 was Francisco Durá. Contending that the State had been made the protector of religion, when in reality the Church should be the protector of the State, Durá asserted that a religious defeatism could only obtain. Religion does not need political protection since that protection can lead to a stifling of religion, a view very similar to that held by Estrada and the resultant consequence of stifling would be the relegation of religion to a subservient station in Argentine society.⁴⁹

The most vociferous critic of the Constitution of 1853 was encountered in José Manuel Estrada, although his ideas were not formulated until 1871 with the publication of his noted work, La iglesia y el estado. Estrada maintained that national patronage limited the religious liberty of the Catholic faith by attacking its basis, resulting in its nullification.⁵⁰ Nullification of the freedom of worship resulted from the Constitution of 1853, since the Catholic Church was enslaved by the State--enslaved since it must rely on the State for subsidization and tariffs. Estrada held that the hierarchy was enslaved because the State could intervene in the providing of benefices, and lastly, its captivity was evidenced by the State's power to withhold pontifical bulls and decrees to the detriment of Catholics.⁵¹ When the State

⁴⁹Francisco Durá, Iglesia y estado (Buenos Aires: Cultura católica, 1927), pp. 50-51.

⁵⁰Grandes Escritores, Vol. XXVII, p. 33.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 49.

exercised the right of patronage over a communion at the same time that it granted complete freedom to all other cults it was "un absurdo y una iniquidad." ⁵² For Estrada the patronized communion was placed in an unfavorable position, subjected to a tutelage which violated equity and negated religious liberty. ⁵³ As only the Catholic cult could be harrassed and oppressed, there was no liberty for the Church, for "crippled liberty" was "the privilege and the denial of its self." ⁵⁴ The sentiments of Estrada were elaborated upon and a remedy offered in his three reforms, to wit:

1. Abrogation of the right of patronage.
2. Equality of the Church in religious liberty.
3. A free Church in a free State, according to the formula of Montalembert. ⁵⁵ Once unshackled from the State, the Church was stimulated to enthusiasm, the spirit of brotherhood was created and the Church became a more powerful influence in developing the peoples' morals, according to Estrada. ⁵⁶ Fray Mamerto Esquid was in complete accord with the idea of separation of Church and State, when he replied:

The political relations of the Argentine Republic as well as its administrative acts are neither Catholic nor inspired by true liberty,

⁵²Ibid., p. 33.

⁵³Ibid., p. 34.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 51.

⁵⁵Francisco S. Tessi, Vida y obra de José Manuel Estrada, (Buenos Aires: Casa Jacobo Peuser, 1928), p. 193.

⁵⁶Estrada, p. 61.

and the desire of the Church for its emancipation is worthy of all Catholic souls. To obtain it is a sacred duty.⁵⁷

Generally speaking, Catholics and secularists, have made a compromise in Church-State relations in which a modus vivendi between the two opposing schools has come into existence, with both groups asceding their particular interests to the general welfare of the nation. Catholics, for the most part, have been content with the Catholic orientation of the Constitution, which recognized Catholicism as the traditional religion of the majority of the inhabitants, while the secularists have been gratified that "the religious question has been kept out of politics by and large."⁵⁸

When the Constitution of 1853 was being ratified, a significant event for future Argentine Church-State relations occurred in the founding of the first openly Catholic newspaper, La religión by Msgr. Federico Amerigo, later Archbishop of Buenos Aires and Fray Olegario Correa, aided by Félix Frías, who soon became a collaborator in the enterprise and the leading journalist for the newspaper. La religión was to make a permanent contribution to the development of Argentine Catholic lay opinion.⁵⁹ In 1855 a second Catholic newspaper, El orden, was founded by Frías as a counterpart to the first, but one in which

⁵⁷Tessi, p. 197.

⁵⁸Kennedy, p. 22. Cardinal Caggiano, the Argentine Primate, has stated that the Argentine Constitution bears a strong Catholic stamp.

⁵⁹Richard Patee, El catolicismo contemporaneo en Hispano-america, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Pides, 1951), p. 24.

more stress would be placed upon the social aspect of religion. Creation of a society in which the Catholic laity would take part was one of Frías' goals--a goal that would reach fruition only in the 20th century. Distrusting the intellectuals whose philosophy had resulted in chaos during the pre-Rosas days of the nation, Frías urged the Church to take direct action in the political sphere in order to protect the institutional interests of the Church as he believed the intellectuals to be biased against religion.⁶⁰ Frías held strong ideas on education and its place in the nation and became a champion of the Church in its fight for continued religious instruction--more about which will be said later--during the school controversy.

José Manuel Estrada, like his contemporary Frías, was to found the Argentine periodical La revista Argentina, and like his contemporary was one of the leading Catholic thinkers and journalists of this period. He stood for the principles of Christian liberalism and, unlike Frías, was more an educator than a journalist, although he continued to write all of his life.⁶¹ He, as well as Frías, was a champion of the Church, and both were the products of a new development in Argentine life. Previously, the spokesmen for the Church had been the clergy, but now Catholic laymen in an unofficial capacity, spoke out in defense of the Church's rights as they saw them.

⁶⁰Kennedy, pp. 77-85.

⁶¹Rojas, Vol. XIV, cited by Kennedy, p. 98.

The Church-State School Controversy

The school question precipitated a major crisis in Church-State relations, a crisis that still (1963) has not been completely resolved. Traditionally, religious instruction had been mandatory in all Argentine schools as part of the regular school curriculum, for the schools and religious institutions had been historically linked from the time of the Spanish domination.⁶²

Prior to the school controversy, Domingo F. Sarmiento, later president of the Republic, had been named Director of the Department of Education in 1859 for the province of Buenos Aires. Although renowned as a great educator, at times Sarmiento showed little regard for freedom of conscience, in spite of his former opposition to the ratification of Article two of the Constitution of 1853.⁶³ He issued a circular directed to all public school teachers requiring them, before beginning classes, to oblige all children under their tutelage to rise and commence the recitation of prayers to be followed by the benediction. On non-feast days and every Thursday, the teachers were instructed to lead their students personally to the parish mass. During Holy Week all students without exception were to make the Stations of the Cross.⁶⁴ Sarmiento not only had violated the Argentine Consti-

⁶²Ibid., p. 188.

⁶³Supra, p. 34.

⁶⁴J. M. Estrada, Obras completas de José Manuel Estrada, Vol. IV, cited by Casiello, p. 329.

tution by his directive, but he had prohibited the exercise of the individual's freedom of choice. Nevertheless, he had acted in the true fashion of a good Argentine republican--that is interpreting principles concerning the general public, as he saw fit, with a complete disregard for any other interests except his own.

Estrada, ten years later, held the same office as Sarmiento--the Director of the Department of Education for the province of Buenos Aires and demonstrated, in spite of his Catholic bias, some concern for the individual's freedom of conscience. All public school teachers, under his jurisdiction, were ordered not to oblige any student to take religious instruction if the student's parents had expressly prohibited it by reason of belonging to another communion.⁶⁵

Sarmiento, as president of the Argentine Republic, continued his peremptory policies by ordering the translation from French of a catechism entitled The Conscience of a Child and commanding its adoption in all primary schools for the purpose of imparting a moral and religious education to the child.

Nicolae Avellaneda followed Sarmiento into the presidency and similarly vigorously defended religious instruction in his writing, Schools without Religion.⁶⁶ As a traditionalist, Avellaneda was not ready to acknowledge the rising tide of liberalism which was rapidly transforming the Argentine mentality. Nevertheless, the winds of change manifested themselves at

⁶⁵Kennedy, p. 190.

⁶⁶Caciello, p. 330.

the meeting of the National Pedagogical Congress of 1882, held for the purpose of coordinating ways and means of standardizing teaching. The Pedagogical Congress demanded that religious instruction and the use of the catechism be dropped from the public school system. These requests might have been anticipated as the ecclesiastical authorities had not been invited to participate, and widely divergent views were accorded expression for the first time. The laicist campaign for a secularized education was to grow increasingly intense over the next two years--with both Frías and Estrada entering into the debate--before the issue was resolved in 1884 by the passage of the Secularized Teaching Law.

The climax to the school controversy was reached in the middle of 1884, during the presidential tenure of Julio A. Roca. At that time the Reverend Jerónimo Clara, vicar of Córdoba, protested, in a pastoral letter, the heterodox doctrines upheld by the University of Córdoba and more specifically, the governmental proposal of establishing a normal school for girls at Córdoba which was to be directed by Protestant teachers from the United States. Dr. Clara declared that "no Catholic parent had the right to send his children there."⁶⁷ This attack was immediately countered by the Minister of Cults, Eduardo Wilde, who proclaimed the pastoral letter to be subversive in content

⁶⁷Casiello, p. 333. Casiello states that "secularism is not neutrality, but belligerence when it signifies the adoption of a resolute position in the solution of fundamental problems. The agnosticism which it supports is nothing but a shamefaced atheism."

since it was issued by a government official and in opposition to the stated policies of the government. Wilde's attack was followed by the Attorney-General's decree suspending the Reverend Clara from office.⁶⁸

Dr. Clara, not a man to let matters lie, retorted by issuing another pastoral letter, claiming his dismissal was null and void because it had emanated from an incompetent authority and secondly, because by the text of the letter, only the canon of Córdoba would be dismissed and not the government of the bishopric.⁶⁹ The issue was bitterly argued back and forth in the Argentine Congress as to the legality of the government's action in removing a prelate from office. Fortunately, this part of the controversy was peaceably resolved when Msgr. Tisoera took charge of the see of Córdoba--thus ending the authority of Clara in the matter.

Although Church-State tension had relaxed by the summer of 1884 with the termination of the Clara dispute, the controversy blazed forth anew in the fall when Bishop Riso Patrón issued a pastoral pertaining to the schools of the Salta diocese. He sustained the opinions so aptly expressed by Clara and added that

⁶⁸Mecham, p. 293.

⁶⁹Legón, pp. 529-530. Dr. Clara's reply is worth noting for its clear and concise language. He stated that "it is not the Capitular Vicar of Córdoba, but the Attorney-General of the Nation, who had mistaken the times and men by passing an order which carried the stamp of the period of Charles III, whose attorney called him 'Our Master.'" In concluding Dr. Clara stated that "in the Argentine Republic, there is not a law which obliges Catholics to educate their children in Protestant schools . . . and this and nothing more is what the pastoral is expressly prohibiting."

"all children in his diocese could not be sent to schools directed by heretics and that if a parent disobeyed the letter, he would be denied the sacraments of the Church."⁷⁰ The vicars of Santiago del Estero and Jujuy joined Risse Patrón in his stand and, like him, were branded as subversives by the government and suspended from office. This subsequent action by the government rallied the Metropolitan of Buenos Aires and the nation's other bishops behind the Church's protagonists. Arguing that only the Pope had the authority to remove ecclesiastics, the nation's bishops unanimously labeled the government's action as invalid.

The last phase of the school controversy occurred with the arrival in Córdoba of the Apostolic Delegate to Argentina, Msgr. Mattera, for the purpose of interviewing one of the Protestant school teachers, a Miss Frances Armstrong, director of the normal school.⁷¹ Afterward arguing that his conversation had been solely of a private nature, the Apostolic Delegate stated that he had advised Miss Armstrong to publicly announce that the school had no intention of proselyting for the Protestant denomination and that no obstacles would be placed in the way of teaching the Catholic catechism in the school.⁷² Wilde, learning of the Apostolic Delegate's visit to Miss Armstrong, accused Mattera of meddling in Argentine internal affairs and advised him to leave the nation within twenty-four hours as he was now

⁷⁰Mocham, p. 294.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 295-296.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 294-295.

considered persona non grata. Anti-climatical as the Mattered incident was, the ousting of Mattered ruptured diplomatic relations with the Holy See--a rupture which would not be mended until a new administration had taken office.

The Catholic position during this entire controversy was eloquently expounded by Félix Frías in his writings entitled Escritos y discursos. A primary school teacher should be permitted to teach only the religion which he professed, according to Frías. In other words, Catholic instruction could not be given by Protestant teachers as this constituted a violation of freedom of conscience. Holding of a religious conviction was necessary for its transmittance. Frías asserted that "popular instruction should be religious, and the religion of the majority ought to be taught."⁷³ Like Estrada, Frías considered religion to be the basis of all social order, and a religious majority should not be subjugated to a religious minority. Attacking the laicists for departing from Argentine tradition in their attempts to transfer certain functions from ecclesiastical to State jurisdiction, Frías denied the laicist claim to exclusive jurisdiction over areas such as marriage.⁷⁴ Secularization was being carried too far and would only lead to the elimination of all religious education from the public school system, according to Frías.⁷⁵

⁷³Félix Frías, Escritos y discursos, Vol. III (Buenos Aires: Imprenta y librería de Mayo, 1884), pp. 182-186.

⁷⁴Kennedy, p. 87.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 99.

His defense of the rights of the Church was unsuccessful against the rising tide of laicism which reached its apex before the turn of the century.

The school controversy of 1882-1884 had also involved Estrada, who was a resolute defender of the rights of the Church. He defended the bishops' freedom of speech and their right to be heard even when disagreeing with the official policies of the State.⁷⁶ Estrada thought that "no está la libertad sino donde está el espíritu."⁷⁷ For him "reason without Christ walks in darkness."⁷⁸ As to the value of a Christian education, Estrada stated that

the child whose soul is developed under the luminous, noble and pure sentiments of religion, acquires the heroic strength of virtue which leads him to make sacrifices and consequently strengthens the republican character.⁷⁹

The final passage of the Education Law of 1884, despite the protestations and objections of Argentine Catholics, was accomplished, and although this Law, 1420, did not prohibit religious instruction, it made its application impracticable in that all such instruction had to be given outside of regular school hours.⁸⁰ Its ratification abolished religious instruction, for all practical purposes, under the guise of neutrality.⁸¹ The

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 100.

⁷⁷Tessi, p. 193.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 168.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 107.

⁸⁰Kennedy, p. 194.

⁸¹Legón, p. 527.

result was the secularization of the school system.

The secularization campaign, begun in 1882 by the liberals and socialists and supported by many primary school teachers, had not yet run its full course by 1884.⁸² The second great secular victory of liberalism was secured, four years after the ratification of Law 1420, with the passage of the Civil Marriage Law of 1888. For the first time civil marriage was made obligatory and a civil ceremony was made a prerequisite to a religious one. In other words, no religious ceremony could be performed until after all of the civil requirements had been met. Any violation of this law was punishable by severe penal sanctions, according to Article 147 of the Argentine Penal Code, and any minister, pastor or priest found in violation of the law was subject to from three months to one year imprisonment.⁸³ The State regarded marriage solely as a social contract between the contracting parties, "solemnized before the government official in charge of the official register."⁸⁴

The proverbial champions of the Church's cause for over thirty years, Estrada and Frías, attacked the Civil Marriage Law as being a totalitarian threat to the family as a "social unit distinct from that of the state"⁸⁵ and as a violation of the liberty of conscience. Frías in his work, Derecho matrimonial católica, stated that

⁸²Patee, pp. 25-26.

⁸³Casilello, pp. 297-298.

⁸⁴Hecham, p. 303.

⁸⁵Kennedy, p. 202.

Catholic parties should not contract civil marriages as it would be for them a perpetual concubine, condemned by their religion and by the customs of the country. The law which authorized such marriages in the present state of our society, would be ignorant of the purpose of the law.⁸⁶

Estrada felt that marriage was essentially religious and that the State should recognize the legitimacy of a marriage consecrated by the rites of the Church.⁸⁷

Catholic opposition to the Civil Marriage Law of 1880 was unrelenting and assiduous since a prior civil marriage, in the eyes of the Church, resulted in a state of concubinage--a mortal sin. The Church thus denied the State's exclusive claim to foster the creation of the family through marriage. The Church's position was that the State had no right to legislate the civil effect of marriage because it denied the divine and natural origins of marriage. The State's disposition placed an obstacle before Catholics in the practice of one of their sacraments as it punished any priest who administered marriage previous to a civil ceremony. Individual freedom of conscience could only be harmed by the existence of such a statute which recognized the State's claim to exclusive jurisdiction over marriage.

The Church had thus been surmounted by the rising tide of a liberal doctrinalism which based its concepts of society upon the new ideas of Europe's 19th century Socialists and intellectuals. Antireligious sentiment was rising among the leaders

⁸⁶ Frías, Derecho Matrimonial Católica, cited by Casiello, p. 297.

⁸⁷ Estrada, p. 64.

of Argentine society and was manifested by the emergence of anti-clerical newspapers and the expansion of Masonry. Progress, enlightenment and intellectual freedom were the new shibboleths of the liberal secularists--obtained from the tracts of Smith, Mill, and Spencer. These new liberal ideas were embraced by but a small minority of Argentines--principally those men in public life who, while not typical of Argentine thought, were to exert a profound influence, out of all proportion to their numbers, on Argentine life. Outside of the small clubs and certain governmental circles, the masses remained as before, unchanged in their pursuit of the traditional and religious way of life.⁸⁸

The liberals envisioned the Church as a distinct menace to their new concepts, particularly since the Church, through the priesthood--a priesthood which might be tempted to tyrannize freedom of conscience--had controlled education and supervised the birth, death and matrimony of most individuals. The State, in its new guise, the supreme religious as well as political arbiter, was instrumental in fostering the liberal secularist ideas that would emancipate the Argentine conscience.⁸⁹ For the Church, the new liberalism was a total menace to religion, and for the liberals, the Church, in its adherence to Roman authority, was an obstacle to freedom and a threat to national independence.⁹⁰

Argentine society was thus in a state of transition brought about by a combination of circumstances; namely, the importation

⁸⁸Patee, p. 22.

⁸⁹Kennedy, p. 103.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 105.

of foreign ideologies from Europe and the increased European immigration which acted as a nucleus around which the industrial basis of 20th century society would emerge. The rural, parochial, agricultural and traditional Argentine society was besieged by change on all sides--a changing environment with changing ideas. Having no other recourse, the Church was forced to accept the new challenges, and this in turn would radically alter the Church's perspective. Religious emphasis until the last decade of the 19th century had been centered around political issues--an emphasis heightened by the Church's resistance to the educational and matrimonial reforms of the period.

Catholic political thought, reacting to outside forces, was beginning to crystalize, and toward that end the Catholic Association of Buenos Aires was established in 1884 under the leadership of Estrada. The new association had as its goal the combating and halting of the trend toward secularization, and was political in nature in that it sought to arouse and organize Catholic opinion.⁹¹ That the Catholic Association was partially successful had been attested to in that Catholic lay opinion was sufficiently aroused to pressure the Congress for a cessation of the secularization campaign. The suspension of secularization allowed the Church to redirect its focal point from the political arena to other spheres, even though a return to traditional concepts would not be countenanced by the laicists. With the emergence of organized lay groups, however, the Church would find its paladin in times of need.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 183.

CHAPTER II

NEW DIRECTIONS OF CHURCH AND STATE

1892-1942

Aspects of Change

The last decade of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century witnessed the gradual evolution of Church emphasis from the political toward the social field of human activity. As a dynamic element of society the Church began a process of self-reform, made necessary by a changing society. No longer was the Church the spokesman for the majority of Argentines; no longer did it have exclusive control over education; no longer was the Church the sacrosanct arbiter of faith and morals. The developing forms of secular culture which ignored the traditional, the Spanish and the religious origins of the Argentine nation, were imbued with the ideals of the French positivists and the North American progressives whose Argentine counterparts were to resound in the forums of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. No longer an integrating factor of society, the Church was challenged by these new forces of liberalism, by the socialist ideals and later by the ideas of the Communist Manifesto. Confronted, as it were, by new political forces on one hand and the growth of an urban proletariat class on the other, the Church had to adapt itself to new conditions or face the gradual elimination of Christianity

from society. Making use of the only weapons which it possessed, indirect influence and persuasion were exerted where feasible in order to support the causes in which the Church believed.¹

Liberal doctrinarism had its effect on society by separating the three great spheres of human activity--the political, the economic and the spiritual. Separatism was demanded in order that each sphere, independent of the other, and without hindrance,, could more freely attain its specific goals. The disintegration of the old order produced a new Argentine social crisis.² Stabilization of the new order has successfully eluded the human grasp and thus left Argentina in a state of flux.

One of the principal Argentine liberal secularist thinkers at the turn of the century, Augustín E. Álvarez Suarez, propounded the liberal secularist ideas of his era. Critical of the Church and an exponent par excellence of universal education under State auspices, he believed that the Church had set limits upon the human capabilities and consequently, religious education must be supplanted by public schooling for the purpose of increasing the individual's reasoning powers.³ For him, rationalism was more altruistic than Christianity and therefore more moral.

¹Coleman, pp. 36-37.

²Mogr. Miguel de Andrea, El catolicismo social y su aplicación (Buenos Aires: Domingo Viau & Cia., 1941), p. 2. Hereafter cited as El catolicismo social.

³Augustín E. Álvarez Suarez, Historia de las instituciones libres, cited by William R. Crawford, A Century of Latin American Thought (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 96.

His ideas, along with those of other 20th century Argentine liberals such as Alejandro Bunge, Ricardo Rojas, Alejandro Korn and Alfredo Palacios, were to exert a profound influence upon future generations of Argentines.

The changing order of society had witnessed a weakening of the political power of the Church, but conversely, had seen the Church's prestige increase in the social field.⁴ Under the guise of reform--reform in the political, reform in the economic and reform in the religious fields--great changes had been wrought in a more or less static society within a relatively short span of time. Slowly at first, led by the younger clergy, the Church edged into the social area of human endeavor while still maintaining a keen interest in the political field. The passage of time had increased the Church's interest in what has come to be known as social Catholicism or Christian liberalism--a Catholicism interested in the economic improvement of the masses, to the securing of just welfare legislation and to the bettering of labor's wages and living conditions. Within the vast framework of the Argentine Church, this active, vocal and belligerent faction made its presence felt through labor and charitable organizations which it had fostered, although relatively few Catholics adhered to its ideals or principles. Indifferentism, capitalism and the political environment in which it operated

⁴Edwin Lieuwen, Arms and Politics in Latin America (New York: Praeger Inc., 1960), p. 58.

prior to 1942 had resulted in no spectacular achievements.⁵ Christian liberalism had recognized for the first time that the Church must concern itself with man's role in this world and that only through economic well-being and betterment, with the consequent reduction of poverty, disease, and illiteracy, could a vibrant, strong Church combat atheistic materialism. Traditional Argentine Church emphasis had been based on the order of the mystical, Spanish Church and had been primarily concerned with man's attainment of salvation--an attainment in which the transitory nature of this world was largely ignored. Recognizing that man's physical condition is as important as his spiritual welfare and that spiritual attainments are impeded and in some cases prevented if man lives in poverty and disease, the Church attempted to shift its emphasis. An important step toward social Catholicism was ultimately achieved in 1931, when a more effective organization and wider expression of ideals was procured through the foundation of Argentine Catholic Action, part of the Church's universal effort to ameliorate the deplorable conditions in which a great part of humanity was found, especially the laboring classes. The Argentine Church, in its new role as champion of the laboring classes, additionally expounded the ideas of individual freedom and the right to private property.

Msgr. Miguel de Andrea took up an active role of leadership in areas where Estrada and Frías had left off. He asserted

⁵Lisandro de la Torre, La cuestión social y un cura (Buenos Aires: Colegio libre de estudio superiores, 1943), p. 52. Hereafter referred to simply as La cuestión social.

that the Church, as well as the State, was a defender of freedom, for "without freedom there is no virtue, no holiness, no merit and no heroism."⁶ Megr. de Andrea attacked liberalism as leading to an abuse of freedom by all sections of society, resulting in anarchy. Playing the leading role as the exponent of Argentine Christian social liberalism and individual freedom, Andrea fought for over thirty years against social injustice, inequality, and maldistribution of wealth--his battle culminating in unflinching opposition to the authoritarian forces of Peronism. Liberalism, to Andrea, was the abolition of God and the violation of all norms of economic justice inasmuch as it sought the unrestricted and unhampered attainment of money.⁷ Before concentrating on these efforts let us first examine two of his predecessors who were instrumental in launching the new Catholic social movement in Argentina.

The two guiding lights of the Church from the turn of the century up to World War I were Emilio Lamarca and Father Federico Grote, both of whom played a cogent and complimentary role in the development of Christian social aims. Lamarca carried on the difficult tasks of fomenting Catholic lay opinion after the death of Estrada. Although he repeatedly warned the masses that the new forces of society, particularly the Socialist party, were revolutionary in intent and atheistic in outlook, his supplications passed unheeded by the majority of Catholics who believed Argentina

⁶De Andrea, El catolicismo social, p. 61.

⁷Ibid., pp. 64-73.

"impenetrable to Socialism."⁸ Lamarca's warnings could no longer be ignored after 1890, and accordingly Grote, a German Redemptorist, arrived to assist in the formulation of a rebuttal to the Socialist doctrine and to point out the need for a positive Catholic social action.⁹ Heading the vanguard of the workers' circles, which he had helped organize in his native Germany, Grote extended those circles throughout the Republic. By 1902, he aided in the formation of the Democratic Christian League whose aims were to prepare workers for future organizational leadership on a national level and to increase the social studies already begun and expounded upon by the noted Argentine sociologist, Alejandro Bunge. The Second Argentine Catholic Assembly of 1907, headed by Lamarca, was called to foment social work through the Catholic lay organizations in accordance with the exhortations of Pope Leo XIII's well known encyclical, Rerum Novarum. The following year, at the meeting of the Third National Congress of Argentine Catholics, Lamarca unveiled his project for the creation of an Argentine Social League--the purpose of which was to make known the "advantages of a Christian oriented organization."¹⁰ At the same time, Grote established the Catholic Workers' Circle and the Christian Democratic Union, both organizations composed of Catholic workers and laymen who desired to defend Christian principles in the social areas of labor and

⁸Patee, p. 27.

⁹Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁰Casiello, p. 27.

management according to the principles of the Papal encyclicals. In 1912, Pope Pius X suggested that the Argentine Social League be transformed into the Argentine Popular Catholic Union, which subsequently was to derive its inspiration from the Italian model. However, the latter ideal was not realized until 1919, when the Argentine episcopacy finally consented to its formation under the leadership of Andrea. Not concerned with immediate political objectives, it sought to awaken individual Catholics to the need for action in the social field.¹¹ The construction of low cost workers' housing was the proximal goal of the new organization. After the Semana trágica of 1919 when riots and strikes had arisen, caused by the hysteria of World War I and the fear of Bolshevism, Andrea attributed the causes of the disorder to the fact that the workers had no articulate means of expressing themselves to the public authorities as they lacked a voice in public affairs. He solicited a voluntary collection of funds in the Gran Colecta Nacional, the proceeds of which were to be spent on a social welfare program. Two institutes were the corollaries of his endeavors--the most noted being the Instituto técnico femenino, which was devoted to the protection of the interests of working women, and El Ateneo de la juventud, established as a social work center for working class youths.¹² In association with the former, a residence hall was built where single working

¹¹Kennedy, p. 183.

¹²Ibid., p. 141.

girls might live.¹³ Eventually, the Instituto técnico femenino, along with the Federation of Catholic Associations of Women, founded by Andrea, contained more than twenty thousand working women in Buenos Aires. In addition they had a library, vacation houses in the country and a hotel for working people with no family.¹⁴ Andrea enumerated three causes as being responsible for the breakdown of the Argentine social and moral order: political division, moral bungling and economic dislocations.¹⁵ The individual's right to private property was staunchly defended by Andrea for if the right to own property were taken away, such as had occurred in certain political systems, then man was reduced to slavery in Andrea's opinion. Economic solutions were not found by abolishing private property, but rather in the "indefinite expansion of private property"¹⁶--that is by a rapidly increasing economy with its attendant benefits. According to Andrea, anti-Christian forces were responsible for the undermining of the social order and the weakening of individual responsibility. No thought that miserable people without a living wage should not resign themselves to their present status, but rather had the duty to "break the bonds that subject them under a despotic yoke."¹⁷ In order to secure a living wage, joint

¹³Bruce, p. 183. This organization was one of the principle charitable institutions not absorbed by the Eva Perón Foundation. See Chapter IV.

¹⁴Patee, p. 41.

¹⁵De Andrea, El catolicismo social, pp. 44-45.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 53-54.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 96.

agreements between the workers' and employers' organizations should be worked out--an agreement currently known as collective bargaining. As a stalwart defender of labor's right to a living wage, economic individualism and Communism were both rejected, for each in its own way reinstated individual slavery--"the slavery of the proletariat"¹⁸ which Christianity had abolished by virtue of its essence. Outspoken in his defence of the family, Andrea sustained the Catholic contention that the conjugal state preceded the civil society in time, place and right, and as such the State should not invoke laws which are against the essence of the family and in violation of the natural law.¹⁹ For him, dictatorship of the right or left was to be condemned as an "excess, an overstepping of the law, an abuse of force."²⁰ This abuse of force was seen as a greater crime than the abuse of the law since the former harmed the individual, while the latter harmed only the community. Finally, Andrea was instrumental in focusing the Church hierarchy's attention on the need for better workers' housing, believing that good environmental conditions were as important as a favorable spiritual atmosphere for the total well-being of the individual. In 1919, his exertions resulted in the issuance of a joint pastoral letter by the Argentine

¹⁸Ibid., p. 147.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 104.

²⁰Ibid., p. 105. Msgr. de Andrea, later was the principal religious opponent of the rise of Peronism. He, virtually alone among his cohorts, condemned Peronism as an inherent evil that would eventually enslave the individual and extinguish personal freedom. His position was substantiated within a relatively few years. See Chapter III.

hierarchy which stated among other things that

a sanitary dwelling from the physical and moral point of view, within reach of those of modest economic means is essential in order to assure a better education for future generations and to exterminate the social plague of tenements.²¹

Shortly thereafter, Andrea, under the auspices of the Argentine Popular Catholic Union, headed a group which began the construction of low cost workers' housing. Unfortunately, only four ensembles of new housing were completed before the program was abruptly halted. On commenting upon the stoppage, Msgr. de Andrea was careful to avoid inordinating any particular group and added that "it was not the fault of the Church, but now is not the time to judge it."²² It was tremendously disconcerting to learn that such a beneficial project had been halted by certain unnamed vested interests. Had the low cost housing project been carried out, today there might be only a relatively few slum dwellings in Buenos Aires. The obstructive forces which halted this program were rather indicative of the great barriers to progress that faced Latin America--primarily that of the human element, namely, a lack of humanitarianism. Occasionally, a solution has if not through existing devices, then through revolutionary means.²³ A recent Argentine observer has identified the parti-

²¹Ibid., p. 142.

²²Ibid., p. 143.

²³Cuba and Mexico are good examples where the vested interests were ultimately swept away in a political and social revolution, principally because society in general would not alleviate the dismal conditions under which 40% of a nation tolled.

cular vested interests that stalled the low cost workers' housing program as having been certain wealthy landowners and elements of the right wing clergy.²⁴

Conflicts Under the Alvear Administration

After a long period of quiescence, a major Church-State struggle erupted in July, 1923 when Marcelo T. de Alvear, the Argentine president, proposed the nomination of Andrea to the vacant archepiscopal see of Buenos Aires. Using his constitutional prerogatives of national patronage, President Alvear submitted Andrea's name for the Holy See's accustomed confirmation. A considerable period of time elapsed in which Rome took no action upon the presentation. Belatedly, the Holy See replied through the Argentine Papal Nuncio, Msgr. Bea Cardinale, that Andrea was persona non grata at the Vatican and, as such, his canonical investiture as archbishop of Buenos Aires would be impossible. Meanwhile, Andrea withdrew his candidacy for the vacant see at the suggestion of the Papal Nuncio.²⁵ Alvear refused to accept his withdrawal and insisted upon his appointment. The progressive deterioration of Church-State relations was not helped by receipt of a letter from the Holy See stating that it was not compelled to make public the reasons for its refusal to accept a prelate's nomination. At the time, the prevailing consensus

²⁴Isabel F. Rennie, The Argentine Republic (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1945), p. 269.

²⁵The New York Times, November 12, 1923.

of opinion seemed to be that the Holy See resented Andrea's extreme nationalism as not befitting a prospective archbishop.²⁶ Retaliating by declaring Beda Cardinale, the Papal Nuncio, persona non grata, the Argentine government withdrew its envoy to the Holy See, effectivly severing diplomatic relations between the two.²⁷ A year and a half elapsed and an analagous dispute ran its course before an amicable settlement of the controversy was reached. With feeling running high over the de Andrea affair, the Holy See announced that Msgr. Juan Boneo, Bishop of Santa Fé, would assume the administrative duties of the archdiocese of Buenos Aires, acting in the capacity of Apostolic Administrator for the sede vacante, pending the installation of a regular bishop. Viewing this latter action by the Vatican as a personal affront, particularly in view of the delicacy of the existing situation, the State determined to obstruct Boneo's mission. When Boneo returned from Rome with a sealed envelop containing his credentials, the Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship, Gallardo, demanded that the papal documents be submitted to the government for inspection. Bishop Boneo, stating that no constitutional provision required compliance with this request, refused to deliver the credentials. The Government then threatened Boneo with prosecution under the penal code which made execution of papal bulls, decrees or orders, without prior governmental approval a crime.²⁸ Adding that continous refusal to present

²⁶Kennedy, p. 16.

²⁷The New York Times, September 25 and November 5, 1924.

²⁸Ibid., January 4, 1925.

his credentials would be construed as a rebellious and disobedient act, the Government, determined to terminate the conflict favorably, submitted the issue to the Argentine Supreme Court. The court, in its considered opinion, denied Beneo's right to act as Apostolic Administrator for the vacant see on the ground that his credentials violated the Constitution.²⁹ Yielding to the weight of superior force, Beneo presented his documents to Foreign Minister Gallardo, subsequently stating that he had not failed in his duty as a bishop nor as an Argentine citizen.³⁰ De facto possession of the see by Beneo as administrator was not challenged further, and he endured in office until a regular successor was determined.

Meanwhile the Socialist Party, meeting March 8, 1925, condemned the weakness and vacillation of the Government and clamored for the separation of Church and State since the Government had handled the entire Andrea affair most regrettably.³¹ The long struggle was finally resolved on September 25, 1926, when the Senate, after twelve hours of debate, agreed to the presentation of a new trio of candidates for Alvear's consideration. The nomination of Msgr. Fray Bottaro was accorded immediate papal confirmation, and his investiture took place without delay.³² The foregoing Church-State disputes once again demonstrated that,

²⁹Ibid., February 8, 1925.

³⁰Ibid., December 28, 1924.

³¹Ibid., March 8, 1925.

³²Wicham, p. 298.

in the absence of a concordat, areas of conflict would occasionally arise between Argentina and the Church.

Catholic Action

Tranquility was re-established after the passing of the Alvear administration with the institution of a modus vivendi between the Church and the State. Toward the end of the second decade of the 20th century an event of singular significance transpired--one that would have a profound effect upon the Church in the coming decades--in the issuance of a pastoral letter, dated December 1, 1928, by the Argentine episcopacy. The pastoral sanctioned, in effect, the transformation of the Argentine Popular Catholic Union into a new organization of the laity, Acción católica.³³ For the achievement of this goal, four Argentine prelates, among whom was the Bishop of Rosario, Antonio Cardinal Caggiano, embarked for a year's study in Rome. Their return initiated the organization of Argentine Catholic Action; formally approved and recognized by the Government as a juridical personality, and officially established under church auspices by a collective pastoral issued by the hierarchy, April 5, 1931.³⁴

Argentine Catholic Action, as part of the worldwide movement, supplanted the Argentine Popular Catholic Union--that is, it was an amalgamation of the principal Catholic lay organizations

³³Supra, p. 58.

³⁴Casiello, p. 272.

formed to operate under the auspices of the hierarchy as the "right hand of the clergy." Pope Pius XI defined the organization as "action of the spiritual order," and lauded the Argentine episcopacy for its support of the new organization, but cautioned that political activities would not be countenanced.³⁵ In reality, it was an apostelate of the laity, whose primary task was to permeate the environment with Christian principles of grace and charity.³⁶ The need for Catholic Action was obvious as society had been undergoing a radical transformation, and the protected, sheltered atmosphere in which religion had formerly operated no longer existed. The rise of a new heterogeneous Argentine society had resulted in a lack of religious and secular stability. Tolerance became necessary for the first time because a unanimity of belief was no longer present. The Church believed that its paternalistic approach to society should be shifted to a fraternalistic approach--that the social and economic errors of society should be evaluated from a fresh perspective with Catholic Action promoting fulfillment of individual religious and social needs. The principal precepts of Catholic Action, stated in Article one of its by-laws, affirmed joint participation between the laity and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church--a collaboration between the two which was limited and dependent upon the hierarchy.³⁷ Catholic Action, as well as the hierarchy, was

³⁵The New York Times, May 2, 1931.

³⁶Coleman, p. 78.

³⁷Casiello, p. 274.

accorded the privilege of acting as the official spokesman for the Church because of the organic union existing between the two.³⁸ Further, all political activity was expressly prohibited by Article five, including any form of adherence to an extant Catholic political party. However, the prohibition was organizational in approach since a member might belong to a political party outside of Catholic Action if that party were not prohibited by the Church. No member was free to join a political party which specifically opposed Catholic doctrine or morality. In 1931 this restriction was amplified and elucidated upon when the Argentine episcopacy enjoined all members from supporting any political party which propounded a separation of Church and State, the recognition of legalized divorce or a secularized system of education.³⁹

Organizationally, Catholic Action was divided into four separate, but related branches--Catholic men, Catholic women, male youth and feminine youth. Local organization was based upon diocesan and parish lines somewhat similar to the cell structure of the Communist party. A Central Committee coordinated the parish and diocesan functions, and a Secretary of Morality campaigned against pornography while editing weekly reports on the moral value of films. Being organized along

³⁸Ibid., pp. 275-276.

³⁹Kennedy, p. 183. This last dictum operated as being prejudicial to certain political parties, namely, the Radical, Socialist and Communist parties, for it effectively penalized them by forbidding Catholics to vote for them.

hierarchical lines, dictates were carried down from the top to the local level. The Economic Social Secretary campaigned for sanitary dwellings for workers and supervised the spread of Catholic social doctrine via books, magazines and pamphlets.⁴⁰ Catholic Action's formation was aimed at reducing sterile particularism and coordinating Catholic lay activity along unified lines. Catholic Action had been accused of being anti-democratic and pro-fascist in the period from 1938 to 1946, but this would be rather difficult to prove, as exact documentation would be all but impossible to obtain, even if it existed. The Argentine episcopacy in November, 1938, reiterated the Church's position of reproof toward the totalitarian state which denied the "inalienable rights of persons, of the family or rights previous to those of the State."⁴¹ At the same time, the hierarchy unequivocally rejected the doctrine of racism. This was followed in December, 1942, by a pastoral letter addressed to the clergy stating that the Church "condemns totalitarianism in all forms, as it threatens dignity, despoiling man of the essential gift of liberty."⁴² Undoubtedly there were some members of the organization who were pro-fascist and racist, but the organization itself was not responsible for the individual political opinions of its members outside the organization.

⁴⁰Patee, pp. 40-41.

⁴¹Casiello, p. 28.

⁴²The New York Times, December 16, 1942.

Ideological Polemics

The conflict between differing ideologies engendered during the last half of the 19th century was heightened by the advent of World War II.⁴³ The ideals of Marx, as expounded by the Communist Internationale, were of increasing concern for individual Argentines after the Semana trágica of 1919. Alfredo Palacios and Lisandro de la Torre were representative of Argentine secular thought of the period. The former, the founder of the Argentine Socialist Party, a distinguished lecturer, a faculty member at the University of La Plata, unmercifully attacked the destruction of democratic processes under the Perón regime. The latter had been an Argentine member of Congress and an unsuccessful candidate for the presidency for the Partido Demócrata Progresista. At the other end of the political spectrum were Msgr. Miguel de Andrea, who represented the so-called left wing of Catholic Church opinion, and Msgr. Gustavo J. Franceschi, who was representative of the Church's right wing element. Prior to World War II, Andrea found time out from his social work to champion the cause of democracy in his Causas que favorecen la difusión del comunismo---a notable work that was as critical of 19th century capitalism in Argentina as it was of communism. In a lengthy review of the causes for maldistribution of wealth and the emergence of the class struggle in which Argentina was engaged, he stated that "wealth had ceased being a means of social welfare

⁴³Supra, p. 52.

and had passed over to being held as private profit."⁴⁴ Doctrinaire liberalism was responsible for affecting social life, since the religious and moral forces had absented themselves from any active participation in the economic life of the people. The Church could have intervened to prevent many excesses in the resulting social disintegration, if it had so decided. Similarly, political forces became so imbued with the doctrine of liberty, that they betrayed their mission of guarding the common welfare of society.⁴⁵ Accusing two powerful factors, the French Revolution and the phenomenon of mechanization, Andrea condemned them both for having precipitated the disastrous consequences found today throughout society. Leveling an accusing finger at the French Revolution, he blamed it for having destroyed the former association between capital and labor as equals under the guise of freedom. The superiority of the machine was similarly responsible for the disintegration of the social order--for it had absorbed the individual and in so doing, had denied him any importance or significance.⁴⁶ The twofold result was a bifurcation of the hierarchical order of society--causing a disintegration of the old order and an inversion of the new, so that the accumulation of capital became the first, the paramount factor of production.

⁴⁴ Msgr. Miguel de Andrea, Las causas que favorecen la difusión del comunismo (Buenos Aires: Lajouane & Cia., 1937), p. 5. Hereafter referred to simply as Las causas.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 6-7. De Andrea omits reference to the inequality of wealth that antedated the French Revolution in his hierarchy of the social order. His premise might therefore be considered invalid.

Conversely, man was transformed into an instrument in the hands of capital, losing his identity as an individual--ultimately resulting in the annihilation of his personality. Consequently, capital, freed from all restraint and lacking justice and charity, appropriated the needs of production and created an inequality in the distribution of wealth.⁴⁷ The ensuing fight between capital and labor advanced the cause of communism and was aided by a proliferation of the luxurious and hedonistic upper class life. The twofold effect resulted in the absorption of the energies of the rich and increased the indignation and violence of the poor.⁴⁸

For Msgr. de Andrea, a Christian civilization had ceased to exist in the Western World, although it still was called Christian. The preservation of the remnants of Christian civilization could not be carried out by the totalitarian extermination of one's adversaries as some propounded--for the Gospel calls for the life of the sinner, not his death. Turning next to social Catholicism, a subject that generated a vituperative rebuttal from Lisandro de la Torre, Andrea asserted that two diametrically opposing forces--communism and social Catholicism--had confronted each other. Communism, being materialistic, had placed all wealth exclusively into a few hands--into the hands of those who held power, i.e., the party members--while social Catholicism, as a spiritual force, penetrated the social and economic order with Christian love and social justice--thereby encouraging prosperity

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 8-9.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 12-15.

through a healthy corporatism.⁴⁹ Further, Andrea added that "capitalism had been the communism of the bourgeoisie, while communism had become the capitalism of the proletariat."⁵⁰ His concepts gained the adherence of large sectors of Argentine Catholic opinion, and both communism and capitalism were rejected.

While Senator de la Torre was campaigning as a presidential candidate on the Partido Demócrata Progresista ticket, the clergy waged an intensive campaign against his election.⁵¹ De la Torre lashed out against organized religion in general and the Catholic Church in particular, thereby spawning the succeeding polemical battle. As the head of a political party, he generated considerable popular appeal, and his subsequent articles were among the most widely read in Argentina. De la Torre asserted that Social Christianity was not Catholicism, since only a minority of Catholics were concerned with the social question. He did, however, acknowledge its influence through the media of the newspapers, the workers' organizations and various charitable enterprises.⁵² However, he added that Social Catholicism offered no serious solutions for the social question and that a more

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 17-23.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 21.

⁵¹Rennie, p. 270.

⁵²Lisandro de la Torre, La cuestión social y un cura (Buenos Aires: Colegio libre de estudios superiores, 1943), p. 105.

vital panacea was required in order to carry out needed reforms.⁵³

His thought went as follows:

Religions were children of fear and anxiety before the mystery which locks up the origins and end of life, and fear will be eternal since man is after all naturally superstitious.⁵⁴

The Bible and all holy books of mankind were created by paranoics, deceivers and visionaries, and if one needed faith, since all religion was superstitious, then it would be better for man to be a Hindu than a Christian--for Hinduism was more logical than Christianity for de la Torre. Bitterly, sarcastically, deriding Msgr. Franceschi through his tracts, he bemoaned the fact that the Argentine Church had disappeared because of the absolute predominance of foreign influences which resulted in a national patronage that was little more than an empty expression. Only Argentine priests, "trained in the shadow of the Vatican, and in reality but servants of the Pope,"⁵⁵ could attain the highest religious benefices in Argentina.

Franceschi, the recipient of the invective hurled by de la Torre, had adumbrated the ideas held by the rightest clergy in Argentina prior to and including the Perón regime, and had been bitterly criticized by many for his fascist ideas. As editor of

⁵³Ibid., p. 52. His observation was largely substantiated by the facts, since the Catholic social movement had made but a dent in the surface in alleviating poor social conditions during the forty years of its existence. Additionally, it never had the unanimous support of the hierarchy.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 105.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 106.

the influential Catholic magazine, Criterio, his ideas were widely disseminated and garnered a large audience.⁵⁶ In his book entitled En el humo del incendio, Franceschi supported Franco's nationlistic position in Spain. Fearing the de-Christianization of the upper classes, he called on all Spaniards for a renewed apostolate. Speaking out vigorously in defense of the Church, he denied the protection of the Church to the ruling upper classes when those classes were unjust. He felt that many of the upper classes had concealed themselves, either consciously or unconsciously, behind the skirts of the Church in pursuit of their own particular motives and that, as a consequence, the Church had been harmed and credited with the injustices of the ruling classes. At other times members of the landed gentry had demanded aid from the Church in protecting the rights of private property, although they themselves had been guilty of blatant abuses.⁵⁷ Franceschi expressed sympathy for the revolutionary worker, who in most cases had been rewarded a niggardly daily wage. Possessing only a rudimentary mentality, the worker had been inflamed to hatred and violence against the injustices perpetuated against him. The working classes were always convinced that they served a good cause, and this often resulted in undisciplined and savage actions.⁵⁸ Whether Franceschi was an avowed Fascist or not, would be open to question--in spite of Isabel

⁵⁶Rennie, p. 269.

⁵⁷Msr. Gustavo J. Franceschi, En el humo del incendio (Buenos Aires: Editorial difusión, 1938), p. 54.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 124-125.

Rennie's assertion that as editor of Criterion he was "the most intelligent spokesman for the fascist Catholic clergy."⁵⁹ He denounced Nazism, unequivocally, and stated that Nazism and communism were "two forms of an identical materialist doctrine."⁶⁰ Nevertheless, he viewed the Salazar and Franco regimes sympathetically--probably more from fear of communism than out of unqualified support of Fascism. While perhaps not a Fascist, Franceschi was no exponent of democracy.

During World War II, many liberals lauded the communist cause, but the clergy maintained its traditional position that communism was anathema to Christianity. Antagonism between the clergy and the liberals probably resulted in the clergy being labeled as fascist. The Church dichotomy, epitomized by its right and left wings--with the former considerably stronger than the latter--did not augur well for the future as subsequent events were to prove. However an unmitigated criticism of the Argentine Church as being fascistic would be nefarious and unjustifiable, since a strong vocal minority led by de Andrea never wavered in support of democratic principles. Widely divergent opinions were permitted the clergy under the aegis of the Church and they were given a good deal of latitude. Lamentably, the so-called right wing, which consisted of a large number of Spanish refugees who favored a corporate state, was able to swing the Church behind the Perón regime for a variety of reasons discussed at length in the next chapter.

⁵⁹Rennie, p. 269.

⁶⁰Franceschi, p. 199.

CHAPTER III

YEARS OF REACTION: 1942-1952

The Ramirez Retrogression

World War II had little more than reached its midpoint when the rightest, conservative government of the aging President Ramón S. Castillo was toppled from power on the afternoon of June 4, 1943. The Campo de Mayo military garrison traditionally the guarantor of the presidential office--led by General Arturo Rawson in consonance with the Argentine Minister of War, General Pedro P. Ramirez--marched forward and seized control of Buenos Aires, thus ending constitutional government for the second time within a dozen years. Apparently oblivious to the previously forged entente² between himself and the War Minister, General Rawson occupied the Casa Rosada and proclaimed himself the new chief executive. The new chief of state's tenure was terminated almost before it began, when a forthright reminder from General Ramirez, relating to the prior accord, jarred General Rawson's^{1,2} failing memory and moved him to resign two days later in favor of General Ramirez.¹

General Pedro Pablo Ramirez, the new chief of state, was no democrat; he was a military caudillo in a nation that has had a long tradition of caudillismo or one man personal rule. His

¹Robert J. Alexander, The Perón Era (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), p. 14.

pro-Axis and authoritarian tendencies were readily apparent, although in this he differed but little from his legally elected predecessor. It was in the area of Church-State relations that the Ramírez regime embarked upon a historical course that ran counter to the liberal traditions of the preceding sixty years. Basing its stated ideals upon the concepts of a Catholic corporate state as embodied in the social precepts of the Church, the Ramírez regime from the outset courted the support and favor of the Roman Catholic Church.² Whether from personal conviction or in an attempt to win Church support, General Ramírez set back the clock of time when he decreed on December 31, 1943, that religious instruction would be reinstated in all public schools.³ Not only was religious instruction to be re-impacted, but it was to be compulsory.⁴ In view of the radical nature of the new law, it is important to note the exact words of part of Decree Number 18411. Article one stated that:

In all public schools of primary, postprimary, secondary and special, the teaching of the Catholic religion will be imparted as a daily course in the respective plane of study. Those students whose parents manifest express opposition by belonging to another religion remain excluded from this teaching, as respects freedom of conscience. These students will be given moral instruction.⁵

²Bruce, pp. 179-180.

³Alexander, p. 17.

⁴Rennie, p. 374. Rennie stated that religious education was made compulsory for "the first time in the history of the Argentine Republic." A more thorough examination upon her part would have shown that this statement needed some qualification. See Chapter I, p. 40.

⁵Annáles, Vol. IV, 1944, p. 73, cited by Casiello, p. 336.

Article two added that "the instructors who have the job of teaching the Catholic religion will be designated by the government falling back upon nominations of persons authorized by the ecclesiastical authorities."⁶ Article five created a Director General of Religious Instruction, for purposes of organizing and directing religious teaching in the schools and was dependent upon the Minister of Justice and the National Educational Council with the agreement and consent of the ecclesiastical authorities. Article six related to the expenses incurred in implementing the decree, and stated that a special budgetary item would be included in the National General Budget to cover all the expenses involved.⁷ Scorning sixty years of liberal tradition demanded some form of justification as the Ramírez regime encountered much opposition from teachers and others who resigned their positions rather than conform to the new decree. The Ramírez government made a valid legal argument for its position by basing its decree upon the Constitution of 1853. It re-examined the Public Teaching Law of 1884 and asserted that the law itself was valid since it was not anti-Catholic per se --for had it been anti-Catholic, it would have been null and void according to the Argentine Constitution, which supported and promoted the Catholic religion. Not being invalid, the Public Teaching Law of 1884, by fixing an inconvenient hour for religious instruction, had literally denied religious teaching in

⁶Ibid., p. 336.

⁷Ibid., p. 337.

the Argentine schools.⁸ Denying the validity of subsequent interpretations of the 1884 law, the Ramírez regime held that these previous interpretations of the law were inadmissible--inadmissible because the students were obliged to ignore the State-supported religion as a practical result of such interpretation. Even the Indians had not been denied the benefits of religious instruction according to the Constitution, and its denial to the nation's students was absurd and a misinterpretation of the law, according to the Ramírez regime. Further justification for the new interpretation was found in the statement that "the child without the knowledge of religion is not educated in neutrality, but in atheism, which begins by systematically repudiating the name of God and ends by denying his existence and laws."⁹ The revolution of June 4, 1943 was made, in part, to correct such mistakes, abuses and misinterpretations of the law--at least that is the interpretation of the Casiello school of thought.

The new regime undeniably sought to obtain the active support of the Church and its clergy, even though the Argentine clergy in the twentieth century had remained outside politics, for the most part, as disinterested observers. The dramatic and complete reversal of Church-State relations in the educational field did not unite the clergy as might have been supposed,

⁸Casiello, p. 334.

⁹Ibid., p. 335. This espousal of religious instruction appeared quite similar to the precepts held by Frias, Supra, p. 46.

although the hierarchy had continuously favored a revision of the school laws of 1884. A division of clerical opinion was the inevitable result of the new decree--a division which practically always appeared when certain crucial principles were deliberated. Santiago Luis Cardinal Copello, the leader of the right wing, ultra-conservative clergy congratulated President Ramirez on the new decree stating that:

The patriotism shown by Your Excellency in fulfilling one of the deepest hopes and greatest ambitions of the Argentine people has recuperated for them the morality of our country's great destinies, the path which was shown by the great thinkers and heroes who forged its nationality.¹⁰

Msr. Alfonso Buteler, Bishop of Mendoza, expressing the minority viewpoint of the clergy warned members of Catholic Action to be careful "not to create by our attitudes certain ties and understandings in the eyes of society, by which the Church never gains and almost always loses."¹¹ In the course of events, his warning was completely disregarded by Catholic Action, whose Central Committee issued a letter to Ramirez which stated in behalf of all Catholics that "Your Eminence and your government well deserves the praise of the nation for the clear-sightedness and decision with which the Argentine children have been restored to their authentic patrimony of returning Christ to the schools."¹²

¹⁰Blanksten, p. 190.

¹¹El Tiempo (Mexico City), June 30, 1944, cited by Rennie, The Argentine Republic, p. 374.

¹²Boletín de la Acción Católica Argentina, No. 261, cited by Casiello, p. 337.

In all fairness, it should be mentioned that a minority of the clergy did not support the Ramírez regime, but the overwhelming weight of opinion in favor of Ramírez was clearly manifested in the letters of Cardinal Copello and of Catholic Action in which the Church actively endorsed the regime. The Church did not sustain the regime out of a sense of altruism; rather it sought and found the fulfillment of its long cherished educational ideals in the Ramírez regime. For the Church, sixty years of denial had at last been vindicated by the Ramírez victory-- compulsory religious education in all schools was again a reality and the secularist and atheistic trends of the last century had been arrested.¹³ The question might be asked as to why the Church was so insistent upon a religious education for youth. Here is found the crux of the entire problem--the differing philosophies concerned with the education of the child.

The Catholic educational ideal was diametrically opposed to that of the modern Argentine state. The Church felt that inasmuch as the Argentine state had based its educative philosophy upon the positivist thinkers of the 19th century, the child was considered as only a biological being with no more substance than that with which he was formed. Although the educational goal had been to adapt the child to the means, to give him sufficient weapons in order to confront and succeed in the fight for life, those philosophies, in the eyes of the Church, did not resolve the problem of man's destiny, his end or purpose of life.

¹³Kennedy, p. 206.

They stated what man was, but not what he ought to be.¹⁴ On the other hand, Christian philosophy, according to Casiello, taught that man was dependent upon a greater force than himself for his existence--that force being God, the Alpha and the Omega of all things. As such, man had a spiritual and an immortal soul, subject to God, but not subjugated by Him. The Christian man was neither pure animal nor pure spirit, but held the seeds of wisdom and vice simultaneously, either for good or evil, dependent upon the exercise of his own free will.¹⁵

The conflicts between the educational ideals of the Church and the State resulted in the formulation of two diverse postulates of human life--the anthropocentric theory, which envisioned man as the center of life, and the theocentric theory, which recognized God as the center of a universe in which man subordinated himself to God and was contingent upon Him. The anthropocentrist acknowledged that the true end of life could not be perceived and as such, failed in forming the integrated, the whole man, so far as the Church was concerned.¹⁶ Paradoxically, the theocentrists believed in aiding, clarifying and disciplining the human will and spirit in order that man might attain his legitimate desires and true ends, so long as they were not in contradiction to Christian morals and ethics. Carrying out a well-aimed selection of man's innately good tendencies

¹⁴Casiello, p. 316.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 318.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 317.

resulted in the development of an individual personality which could successfully resist malicious external pressures and resulted in the attainment of the desired ideals. Christian education deplored the "Let nature take its course" ideas as expounded by certain 19th century progressive philosophers. The individual must be stimulated, transformed and orientated toward an ideal in which education plays the role of exciting and awakening the pre-existing powers and not simply in the transmission or infusion of ideas.¹⁷

It was because of this educational philosophy that the Church in part supported Ramírez in re-introducing compulsory religious instruction in the public schools--thereby denying to each individual the right to determine for himself the right or the wrong of an educational ideal. Should education be religious or secular? If religious, does the child receive a too narrow, too conservative, too restricted outlook on life? Conversely, does the child in a public school receive enough religious training outside of school to give him more than a superficial knowledge of Christian fundamentals? As the Argentine state had denied the Christian ideal of education by remaining neutral in the conflict between differing educational ideologies, it had, through its own inaction, festered the liberal positivist philosophical ideas of the 19th century. The Church as a whole reacted favorably toward the Ramírez regime since it had found a champion for its cause--that of a Christian education for youth. The Church and

¹⁷Ibid., p. 314.

its hierarchy were, for the most part, concerned not with the democratic aspects of the regime or the lack of them, but only in the attainment of its own immediate objectives--that of restoring universal religious education on a national scale.

Argentina had thus taken a step backward--as viewed from the liberal viewpoint--while the Church regarded the State's re-establishment of religious instruction as a step forward in the right direction. Prior to 1943 the solution of the Church-State conflict over religious education in the public schools had been mollified by a modus vivendi in which the Church was free to erect its own religious schools complimentary to, but separate from, those of the State. In the final analysis this would seem to offer the most satisfactory solution to the recurring educational conflict. Those students who desired a religious education were untrammelled in obtaining this type of education in the church sponsored parochial schools, while those not desiring an education based upon religious precepts were free to pursue their academic aims in the regular public schools.

Another theoretical question is posed with regard to religious instruction in the public school system: does this instruction, if imparted, deny the individual's freedom of conscience? In a nation where the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants belong to one religious creed, is a violation of freedom of conscience committed when religious instruction is imparted to the majority of students through the public school system? In a democratic system of government where the majority rules, would religious instruction in the public schools deny or discriminate

against a religious minority of that nation's citizens? These are moot questions, worth raising, the answers to which the reader can best determine for himself.

The Peronist Ascendancy

From its inception the Ramirez regime was no more than an interim government--a brief interlude out of which the most despotic, absolute and tyrannical Argentine government of the 20th century would grow.

Juan Domingo Perón's rise to power was no accident--it was the culmination of a well-conceived and deliberate plan to organize the Argentine masses--the deseemisados into an effective source of political power under the auspices of the new General Confederation of Labor. Under the Ramirez regime, Juan Perón, as Secretary of Labor, used his position as a stepping stone to the attainment of his fondest aspirations--that of the presidency. Championing the cause of the Argentine worker against the conservative, reactionary forces of the oligarchy which had successfully thwarted the will of the masses, Perón solicited and obtained the workers' support. For the first time the Argentine worker had found a capable, energetic and willing advocate in Perón and rallied around him in search of its long sought goals of better working conditions, decent housing and the securing of a living wage. Once organized into labor unions, which later became operatives of the all powerful General Confederation of Labor, the workers wholeheartedly lent their support--a support which was

instrumental in fulfilling the ambitions of Perón. His resultant success was not based upon labor alone; it was rather a combination of military and labor support which together assured Perón of election to the nation's highest office. As an army officer, Colonel Perón was able to dominate an influential group of politically minded officers known as el grupo oficial. As a wily politician, he was able to forge an alliance between the military grupo and labor--an unbeatable alliance that would guarantee him ultimate victory in the presidential elections of 1946.¹⁸

Cardinal Copello, as the unofficial spokesman for the right wing of the Church, was, by virtue of his high position, able to exert a dominant influence over the majority of the clergy in the final analysis. This faction, led by the cardinal and supported by Msgr. Gustavo J. Franceschi, Father Wilkinson Dirubé and Father Virgilio Filippo, had from the start favored the Ramírez regime and the anti-democratic, authoritarian policies of the Conservatives and other small nationalistic groups.¹⁹

Msgr. Miguel de Andrea, as the unofficial leader of the Church's left wing, voiced his unrelenting opposition to the Ramírez regime²⁰ and demanded an early return to constitutional government, asserting that "the indefinite prolongation of an abnormal state of instability and uncertainty is a clear symptom

¹⁸Arthur Preston Whitaker, Argentine Upheaval (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1956), p. 3.

¹⁹Blanksten, pp. 232-233.

²⁰Supra, p. 60.

of the evil which is a sad characteristic of our epoch."²¹ As a bishop in partibus--that is a bishop without a territorial see or diocesan authority--Andrea was in a position to expound his beliefs without restriction, for in so doing none of the laity would be penalized by his actions as would be the case of a diocesan bishop. The left wing faction found its support, in addition to Andrea, in Father de Echeverría and Father José María Dunphy.

In the subsequent course of events, the left wing representatives of the Church were, for the most part, subordinated to the ascendant right wing led by Cardinal Copello, who personally favored Perón's ascension to power. This hierarchical factionalism would not be reconciled until nearly a decade later when the heavy hand of absolutism and persecution would activate a new coalescence among the clergy--a unity based upon unanimous opposition to a personal despotism.

Conclusive evidence of the existing dichotomy within the Church was manifested on November 25, 1945, in front of the Immaculate Conception Church of Buenos Aires when a group of Catholic women walked out of the church in protest to "politics in Church." When some parishioners shouted for liberty and democracy, fighting broke out among the rapidly swelling crowd of 1,500 in front of the church. Specifically directing their protest against the regular parish priest, Father Virgilio Filippo, who had displayed a completely partisan attitude in his sermon on the impending

²¹La Prensa (Buenos Aires), January 2, 1947.

elections, the Catholic women kneeled in prayer on the street and beseeched the Almighty to "illuminate this minister's mind."²² This laical protest against Filippo's political meddling was noteworthy, for it demonstrated that part of the church would not submissively yield to political direction, and secondly, it magnified the existing split between the right and left wing elements within the Church. Later, a group of prominent Catholic laymen expressed their unalterable opposition to Perón's candidacy for the presidency in a published manifesto which urged their co-religionists to vote against totalitarianism.²³ Subsequently, in November, 1945, the Argentine Episcopate issued a joint pastoral to all Argentine Catholics reminding them of their duty as citizens to vote in the forthcoming elections. The pastoral admonished all Catholics to refrain from voting for any candidate whose party platform called for the legalization of divorce, secularized education or the separation of Church and State.²⁴ Although nothing new had been added to the hierarchy's previously stated position²⁵ the timing of the pastoral has been interpreted by many observers as having aided Perón's election, since it prejudiced the cause of the Communist, Socialist and Radical political

²²The New York Times, November 26, 1945.

²³Alexander, p. 14.

²⁴The New York Times, December 5, 1945.

²⁵Supra, p. 67.

parties.²⁶ One observer made the bald assertion that "Perón had received political support by high Church officials"²⁷--a statement which has not been corroborated and one based primarily on the timing of the pastoral. Beyond the slightest doubt the pastoral was leveled at the aforementioned political parties and as such could be construed as church intrusion into the political arena. Equally certain is the fact that the right wing of the Church favored Perón's election and believed in his social precepts, but whether or not they entered into any behind-the-scenes political deal with Perón has yet to be substantiated.

On the eve of the elections of February 24, 1946, prevailing opinion among the Catholic clergy favored Perón, particularly since he had actively courted the Catholic vote, but favoritism was not necessarily active support. The few evidences of active support encountered in important instances such as Father Filippo, Cardinal Copello and the editorials of Msgr. Franceschi, certainly do not offer much substance to the charges when contrasted with the opposition of a few left wing members of the clergy. We do not have any definite information as to how the mass of the clergy felt toward Perón's candidacy.

In the most honest elections since the enactment of the Saenz-Pena Electoral Law of 1916, Juan Domingo Perón received

²⁶Bruce, p. 180. Bruce seemed to feel that the Church's pastoral letter "broke the Conservative front and won Perón many a vote" for the "poorer Argentines were inclined to accept what the Church recommended." This opinion by Bruce may have merit, but it is not supported by the skimpy evidence available.

²⁷Alexander, p. 126.

over two-thirds of the total vote, thereby constitutionally becoming the next president. The masses, labor and the working classes had overwhelmingly supported Perón, and his victory was their victory--for them a new day had dawned.

The Peronist Nirvana

Once in power, General Perón manifestly supported and endorsed the Church's activities--a far cry from the pre-existing Church-State relations prior to the Ramírez regime. Clergymen were invited to attend Peronista rallies and party meetings, and asked to bestow their special blessing on the proceedings.²⁸ An ably calculated and conceived policy designed to win a maximum of Church support was pursued by the new regime. One of the first results of this policy was the presidential introduction of Decree No. 18411, the Law of Compulsory Religious Instruction, to the Argentine Congress for its ratification--necessary to confer upon it the aura of legality. Containing an absolute Peronista majority, the Congress approved the measure by more than two to one, and Perón's subsequent signature made it the law of the land on April 20, 1947.²⁹

The idyllic Church-State relations were proximated further when Pope Pius XII awarded the Great Cross of the Order of Pius IX to Perón in recognition of Argentina's munificent contribution toward the relief of war-suffering in June, 1947.³⁰ The

²⁸Ibid., p. 127.

²⁹The New York Times, April 18, 1947.

³⁰Ibid., June 29, 1947.

pope's action came immediately after the celebrated pilgrimage of Señora de Perón to the Holy See and in no way expressed papal approval of the new regime, although if papal disapproval had been manifested, the award most likely would not have been made --in spite of the Peróns' efforts to relieve war suffering.

In October, 1947 the opening of the first Argentine Marian Congress at the shrine of Our Lady of Luján witnessed the presence of President and Señora Perón and the entire cabinet, which had turned out for the occasion en masse. This latter action offered visible evidence of the support and backing which the Perón regime extended to the Church. Was a new union of throne and altar in the process of formation--a union comparable to that extant during the Roese tyranny?³¹ Why had President Peron sought a close alliance with the Catholic Church? Was it out of a deep sense of pious devotion to Christian principles or primarily for political reasons? The framing of a definitive answer to the above questions would show that both political and religious reasons seemed to have entered into his considerations. Political--for Perón needed a maximum of support from all sectors of Argentine society and the Church as part of the society was an unknown political factor to be reckoned with. Religious--for Señora Perón, considered by many the power behind the throne, was the "devout member of the family."³² While alive, Señora Perón was the strongest ally

³¹Supra, p. 29.

³²Claudio Velez, "The Argentine Crisis," The Nation, Vol. 181, No. 1, July 2, 1955, p. 3. Mr. Velez categorically asserts that Eva Perón "was instrumental in the enactment of the religious education of April, 1947." If his statement is correct then most critics of the Perón era have overlooked this significant fact.

the Church possessed, according to one observer, and personally promoted cordial State relations with the Church.

For its part, the Church went along with the Perón regime --especially the right wing clergy--finding in the Peróns' a champion for their social and religious goals. Father Filippo, the most outspoken supporter of the new regime, secured election to the Chamber of Deputies on the Justicialista or Perón social platform in 1948. Father Arturo Melo was another active Peronista supporter in Catamarca, editorializing the virtues of Perón and lauding the new regime in the daily La unión.³³ Never had Church-State relations appeared more harmonious, but on the distant horizon were a few minor, seemingly insignificant events that if observed might have prophesized an impending conflict.

As far back as June, 1946, the Peronista controlled Congress passed a law depriving the Catholic professional and labor organizations of their juridical autonomy.³⁴ At the time, this action caused but a ripple--a ripple that was ultimately to grow into a real problem. Little did the right wing clergy, blinded in its devotion to Perón, recognize this first--this initial act-- as a portend of future events. Most observers regarded this event as of no major import, since surface harmony between the Church and State was maintained, but this writer regards it as the opening salvo in a long struggle by Perón to dominate every

³³Alexander, p. 129.

³⁴Francis E. McMahon, "Perón and the Church," Commonweal, Vol. 61, No. 26, April 1, 1955, p. 571.

segment of society. Outwardly, Church-State relations were extremely amicable as late as September, 1948, when the Argentine hierarchy ordered special prayers of thanksgiving for the merciful preservation of President and Señora Peróns' lives after an unsuccessful assassination attempt had been made against them. In addition, three To Doums were offered especially for the Peronista groups.³⁵ Within two months a second significant event was to occur, a warning signal that the Church would remain as a favored, privileged sector of society only as long as Perón willed it--that is until he had consolidated his power and was no longer restrained by Eva Perón.

On November 17, 1948, the Perón regime decreed that all members of the clergy, in the future, were required to carry special ecclesiastical credentials on their persons. The Peronista controlled press previously had lambasted certain "reactionary" elements among the clergy, and its real significance was to keep a close and continual vigilance upon all clerical critics of the regime.³⁶ Some of the clergy, previously ardent Peronistas, heeded the warning signal and began entertaining reservations about the regime. Father Rodolfo Carbone, in this group, published a pamphlet enumerating the faults of Peronism, but apparently not having the courage of his convictions, ended by stating that Peronism was the lesser of two evils.³⁷

³⁵The New York Times, September 27, 1948.

³⁶Ibid., November 17, 1948.

³⁷Commonweal, Vol. 61, No. 26, p. 672.

A third significant event, of concern to Church-State relations, took place in January, 1949--an event which portended a rising antagonism between Peronistas and the clerical authorities. Father José María Dunphy, pastor of the suburban Buenos Aires church of Corpus Domini for fourteen years and a leader of the left wing church element, was dismissed from his parish. A long time opponent of Perón, Dunphy had been initially attacked some months previously by the Peronista newspaper, Democracia, which had stated that "the priest Dunphy should be removed from his post."³⁸ His attacks against the regime had started in 1945 and had continued intermittently until the 1949 impasse. Admitting that he had spoken against the regime, Dunphy declared: "I have always spoken as a priest, as a Christian and as a Catholic. There is a totalitarianism of the right and of the left, and from the moral and religious point of view, they are equally wrong."³⁹ In the ensuing course of events, Dunphy received a visitor on October 3, 1948, in the person of Cardinal Copello, who had suggested that the good father "voluntarily resign" and that a new monastic post was awaiting him.⁴⁰ Apparently, the four month interval between the cardinal's visit and the removal of Dunphy had been insufficient to convince the latter of the errors of his ways and the merits of the cardinal's suggestion--one that should have been taken literally. Accordingly,

³⁸The New York Times, January 5, 1949.

³⁹Blanksten, p. 213.

⁴⁰The New York Times, January 7, 1949.

Dunphy was relieved of his post, followed by a statement from Copello's secretary that the dismissal was "a matter of no outside interest."⁴¹ Two days elapsed before Dunphy acted by petitioning the Argentine Papal Nuncio for an official ecclesiastical hearing of the charges against him, if any.

Disregarding the merits of the case, it should be noted that Dunphy had committed two cardinal offenses in the eyes of the Church. First, he had disobeyed the express wishes of his superior by not resigning as suggested, and secondly, he had exceeded his authority by going over the head of his immediate superiors in appealing directly for the Papal Nuncio's intercession. Either one or both actions constituted a grave offense from a disciplinary viewpoint as far as the Church was concerned -- particularly since Dunphy had not complied with the sacerdotal vow of obedience. Unfortunately, Dunphy's superiors belonged to the right wing of the Church and were in a position to silence him. Had he been fortunate enough to have had a church superior with similar views, in all probability his actions would have gone unnoticed.

As the Papal Nuncio was insensible to his plea, Dunphy, who persisted in his efforts, tried to gain an ecclesiastical trial by appealing directly to the Vatican. Needless to say, Dunphy's various appeals went unheeded in view of his breach of ecclesiastical discipline, and subsequently, he assumed his new monastic post.

⁴¹Ibid., January 8, 1949.

The foregoing course of events conclusively demonstrated that the right wing of the Church was at this time dominant-- that the left wing, with the exception of Msgr. de Andrea, had been effectively muzzled. Secondly, it served as a clear warning that Peronism would brook no criticism nor interference from any quarter, including the Church. The Church's right wing element, so misguided in their blind adulation of Perón, either would not or could not face the reality of a growing absolutism at this time--a despotism that eventually would demand complete subservience to the State of all sectors of society. By June, 1950 the ascendant right wing clergy had effectuated such a close alliance with the Perón regime that Copello issued a pastoral letter addressed to all dioceses in Buenos Aires, ordering the permanent placement of the Argentine national flag upon all church altars.⁴² This latter action indicated the close agreement between the Church and State, resulting in a virtual union of throne and altar by 1950.

Clear evidence of Perón's basic desacato, or disrespect toward the Church, and his intention to manipulate the Church for the attainment of his political ends was manifested in October of the same year, when Perón and his wife ostensibly departed for a brief vacation just before the arrival of the papal legate, who had intended to pay his official respects to the Peróns.⁴³ Ac

⁴²Ibid., June 21, 1950. It would appear that Cardinal Copello was not a student of history, for the last time that the national flag had been placed upon the church altars, during the Rosas despotism, the results were catastrophic for the Church. See Chapter I, p. 30.

⁴³Commonweal, Vol. 61, No. 26, p. 672.

an affront and rebuff to the papal legate and similarly to the Church, this marked the turning point in Church-State relations. A gradual shift in clerical opinion--the bulk of which had favored Peronism to date--was perceptible. Slowly, imperceptibly at first, many clerics began to hold reservations, as had Father Carbone the year before, about the wisdom and prudence of maintaining a close political alliance with the Perón regime. On the surface, nothing had changed; but Perón, cognizant of the slight gravitation of opinion away from his regime, sought to counteract and arrest it. Using the proposed enfranchisement of the clergy as a magnet, Perón backed a constitutional amendment which gave the clergy the right to vote for the first time,⁴⁴ in the hope of remedying the deteriorating relations between the Church and the administration. Passage of the Government sponsored electoral reform law, by a vote of 79 to 3, by the Chamber of Deputies, was but a formality. Perón's friendly gesture toward the Church had had the dual purpose of halting the shift of clerical opinion and of paving the way for his approaching re-election.

Perón's electoral victory of November, 1951, was a foregone conclusion, since most segments of society supported him almost as ardently as before--particularly the masses and the General Confederation of Labor. However, the Church, while not opposed to Peron's re-election, harbored some misgivings, especially since a realignment of opinion within the Church had begun. The bulk of the clergy became aware that Peronism

⁴⁴The New York Times, July 7, 1951.

constituted a definite threat to the country and the Church, and, accordingly, set about intensifying the work of Catholic Action,⁴⁵ the so-called "right arm" of the Church in modern society. Catholic Action, though still comparatively weak, had grown tremendously in Argentina since the first Eucharistic Congress in 1934, when only 600 men had attended. At the sixth convention held at Mendoza in 1943, over 8,000 men from Catholic Action had been present,⁴⁶ and the subsequent growth had been continuous. Perón viewed the growing activities of Catholic Action with alarm and envisioned them as a distinct threat to his despotic regime. His own nationalist youth organization, based upon the tenets of justicialismo, had made scant headway among the nation's youth. In order to remedy this defect, the government founded the Union of Secondary Students in the early 1950's to intensify Peronista activities among the various student groups. Refusing to stand idly by, the Church reacted by forming a Union of Catholic Students--a dangerous move since Perón would tolerate no opposition to his megalomaniacal desire for absolute power. Thus the basis for future discord was laid.

Another cause of Perón's discontent was the continued activity of a group of Catholic laymen who worked toward the formation of a Catholic political party. These men represented a new force in Argentina--a force that labored to break away from the traditional Catholic conservative channels and sought to

⁴⁵Commonweal, Vol. 61, No. 26, p. 674.

⁴⁶Dunne, p. 414.

pursue a middle course between the extremes of right and left. Upholding the precepts of the French Christian philosophers, Jacques Maritain and J. V. Duotillon, they envisioned the organization of a Catholic political party as the representative of Christian Democracy. These Christian Democrats, as previously mentioned, signed a manifesto denouncing the Perón regime for its violation of human rights.⁴⁷ At that time the Christian Democrats elicited little sympathy from the right wing elements. This demonstrated once again the wide gap in political thinking between the conservative Spanish-educated clergy and the small group of laity striving to advance Christian Democracy.⁴⁸ With the new realignment of church opinion, these laymen were aided and encouraged in their efforts by a hierarchy looking for a champion for its cause.

⁴⁷ Supra, p. 88.

⁴⁸ Commonweal, Vol. 61, No. 26, p. 672.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH'S CONFLICT AND AFTERMATH 1952-1960

The Peronist Armagedon

The Church, in 1952, was to lose one of its strongest allies with the death of Señora María Eva Duarte de Perón, according to Claudio Velez.¹ Regarded by many as a restraining and temporizing influence upon her husband, Señora Perón's disappearance from the Argentine political scene was to be keenly felt by the Church. Even though Señora Perón had come into conflict with the Church in the social welfare area through her vast government controlled charitable enterprises, she remained a loyal adherent to her faith until her death. However, many socially prominent Catholic women, who had been active in various church sponsored charitable societies, intensely disliked Señora Perón, not only due to her lowly background, but for her role in taking control of most church affiliated charities and amalgamating them in the Eva Perón Foundation. The socially prominent Catholic women resented this intrusion into what had traditionally been their private concern and vented their complaints to the

¹Claudio Velez, "Anti-Catholic Perón," The Nation, Vol. 180, No. 5, January, 1955, p. 100.

ecclesiastical authorities, equally chagrined by the virtual elimination of the Church from the social field of charity. Señora Perón's charitable activities often assumed a political character when gifts and bequests were made, not with regard to need, but to the political effect such donations would have. The Eva Perón Foundation, thus accentuating the rising Church-State antagonism, became the focal point of the feminine oligarchical resistance to the Perón regime.

With the death of Señora Perón, the impulsive, egotistical character of Perón was no longer held in check. With restraint once removed, he became the undisputed master of the Argentine nation in fact as well as in name, except for the one segment of society which had not been subjugated--the Church. The press, the courts, the universities, labor and the army had all been subdued, but the Church alone remained as a center of opposition to the despotic regime, although the main body of clergy had little reason to lead opposition against Perón until about the time that he launched several attacks on it!

In November, 1954, Perón, freed from the restraining influence of his late wife and imagining himself challenged by the clerical infiltration of the labor unions and the clandestine activities of the Christian Democrats, launched out into what was to become the most direct persecution that the Argentine Church had ever experienced. Originally piqued by the formation of the Union of Catholic Students in direct opposition to the state backed Union of Secondary Students, Peron completely miscalculated

the strength of Church opposition to his anti-clerical campaign. The Catholic Church was not as important a power group in Argentina as it had been in the last century, since only about fifteen percent of Argentine Catholics could be considered as practicing Catholics. Perón's campaign against the Church was very popular with the many left wing groups and also was generally favored by labor. This attack, when it came, was a diversionary tactic, according to one observer, who felt that Perón hoped to distract public opinion from certain aspects of his regime.² Instead of distracting public opinion, the anti-Catholic campaign provided a rallying point for all the enemies of Perón. Even the most luke-warm upper class Catholics made common cause with the Church. Before his attack on the Church, Perón had the bulk of army support, but as the anti-Church campaign became more intense, many army officers, holding deep religious convictions, rallied around the Church.³ The Christian Democratic movement, which originally did not have the support of the Church hierarchy and had little popular following, was a potentially dangerous threat to Perón's regime.⁴ This new party could ostensibly attract a considerable following and eventually might challenge the supremacy of Perón's tightly controlled General Confederation of Labor.⁵

²Whitaker, pp. 73-73.

³Ibid., p. 76.

⁴Herbert L. Matthews, "Juan Perón's War with the Catholic Church," The Reporter, Vol. 12, No. 12, June 16, 1955, pp. 20-21.

⁵"State vs. Church," U.S. News and World Report, Vol. 38, No. 15, April 15, 1955, p. 51.

The first blow in the climatic Church-State struggle was struck by Perón in early November, 1954, when he declared that certain Roman Catholic bishops were quietly waging a campaign against his administration. Later in his text, Perón identified the three bishops as Nicolas Pasolino of Santa Fé, Fermín Lafitte of Córdoba and Froilán Ferreira Reinafé of La Rioja, and labeled them as enemies of the State. Catholic Action, as a partner in crime against the State, was included in Perón's first scathing attack, since its members had attempted to undermine the Peronista movement. Meanwhile, the Peronista General Confederation of Labor had attacked the actions of certain priests in the labor movement and declared that they were "the greatest danger to President Perón's syndicalist organization."⁶

On November 13, 1954, the Archbishop of Córdoba, Megr. Fermín Lafitte telegraphed Perón that he had always been loyal to the authorities and especially to the president himself. The following day the die was irrevocably cast when the Perón government began taking active measures of repression against the Church with the arrest of the first priest, the Rev. Pablo Gottardi in Villa María, Córdoba, on the charges of "spreading unfounded and alarming rumors."⁷ In the provincial capital, a celebration, honoring the twenty-seventh anniversary of Lafitte's

⁶The New York Times, November 11, 1954.

⁷Ibid., November 14, 1954. Father Gottardi was the first of more than 100 priests arrested during the Peronista persecutions and confined on various charges ranging all the way from disrespect of the presidential person to the printing and distribution of anti-government pamphlets.

installation as head of the diocese was cancelled by the provincial police, who locked the church doors of the Córdoba cathedral and posted guards around the edifice. An example of the strong religious sentiment prevalent in that province, traditionally the stronghold of Argentine Catholicism, was observed the following day. The entire cabinet of the provincial governor and the rector and several deans of the University of Córdoba resigned in protest against the Peronista action.⁸

Cardinal Copello, still not aware of Perón's serious intentions, called upon all Catholics to "comply with your civic duties always without detriment to your religious principles."⁹ Additionally, the cardinal warned all priests not to engage in political party conflicts under pain of jeopardizing their investiture.

Urging calm in the existing Church-State crisis, Perón addressed the General Confederation of Labor and declared that "we have acted in time and have put the brakes on this infiltration."¹⁰ He was careful, however, to accuse only certain reactionary clerics for fomenting the disorders, rather than the Church as a whole. Leaving no doubt as to his supreme sense of

⁸Ibid., November 14.

⁹Ibid., November 24, 1954. The Cardinal's warning was apparently necessary since a large part of the younger priests actively sought to oppose the Peronista repression.

¹⁰Ibid., November 26, 1954. The infiltration was an obvious allusion to the growing clerical influence in the labor unions which Perón considered a serious challenge to his power.

confidence in the ultimate outcome of the struggle, Perón declared that he had the power to stop any further moves by the opposition--a confidence not entirely justifiable by the facts since Church persecution would only serve to strengthen and solidify the left and right wing elements of the Church.

On November 22, the Rev. Rodolfo Carbone was arrested and sentenced to thirty days in jail for drawing a parallel in his sermon between the Nazi persecutions and the existing conditions in Argentina.¹¹ The detention of Father Carbone was followed by the first serious anti-government demonstration in front of Copello's episcopal palace on the Plaza del Mayo where 5,000 Catholics manifested their unqualified support of the Church. The crowd shouted "Our lives for Christ" instead of the traditional governmental slogan of "Our lives for Perón."¹² The Primate asked for calm and implored all churchmen to refrain from taking part in religious demonstrations not authorized by ecclesiastical authorities.¹³ Perturbed by the demonstration against his regime, Perón canceled the annual procession in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Disregarding the governmental decree, a crowd estimated at 100,000 packed the Plaza del Mayo and heard a Marian service broadcast by loudspeakers from within the locked Cathedral.¹⁴ Perón replied the succeeding day by reasserting

¹¹Supra, p. 93.

¹²The New York Times, November 30, 1954.

¹³Ibid., December 1, 1954.

¹⁴Ibid., December 9, 1954.

his claim that the oligarchy and clergy were in league against the Argentine people.¹⁵

By the middle of December, the government's attacks upon the Church had increased to an alarming degree when more than ten priests had been arrested on various charges. In addition, four priests had been discharged as professors of religion at the University of Córdoba, while the Colegio del Salvador, one of the oldest parochial high schools in Argentina, had been seized by the Ministry of Education.¹⁶ Viewing the confused state of things as propitious for the introduction of the Perón Divorce Law, the government legalized divorce for the first time in Argentine history--over the strenuous protests of the Church--and declared that social progress was inhibited without divorce. After Perón's signature made the divorce bill a law, the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, denounced Perón and charged his regime with "oppressing Catholicism, liberty of religion, the morals of the Roman Catholic faithful and the rights of the Church."¹⁷

The last day of the year witnessed the re-establishment of legalized prostitution, previously banned since 1937--a measure designed to promote "social progress," but actually a bill to satiate the laboring classes desire for "freer" social contacts. This measure only served to increase the tense Church-State

¹⁵Ibid., December 10, 1954.

¹⁶Ibid., December 19, 1954.

¹⁷Ibid., December 24, 1954.

relations since the hierarchy was unalterably opposed to prostitution.¹⁸

The New year proved no more auspicious for Church-State relations than had the previous one, for Peron, in his obsession for total power, seemed driven by a megalomaniacal desire to force a fight with the Church--one which the Church earnestly sought to avoid. As long as Perón did not interfere with its prerogatives, the Church bent over backwards in order to maintain amicable relations with the State. Nevertheless, the continued arrest of priests, the closing of Catholic schools, and the removal of religious teachers from the universities solidified clerical opinion against the regime.

The Republican Party for Christian Democracy clandestinely formed in Córdoba, was unable to operate on a national scale due to the government's strict surveillance of all its activities. Nevertheless, the new party attracted the support of the bulk of the clergy, as the clergy welcomed a champion against the dictatorship. If all of the clergy did not favor the new party, at least they viewed it from a neutral viewpoint--a far different perspective than that formerly held by the right wing clergy in preceding years.¹⁹

On March 16, 1955, over 3,000 telegrams were sent to Perón imploring him to abrogate the law legalizing divorce and prostitution. They were without effect.²⁰ As of that date, more than

¹⁸Ibid., December 31, 1954.

¹⁹Herbert L. Matthews, "Peron Facing Fight on Church," The New York Times, February 23, 1955.

²⁰The New York Times, March 16, 1955.

one hundred Roman Catholic priests, who had formerly taught religion in the public schools, were dismissed from their posts, thus removing the Church as an influence in the public schools.²¹ In addition, twenty-five professors from the University of Córdoba, thirty from the National College of Monserrat and eleven from the School of Commerce were discharged--the result of their being "too Catholic."²²

The fierce struggle between the two opposing forces, Peronismo and the recalcitrant clergy, continued unabated with a heightening tempo, into the spring when eighty-nine religious schools were charged with fiscally defrauding the Government of \$300,000--a charge which was not elaborated upon.²³ Twenty-three prelates retorted by signing a letter protesting the action of the Perón regime and stated that many church schools would be forced to close with the sharp reduction in state aid to the private schools. Of all Perón's measures against the Church, this latter action against the schools "hurt and alarmed the Church leaders the most."²⁴

By April, 1955, the conflict had degenerated to such a point that the Peronista controlled newspapers began a campaign advocating the separation of Church and State through an amendment to the Constitution. The press claimed that a "crafty campaign"

²¹America, Vol. 92, No. 22, February 26, 1955, p. 549.

²²The New York Times, February 22, 1955.

²³Ibid., March 25, 1955.

²⁴The Reporter, Vol. 12, No. 12, June 16, 1955, p. 21.

by the Church was aimed at creating disturbances and resurrecting the oligarchy, so that the Peronista nationalist doctrine would be undermined.²⁵ The "ecclesiastical oligarchy" was held to be "one of the worst and most insidious enemies of Perón," and the newspapers charged them with exploitation of the working classes.²⁶ Retaliating by the issuance of a pastoral letter, the Church denounced the government's harrassment and said: "To those who have lost their tenure, their positions, their reputations or their resources and to those who endure imprisonment without being convicted of any crime, goes our voice of comfort and encouragement."²⁷

On Holy Thursday of 1955, the traditional parade from the Congress building to the Cathedral in the Plaza del Mayo had been redirected in order that the marchers would not go beyond the Church of Monserrat, five blocks away. In spite of the governmental directive, a crowd of some 15,000 Catholic men and women, led by a group of younger men, paraded past the Monserrat Church to the Plaza del Mayo. Upon reaching the Plaza, the crowd, swollen to an estimated 35,000 people, waved white handkerchiefs in front of the Cathedral and sang "God Save Argentina."²⁸ Following this great outpouring of Church support, the

²⁵The New York Times, April 4, 1955.

²⁶Ibid., March 29, 1955.

²⁷"Strongman vs. Church," Time, Vol. 65, No. 14, April 4, 1955, p. 32.

²⁸"The Church Defies Perón," Time, Vol. 65, No. 16, April 18, 1955, p. 46.

Minister of Education stopped all religious instruction in the public schools, calling the action a temporary suspension--but Church leaders regarded the move as permanent.²⁹

On April 20, the Roman Catholic school authorities sued the Ministry of Education, charging defamation by the preceding month's governmental charge of fraud. Replying to the civil action, the Peronista newspaper, Democracia, stated that the "Yellow internationale" of the church was attempting to pass on its vices and hate to the State.³⁰

A large pro-Church demonstration occurred on May 6, in front of the Cathedral in downtown Buenos Aires, leading to the arrest of forty prominent Catholic laymen, among whom were retired Brig. Gen. Carlos García Cuevas and the head of Argentine Catholic Action, Luis P. Arrighi, along with the treasurer and secretary of that organization.³¹ Cardinal Copello, upon learning of the incident, went directly to police headquarters, where he was kept waiting for more than an hour and subsequently denied permission to visit the prisoners. The following day, the cardinal called on all Roman Catholics to go to their local police stations and demand the release of the leaders of Catholic Action. The disorders were not localized in Buenos Aires, for fifteen important Catholics were arrested in neighboring La Plata after having led a parade of several thousand to the main plaza

²⁹The New York Times, April 15, 1955.

³⁰Ibid., April 20, 1955.

³¹Ibid., May 8, 1955.

of that city following the Holy Thursday procession.³² The next day, Father Egidio Esparza was arrested and jailed on charges of disrespect to the president for stating in a sermon that "the press points out that in most other nations in the Americas, church and state are separated. I would add that in none of these other American nations are priests jailed because they differ with the government or workers fired because they are Catholic." ³³

The Argentine Senate on May 11, voted to abolish all religious education in the Argentine public schools--a reprisal taken against the Church for its refusal to submit to the State. This was followed by the introduction of a bill to tax the Roman Catholic Church for the first time in Argentine history. All religious bodies, including Church schools, traditionally had been exempt from taxation. A second bill introduced into the Chamber of Deputies proposed the separation of Church and State, an action which would cost the Church a minimum of \$5,780,000 annually in governmental subsidies to the Catholic schools. The Church let it be known that it would approve of the separation if the State would restore all property previously seized from the Church--property valued at \$142,860,000.³⁴

Meanwhile a new altercation occurred in Córdoba, when the police chief issued an order forbidding the holding of Bene-

³²Ibid., May 10, 1955.

³³"Unexploded Bomb," Time, Vol. 65, No. 19, May 9, 1955, p. 42.

³⁴The New York Times, May 15, 1955.

diction within a Carmelite Church. The Carmelite priest refused to accept the order and stated that a private act of worship within the church walls did not require a special permit.³⁵

On May 21, the Peronista controlled Congress passed a bill calling for the election, within 180 days, of a constituent assembly to redefine Church-State relations and to disestablish the Catholic Church as the state religion.³⁶ Later in the week, Independence Day was celebrated for the first time in 145 years with the president absent from the traditional Te Deum service.³⁷ Following the Independence Day celebration, more than 125 persons were arrested in six provincial capitals as a result of disorders. Most of the detained were members of Argentine Catholic Action, and this fact would seem to indicate that opposition against the Perón regime had been actively promoted by members of that organization.

The last day of May witnessed the dismissal of 113 Roman Catholic nuns from the orphanages and homes for the aged, along with the secularization of the Holgar Unzué Orphanage in Mar del Plata.³⁸ That evening, demonstrations against the Government broke out at Corrientes, Tucumán and Córdoba, resulting in the arrest of twenty-four persons.³⁹

³⁵Ibid., May 18, 1955.

³⁶Ibid., May 21, 1955.

³⁷Ibid., May 26, 1955.

³⁸Ibid., May 31, 1955.

³⁹Ibid., June 2, 1955.

On June 3, the bill banning all religious instruction in the public schools became law, coupled with the government's termination of all financial assistance to Church schools.⁴⁰

The traditional Corpus Christi Day procession scheduled to be held on Thursday was moved up to Saturday by the Church authorities in order to avoid any disturbances. The Government replied that the parade would be an illegal act under any circumstance, regardless of the day that it was held, since it might result in serious disorders. Pamphlets appeared asking all Catholics to make a peaceful and passive demonstration and warning all participants to assemble early, as public transportation to central Buenos Aires would be halted by the government.⁴¹ The fateful day arrived on June 11 and was the climax of the Church-State struggle. A crowd of more than 100,000 Catholics--the largest religious demonstration ever held in Argentina--gathered in the Plaza del Mayo for the traditional procession in honor of the Feast of Corpus Christi. A six hour parade passed through sixty-five blocks of central Buenos Aires, headed by the leaders of Catholic Action. The parade halted in front of the Congress building long enough to raise the papal flag, beside that of the national flag, and peaceably returned to the Plaza del Mayo, carefully avoiding a rival government sponsored demonstration honoring the return of a renowned Argentine boxer from Japan. Once again in front of the Cathedral, filling the Plaza del Mayo

⁴⁰Ibid., June 3, 1955.

⁴¹Ibid., June 9, 1955.

for some fourteen blocks, the Catholic demonstrators shouted "the Army is Catholic!" and "we have had enough of fear." The Perón government, fearful of a headlong clash with the demonstrators, ordered all police to keep away from the crowd. On-the-scene foreign observers reported that the army leaders were very impressed by the size of the pro-Church crowd which demonstrated its express opposition to the Government.⁴² At midnight, after the orderly dispersal of most of the crowd, 250 Catholics, many of them women who earlier had been trapped in the Cathedral, were arrested. The Government newspapers accused the Catholics of bombing the Israeli and Yugoslav embassies and of breaking the windows of four Peronista newspapers during the parade. Democracia, the official government mouthpiece, called the Saturday events "treasonable," an action which only increased the visible state of tension at this time in Buenos Aires.⁴³

June 14 saw the arrest of 430 persons, caught inside Cardinal Copello's episcopal palace, followed by fighting in the Plaza del Mayo.⁴⁴ Perón replied to the Saturday demonstrations in a broadcast to the nation, asserting that the Church "was the wolf in sheep's clothing" and that a "clerical political act" had occurred on Saturday, rather than any homage paid to God. He concluded by declaring that the "Government was not against the Church, but rather . . . the Church was against the Government."

⁴²Edward Morrow, "Big Catholic March Defies Perón Ban," The New York Times, June 12, 1955.

⁴³The New York Times, June 13, 1955.

⁴⁴Ibid., June 14, 1955.

The next day Perón retaliated against the Church by dismissing Bishop Manuel Tato--auxiliary bishop of Buenos Aires and acting head of the archdiocese during Cardinal Copello's illness--and his secretary Msgr. Ramón Novoa. Both men were charged with treason and detained at police headquarters prior to deportation to Italy. Significantly, none of the Government's four secretaries nor the Defense Minister, Gen. José Sosa Molina, signed the decree of expulsion.⁴⁵ Cardinal Copello, recovering from a nervous breakdown at a nearby monastery, went directly to the Argentine Foreign Minister, Juan Remorino and demanded an explanation for the dismissal and expulsion of the two prelates.

On June 15, Bishop Tato and Msgr. Novoa arrived at the Vatican and reported on the true state of Church affairs in Argentina. That evening the Holy See excommunicated Perón, along with all others who had "trampled on the rights of the Church."⁴⁶ The decree deprived Perón of all the sacraments and of any participation in the religious life of the nation. His excommunication helped to consolidate Catholic opinion at the time that the revolt was in progress.⁴⁷ Technically, Perón could no longer be considered the legal president of Argentina--for the Constitution specified that a president had to be a Catholic, and the decree of excommunication, in effect, legally barred Perón from continuing in office. A few hours later, a coincidence of opinion

⁴⁵Ibid., June 15, 1955.

⁴⁶Ibid., June 17, 1955.

⁴⁷Kennedy, p. 210.

between the Church and naval officers appeared when a revolt broke out at noon on June 16, preceeded by an attack of Navy planes on the Casa Rosada. Perón, supported by the army and aided by the fact that the Navy planes could not land and re-fuel, had the revolt crushed by midnight.⁴⁸ However, that night, a Peronista inspired mob attacked nine churches in Buenos Aires, setting them on fire after sacking them.⁴⁹ The following day, Perón addressed the nation and deplored the "Communist" excesses perpetuated against the Church. His address did not dispel the shock and outrage felt by the majority of Argentinees over the burning of their churches. The bulk of Argentine public opinion orystralized after this wanton attack upon the Church. Many who formerly ignored religion now rallied around the Church and determined to end Perón's power. The damaged churches served as a focal point for the piety and anger felt by the mass of citizens, and the government, thoroughly frightened by the unanimity of public condemnation, did nothing to discourage the many pilgrimages to the ravished churches.⁵⁰

The result of the unsuccessful June 16 revolt activated a large body of heretofore latent Catholic sympathy, which ordinarily remained outside the political arena. This dormant body of opinion was a potential source of power, but could be brought into action only by grave circumstances. The crisis facing the

⁴⁸Whitaker, p. 9.

⁴⁹The New York Times, June 17, 1955.

⁵⁰"The Ravished Churches," Time, Vol. 66, No. 2, July 11, 1955, p. 30.

Church, coupled with the desecration of holy objects, rendered this opinion politically active--an active body that would increasingly oppose the Peronist dictatorship until its final overthrow. The succeeding day, Perón, in a move toward reconciliation with the Church, ordered the release of all Roman Catholic priests previously detained. He dismissed the ministers of Interior and Education, both of whom had actively led the anti-Church campaigns. Understandably, these new moves by Perón did not visibly impress many Catholics, for renewed demonstrations by several thousand Catholics broke out, and crowds shouted for the return of Bishop Tato. Msgr. de Andrea's reply to Perón's conciliatory gestures was viewed in the burned out church of San Miguel, when that prelate threw off his vestments and informed the congregation that henceforth he would wear only black as a sign that his soul was in mourning.⁵¹

The Peronist Reprieve and Deposition

On June 24, seventy of the 430 Catholics arrested in the episcopal palace were released, and the Primate of Argentina, Copello, opened high level talks with the Government in search of a solution to the Church-State differences.⁵² Four days later, the cardinal urged all Argentine Catholics to heed Perón's plea for a political truce and desist from any further anti-government acts. Perón remained silent for the next two weeks, a silence

⁵¹"Damage Control," Time, Vol. 66, No. 2, July 11, 1955, p. 30.

⁵²The New York Times, July 4, 1955.

interpreted by his opponents as a clear manifestation of his weakness. His subsequent July fifth speech was conciliatory and encouraged, rather than weakened, opposition to his regime.⁵³ Catholic Action leaders disagreed with the Primate's recommendation for a reconciliation with Perón and determined to pursue a course of continued resistance to the regime.⁵⁴ This course of resistance was revealed on the 139th anniversary of Argentine Independence when a parade, organized by the leaders of Catholic Action, marched to the Plaza del Mayo, shouting "Let him go" and "Fear is dead." The demonstrators were in direct disagreement with the hierarchy's policy of reconciliation, expressed by the latter's cancellation of the traditional Te Deum commemorating Argentine Independence. The following day, a crowd of 1,000 demonstrated in front of the Cathedral, waving white handkerchiefs and shouting "Death to the tyrant" and "Peace and freedom." Once sufficiently aroused, the Catholic laity were in no mood to heed the bishops' plea of reconciliation--having viewed Perón's past actions, they were no longer willing to trust his motives nor intentions. Police loyalty, wavering at the time, divided between sympathy for the crowd and fulfillment of duty. Finally, the police responded by locking up hundreds of demonstrators in the Cathedral--thus ending the disorders.⁵⁵

A few days later, the Perón regime announced that it would

⁵³Whitaker, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁴The New York Times, July 8, 1955.

⁵⁵Ibid., July 11, 1955.

resume paying salaries to Church prelates--salaries which had been stopped in April--and, in addition, would grant Catholic chaplains the right to return to their prison posts.⁵⁶

On August 15, the Church hierarchy instructed all Catholics to observe the traditional holiday of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, adding that school children would observe the occasion by not attending classes.⁵⁷ The tacit truce between Perón and the Church was broken at the end of August when five men in a jeep fired upon some policemen, and milling crowds battled the police all day.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, university students, protesting the Government's abolition of the feast day, battled police and firemen for three hours before being taken into custody. This act set off a general Roman Catholic student strike or boycott for a "Crusade for Liberty" which was 100% effective in the parochial schools and 65% effective in the public schools.⁵⁹

The resulting disorders, toward the end of August, hardened the Perón government's stand, and the Minister of Interior charged that Roman Catholic priests were actively inciting subversion against the government. He warned that they must desist or face prosecution.⁶⁰ As a consequence, Perón sought to bolster

⁵⁶Ibid., July 14, 1955. Perón was clearly on the defensive from June 16 on. His position grew steadily weaker with attempts at reconciliation. Even the Radical Party, led by Arturo Frondizi, later president, was allowed free radio time in which to assail the Perón regime.

⁵⁷Ibid., August 15, 1955.

⁵⁸"Peron's Big Blow," Newsweek, Vol. 46, p. 43.

⁵⁹The New York Times, August 16, 1955.

⁶⁰Ibid., August 18, 1955.

his regime by again employing the harsh, repressive measures previously used to crush opposition, but public opinion was in no mood to return to the grim days prior to June 16.⁶¹ The pursuit of a carrot and stick policy would not succeed. Still attempting to pacify public opinion, Perón, in early September, postponed the bill which would have separated Church and State and announced that the Argentine ambassador to the Holy See would shortly return to his post.⁶²

The last act in the Peronist tyranny was written on September 16, 1955, in Córdoba and in Bahía Blanca, when a full scale revolt led by the Navy and the Air Force broke out against the despotism. Córdoba, as the chief center of rebel resistance, was once again to triumph over the capital in the long intermittent struggle between the hinterlands and the porteños. Led by General Eduardo Lonardi, a practicing Catholic, a group of Air Force Cadets at the cadet school just outside of Córdoba held out against a vastly superior force of 7,000 Government troops. Repulsing the loyalist attacks, the cadets were able to send forth planes bearing the revolutionary sign of the cross, signifying "Christ will win,"⁶³ on bombing missions against the government troops. Within the city of Córdoba, Brig. General Dalmiro Félix Videla Balaguer led hundreds of armed civilian cadres, organized in squads of ten men each with a handful of rebel soliders, in house to house

⁶¹Whitaker, p. 16.

⁶²The New York Times, September 10, 1955.

⁶³Whitaker, p. 31.

fighting which lasted for three days before the government buildings were finally captured. The naval forces from Bahía Blanca headed north in an attempt to blockade Buenos Aires and drew up alongside the capital in the Rio de la Plata estuary, preparatory to shelling the city. Defectors among the army units in San Juan and Mendoza joined the rebels and cut off the Peronista forces, thereby isolating Western Argentina from the capital.⁶⁴ On September 19, threatened with the bombardment of Buenos Aires, Perón at last resigned and fled to neighboring Paraguay, thus ending one of Argentina's longest and most brutal dictatorships.

Immediately after the successful revolt, General Lonardi was installed as provisional president of the Republic, attributing his victory to the part played by the civilian populace of Córdoba.⁶⁵

The Post-Perón Period

In early October, Lonardi outlined his policy toward the Church, stating that "all differences" would be settled "through the conclusion of a concordat."⁶⁶ Additionally, he ordered religious instruction resumed in La Rioja province and restored the Catholic nuns to their posts in the welfare institutions.⁶⁷ Before the

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 32.

⁶⁵The New York Times, September 22, 1955.

⁶⁶Whitaker, p. 36.

⁶⁷The New York Times, October 4, 1955.

month had ended, the exiled prelates, Tato and Novoa, returned to Buenos Aires, greeted by a crowd of 30,000 who had turned out to welcome them back.⁶⁸

Lonardi's reign proved to be rather brief--lasting less than eight weeks before being forced out of office on November 13, 1955, by General Pedro P. Aramburu. Opposition to certain of his policies had developed among the Army clique, for many officers regard him as too soft on the Peronistas and believed that reactionary Catholics were too influential in his government.⁶⁹

The Aramburu government pushed a more vigorous anti-Peronista campaign and followed a middle of the road course in Church-State relations. With regard to religious instruction in the public schools, Gen. Aramburu decided to allow the Peronista prohibition to stand, thus placating the mass of his anti-clerical supporters on the one hand, but disappointing many of his Catholic adherents on the other.⁷⁰

By May, 1956, a minor religious issue erupted into prominence. A group of 1,000 students at the University of La Plata, long noted for its liberal tendencies, seized the institution in protest against the policies of the Minister of Education, Dr. Atilio dell'Oro Maini, who had been a holdover from the Lonardi government. Two days later, student demonstrators at Córdoba and

⁶⁸Ibid., October 24, 1955.

⁶⁹Arthur P. Whitaker, "Argentina: Recovery from Perón," Current History, Vol. 32, No. 188, April, 1957, p. 207.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 207.

Buenos Aires were injured in clashes between the supporters and opponents of Oro Maini. His opponents, led by the Argentine University Federation, charged that Oro Maini was a "clerical reactionary." The Argentine University Federation was in the vanguard in demanding the resignation of Oro Maini and finally obtained its objective.⁷¹

General Luis Rodolfo González, a former War College professor, criticized rightist Roman Catholics in a speech given before the Military Club in September. His speech had a bombshell effect upon his audience when he stated that "Spanish priests and clerics foment pernicious principles amongst us and use their great influence upon the youth."⁷² In addition, he attacked the Superior War College as "being a breeding ground for totalitarian officers."⁷³

The year 1957 saw the Argentine People chiefly concerned about problems arising from the forthcoming election of a Constituent Assembly. La Prensa favored the constitutional reform in order to strengthen the Argentine federal system and reduce the power of the president.⁷⁴ Speaking out against political parties which advocated divorce, compulsory secular education or a "one big union" labor policy, the Roman Catholic bishops admonished

⁷¹The New York Times, May 11, 1956.

⁷²Ibid., September 8, 1956. It is interesting to note that a majority of the Argentine clergy encountered in this thesis have Italian rather than Spanish names.

⁷³Ibid., September 8, 1956.

⁷⁴"River Plate Republics: Argentina," Hispanic American Report, X, No. 1 (January, 1957), p. 37.

their members to refrain from voting for these parties and urged all Catholics to collaborate in restoring normalcy to Argentina.⁷⁵ During the following weeks, the pre-election situation was further confused when certain political parties, purposely using vague and imprecise language to describe their principles, aimed at winning some of the Catholic vote. In response, the Argentine episcopacy appealed to all political parties to clarify their positions regarding the fundamental problems of life.⁷⁶

The election results for the Constituent Assembly were tabulated at the end of July, and the Moderate Radicals led the reform parties, receiving 2,143,000 votes and capturing 77 seats in the 205 member Constituent Assembly. The socialist Party, also in favor of constitutional reform, captured 511,000 votes and 12 seats, while the new Christian Democratic Party obtained 420,000 votes, placing third with seven seats in the Constituent Assembly. The Intransigent Radical party, which was against constitutional reform, obtained 1,329,000 votes with 73 of the Assembly seats, making it numerically the second party in the nation.⁷⁷ A full 25 percent of the electorate had not voted, as most of them were supporters of ex-dictator Perón. Some observers stated that not all of the blank ballots were for Perón since from two to ten percent of the total vote cast in previous elections

⁷⁵The New York Times, June 9, 1957.

⁷⁶Ibid., June 23, 1957.

⁷⁷Ibid., July 31, 1957.

had been blank.⁷⁸

In September, hope dimmed for reform of the Constitution of 1853 when party factionalism broke out. Nevertheless, President Aramburu expressed his desire to reform the Constitution so that a future president could not make himself a dictator. Before the close of the first day's session at Santa Fé, the Intransigent Radical Party members walked out of the Constituent Assembly, thus weakening the supporters of reform.⁷⁹ In spite of the boycott by the Intransigent Radicals, the remaining delegates unanimously approved the Constitution of 1853 as the law of the land, thereby abrogating the Perón Constitution of 1949 favored by the Intransigent Radicals. Although the delegates present constituted but half, 105 out of the 205 delegates to the Assembly, their votes won the day.⁸⁰

Dr. Lucas Ayarragaray was chosen by the new Christian Democratic party to run as the party's standard bearer in the forthcoming elections of February, 1958. His vice-presidential running mate was to be Horacio Sueldo.⁸¹

After the election of Arturo Frondizi in February, 1958, the Church-State issue again flared to the forefront of Argentine problems. President Frondizi presented a bill to Congress requesting public support for all private universities--universities

⁷⁸"River Plate Republics: Argentina," Hispanic American Report, X, No. 7 (July, 1957), p. 378.

⁷⁹The New York Times, September 8, 1957.

⁸⁰Ibid., September 25, 1957.

⁸¹Ibid., November 5, 1957.

which had been created by private initiative--to qualify them to issue diplomas and professional titles on a par with the state institutions, provided that they submit to the conditions established by State regulations.⁸² Most Argentine university students went on strike against the bill in defiance of Frondizi's wishes. Student rioting against the bill continued into October and led to the wounding of three students in Tucumán.⁸³ The federal chief of police in Buenos Aires stated that Communist agitators and leftist extremists were attempting to convert the university dispute into a religious conflict.⁸⁴

On October first, the Frondizi sponsored bill survived an all night meeting of the Chamber of Deputies when the required two-thirds majority necessary to override Senate approval of the measure failed to pass. The victory was a personal one for the president, and jubilant Catholics commended him on his efforts.⁸⁵

Approximately a year later, Frondizi joined 300,000 persons at the National Eucharistic Congress held on October 12, 1958 in Córdoba. Frondizi praised the civilizing role of the Church in Argentina and wished it well for the future.⁸⁶ Later that month, Antonio Cardinal Caggiano became the eighth archbishop of Buenos Aires, when he swore an oath of allegiance to uphold the Argentine

⁸²Ibid., September 25, 1958.

⁸³Ibid., October 4, 1958.

⁸⁴Ibid., October 1, 1958. There is no evidence for or against this assertion.

⁸⁵Ibid., October 12, 1958.

⁸⁶Ibid., October 14, 1959.

Constitution in a civil ceremony boycotted by the Papal Nuncio who objected to the wording of the oath since it upheld national patronage.⁸⁷ Cardinal Caggiano was attended by Frondizi and other high government officials. Afterwards, Frondizi had an interview with the controversial bishop of La Plata, Antonio José Plaza, known as the workers' bishop for his role in reconciling the Peronista masses still loyal to Perón.⁸⁸

Once again Church emphasis was shifting from the political field to the social arena--especially since the Church was no longer threatened by secular political forces. The temporary interruption brought about by the Perón tyranny had forced the Church to concern itself with political issues, but now, with the dictator gone, it was free to pursue its mission in the social and spiritual fields of human activity. Led by Pope Pius XII, the Argentine Church sought to strengthen its visible presence in Argentina in a new campaign aimed at increasing the number and quality of the clergy and in strengthening religious devotion among the people. Accordingly, Bishop Fermín Lafitte, coadjutor archbishop of Buenos Aires, opened a crusade for priestly vocations,⁸⁹ by noting that of the 51 parish vacancies in Buenos Aires in 1957, only seven were filled by new Argentine clerics and only six would be filled in 1958. The drive to increase priestly vocations and religious devotions among the people was spearheaded in 1960, by

⁸⁷Ibid., October 27, 1959.

⁸⁸Ibid., September 14, 1960.

⁸⁹Supra, p. 103.

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, the United States director for The Propagation of the Faith. Sheen visited Argentina at the time that the largest crusade ever witnessed in Latin America was being held. The crusade was begun by the Papal Nuncio when he dispatched 2,000 missionaries to open the dialogue between the Church and Argentina. Sheen made twelve television appearances, lectured at the University of Buenos Aires Law School and at the Institutes of the Holy Cross. The week-long crusade was regarded as a great success--some three million Argentines had attended services in the Cathedral of Buenos Aires, and the number receiving Communion had increased threefold. In addition, a record number of baptisms and marriages had been performed.⁹⁰ Sheen's return to the United States was followed by a meeting of 800 Catholic clergy and lay workers in Washington, D. C. The American group agreed to give Latin America top priority during the decade of the 1960's and, toward that end, stated that "the U.S. hierarchy would contribute substantial sums of financial aid to the Church in Latin America."⁹¹

The close of 1960 witnessed the Roman Catholic bishops of Latin America appealing to national leaders and all Catholics to support low-cost housing and just land reform. The bishops, gathering in Buenos Aires, added that the various governments and private groups must construct decent housing for all families

⁹⁰"Task Force for Catholicism," Times, Vol. 76, No. 18, October 31, 1960, p. 28.

⁹¹The New York Times, September 14, 1960.

and permit the peasants the right to attain their own land.⁹²
The Church's stance had thus become more stabilized in its new
role.

⁹²Ibid., November 20, 1960.

CHAPTER V

PAST AND PRESENT

The State

We have traced the development of Church-State relations from the founding of the Argentine nation up to 1960 with particular emphasis on this development since 1892. However, only brief mention has so far been made of the composition of the power structure of the Argentine State. These components, or centers of power, together constituted the dynamics and the essence of the State. Any enumeration of these power centers would include not only the Church, but the oligarchy, the political parties, organized labor, the university students and the armed forces.

Traditionally, Argentina has been controlled or governed by any number of these power centers jointly, acting in concert. Any number of combinations have evolved between the various power centers with first one and then the other allied together for a certain period of time. As these links or common bonds have broken with the emergence of new ideas and issues, a new combination of power resulted in which former allies often found themselves on opposing sides. Rarely has there been a unanimity of agreement or action among the power centers for a long period of time, but prior to the 20th century human society was more

simple, less complex and consequently less fragmented. In the society that was, but is no longer, there were three principal centers of power, instead of the six or more found in contemporary Argentina--the Church, the army and the oligarchy. These three traditional centers of power acted in unison more often than not, enabling them to dominate the Argentine nation economically, politically, and religiously. As there existed religious unanimity in the 19th century, a political concordance frequently governed relations between the Church, the army, and the oligarchy.

The Church, politically, was as important, or nearly as important, as the other centers of power, for it alone encompassed most Argentines and transcended the limits of the other centers of power, principally because the majority of the army and the oligarchy not only acceded to their particular group but, additionally, gave loyalty to the Church, resulting in a juxtaposition of the various centers of power.

As has been shown, this traditional power structure began to change radically in the 1880's--largely a result of the growing divisions within society--the rapid increase and expansion of the new centers of power, out of and away from the original nuclei. Immigration, the rise of an urban proletariat, the increase and spread of education, the organization of political parties--all acted as catalyzing agents in sparking the transformation of a small rural traditional society into that of a larger, more complex, modern state--the contemporary Argentina. The gigantic

cattle barons found new commercial and industrial giants had crowded into the expanding economic power spectrum. Labor, never effectively united, waited to be organized. The State as a dispenser of social welfare benefits would develop and expand its operations through its agents.¹

No longer was the Church the behemoth that it once had been when it embraced practically the whole Argentine nation, and accordingly, it suffered a decline in its relative importance--a decline in both the religious and political fields. Placed on the defensive by the new challenges confronting it, the Church, still a creative force, was constrained to shift its emphasis from the political to the social field of human activity, although its weakened political power would remain a potent force to be reckoned with as the Perón era later proved.

The oligarchy, like the Church, experienced a relative decline in its political and economic power as the 20th century progressed--and particularly since 1942. Once a dominant power center in alliance with the Church and the army, the oligarchy, although controlling much of the national wealth, held an increasingly smaller proportion of the total wealth in an expanding and changing society. Never large numerically, the oligarchy was able to maintain its political hegemony by astute behind-the-scenes political maneuvers with the army. Determined to hold on to its privileged economic and social position, the oligarchy allied itself with any conservative reactionary force in order to

¹Lieuwen, p. 69.

maintain the status quo: thereby maintaining for itself a major role in national affairs. The political power of the Argentine oligarchy seems to have waned as a decisive influence upon national affairs.

Numerous Argentine political parties arose from the disillusionment and discontent experienced by the lower middle classes and bourgeoisie at the hands of the oligarchy and conservative forces. The political parties became spokesmen for the bourgeoisie--a means of expressing opposition to the conservative and oligarchical ruling interests, which heretofore had ignored the existence of the new and rapidly increasing commercial class within the national confines.

Originally, the bourgeoisie had been numerically small; it had no champion for its interests, no means of protesting against the abuses of the wealthy oligarchy and conservatives. The rapid rise of political parties of whatever political hue supplied the bourgeoisie with a weapon--an instrument that could be employed to defense of its own interests. One of Argentina's greatest dilemmas has been that the political parties have fragmented to such a degree that no single party could command more than a minimum of public support--at least not until the Peronist party was organized. Where political life is not clearly defined nor developed as in Argentina, the resulting confusion has been so great that the nation has often bordered on anarchy. As nations develop politically, the centers of power distinguish themselves, usually becoming more public and consequently more

democratic.² As Argentina has not evolved politically, the democratic processes have suffered. No modern state can maintain a stable government where a multitude of small political parties exist--amply demonstrated in the example of France, where political factionalism and fragmentation have led to virtual anarchy. Party factionalism in Argentina likewise has so weakened and divided public opinion that the bourgeoisie class has been effectively disenfranchised. The differences between the political parties has become so basic and bitter that they have lost contact with the masses and prestige among the people at large.³ On the contrary, in most modern democratic states where the rights of the individual are respected and upheld, the large bourgeoisie political parties have bolstered the center position and avoided the extremes between the right and the left. Where a multiplicity of political parties exists, as in Argentina, the middle classes cannot speak effectively; hence they have been dominated by a minority of extremists, usually of the political right.

The Argentine masses, chiefly laborers in urban and rural areas, were generally disregarded before the rise of Perón. His electoral success was their victory⁴ for once organized labor could make its voice heard; could be represented in the political

²"Politics in Latin American Countries," CIE REPORTS, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 110.

³Arthur P. Whitaker, "The Argentine Paradox," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCXXXIV (March, 1961), p. 109.

⁴Supra, p. 85.

forum of the nation and eventually could come to dominate the political life of the nation through the ballot box and the powerful General Confederation of Labor. Organized labor was the last of the modern centers of power to arise as a potent political force, but certainly not the least. As the most numerous of all the Argentine power groups, it had too long lacked a spokesman for its just demands for better housing and living wages. Consequently when it found an advocate in Perón, it supported him wholeheartedly and was instrumental in his rise to power. The average Argentine laborer was only superficially educated, and for him, democracy and individual rights were utopian and meaningless since those who had to toil long hours in order to earn a small pittance were concerned not with ideas, but with the realities of the present life. Their antagonists were the oligarchy, the conservatives, and other Argentines who luxuriated in a hedonistic life without care, thought or concern for their fellow man. With the ultimate downfall of Perón, labor's political power suffered a temporary and dramatic eclipse. However, organized labor cannot be again ignored by the ruling cliques, for labor's future cooperation will be necessary to guard the stability and keep the internal tranquility of the Argentine nation.

As the weakest power center in Argentina, the university students are a vocal minority that bring pressure to bear upon many vital political issues through the media of student strikes and demonstrations. Usually organized along the lines of the nation's political parties, the university students act as a

catalyset rather than the determining factor in the formulation of major political decisions. Their strikes may be ineffective, but at such times that they affect the population as a whole they become an influential medium of arousing mass protest.⁵ When the university students demonstrate against specific governmental policies, they vivify and activate political opposition to the State. Whether they will ever be on a par with the other centers of power would seem doubtful since they are limited in numbers. Nevertheless, at certain periods they will continue to have a telling effect upon the internal organs of the nation.

The armed forces are today perhaps the single most powerful force in Argentina. Traditionally one of the important centers of power, but unlike the oligarchy and the Church which have declined in relative political importance, the armed forces have not only maintained their former position, but have increased it to the point that they virtually dominate Argentine political life. Since the revolution of 1930 against the then president, Hipólito Irigoyen, the armed forces have played an increasingly larger role and have become a permanent factor in Argentine political life due to the sharp and deep divisions within the nation--divisions which have led to a loss of direction.⁶ Formerly allied with the oligarchy and the conservative forces in the 19th century, they have recently--or rather a part of them--supported

⁵"University Students: A Real Pressure Group," CIF REPORTS, p. 124.

⁶Whitaker, "The Argentine Paradox," p. 107.

labor's demands for a larger role in Argentine affairs. This resulted in the alliance of labor and the military under Perón --an alliance that became the pillar upon which the Perón regime rested.

After the first anti-Perón revolt, part of the armed forces withdrew its support from labor and backed the Church in its bitter struggle against the tyranny. No friend of political parties, the military had thrown its support to one or another of the various contending factions, depending upon which particular group or groups they favored at the moment. It was said that "the Army gave Perón power and it was the Army, jointly with the Navy, that destroyed his power."⁷

The Argentine military is not and has not been unanimous in its political thinking. The military leaders--the officers--like most sectors of modern society have been the onlookers in the continual saw-saw battle of opinion back and forth like the pendulum of a clock. For a time one particular faction of military thinking becomes dominant and asserts itself politically. This faction remains in the ascendancy until enough opposition has been generated from within its own ranks to permit another faction to rise to the top to displace the former and assume command. The new faction then acts as the spokesman for the bulk of the military. During the Ramírez and Perón regimes, the conservative, reactionary military faction was ascendant and, as such,

⁷"Times Getting Hard for Dictators," U.S. News, September 30, 1955, p. 38. This statement was valid in part, but does not present the entire story, since the other power centers allied themselves with the army in support of Perón, permitting the army to support Perón in the elections of 1946.

supported the dictatorships. However, as the persecution of the Church intensified, many of the military officers with strong religious convictions could no longer support Perón, and this faction became first vocal and then active in determining the military decisions which led to the final overthrow of Peronismo. The military forces have come to regard themselves as the "legitimate force of gravitation in the nation's institutional order" and as the guarantor of republican principles.⁸

Why, it may be asked, are the armed forces so strong today, and why are they able to dominate the Argentine political spectrum? One of the reasons might be that the technological improvements in military weapons made within the last half century have given the military greater combat strength and more rapid mobility. With improved technology has come more rapid communications and more effective weapons. A revolt in a well-organized modern state becomes most unlikely without the assent or cooperation of the armed forces. This axiom is largely overlooked by many experts of political affairs who still predicate revolution on the existent conditions of 1789--that is that man armed only with uncomplicated weapons can effectively revolt against tanks and machine guns with any hope of success.

In recent years, the Argentine armed forces absorbed about eighteen percent of the total national budget.⁹ What part of this large sum was spent on military equipment and what part was

⁸Whitaker, The Annals . . . , p. 106.

⁹CIF REPORTS, p. 110.

paid out in the form of salaries to the enlisted personnel is not revealed, but any power center that can rely on approximately one-fifth of the national budget is necessarily a power to be considered, particularly where, as in Argentina, there is an absence of political balance in the national structures.

The Church

Influence of State on Church.--The changing environment and rising power centers of the State caused the Church to shift its emphasis from the political to the social area as mentioned before. The relative political and spiritual decline of the Church since the 1880's was due in part to the State's exercise of the national patronage. State control of religious appointments often saddled the Church with men of inferior ability, who frequently were more concerned about their individual benefices than they were about the religious needs of the people.

An indigenous clergy failed to develop in Argentina, and the nation had to depend upon outside help for what few clerics it could obtain. The lack of clergy, while still serious today, had been even more critical in the nascent years of the young Republic. As a result, modern missionary principles gained little acceptance, and the medieval methods of patronage, unable to perform the missionizing task, led to an underdeveloped Catholicism and the virtual cessation of the Christian apostolate in Argentina.¹⁰

¹⁰Coleman, p. 11.

Another factor responsible for the Church's weakened role in Argentine society was the State seizure of most Church properties in the Rivadavian period of reform.¹¹ The majority of Argentine people still regard the Church as wealthy from the visible signs of handsome Church structures. The practice of voluntary contributions to support the Church remained undeveloped, and the Church found itself compelled to rely on the State for much of its sustenance. This mentality--that the Church is rich--still predominates in Argentina and most of Latin America, although the opposite would be closer to the truth. Although no statistics are available for Argentina, they have been compiled for the Archdiocese of Santiago de Chile, which, with over two million Catholics, has a paltry annual income of \$165,000. In Lima, Peru, an American Maryknoll parish with 7,500 regular Sunday communicants, collects only \$100 a week.¹² The lack of clergy, coupled with the shortage of financial resources are perhaps the two most serious results of State intervention into the religious sphere. These deficits compounded other weaknesses, which set off a chain reaction which seriously threatened the effectiveness of the Church. The lack of clergy led to the relative ignorance of most Argentine Catholics, which resulted in a nominal Catholicism. Future generations of Argentines could have been trained in the basic precepts of Christianity, without Church reliance upon religious instruction in the public schools,

¹¹Supra, p. 26.

¹²Leonard Gross, "The Catholic Church in Latin America," Look, October 9, 1962, p. 31.

if religious schools had not been lacking; the result of lack of money in part.¹³

Recently, the lack of religious devotion among Argentines was attested to by a religious survey conducted in a typical parish in Buenos Aires. Of the 25,000 parishioners, ninety-three percent had been baptized, ninety percent married by the Church, but only sixty percent had made their first Communion. Of 125 Argentine children who made their first Communion in this parish, only one father and six mothers were practicing Catholics. Most baptized Argentines completely ignore the fundamentals of their faith, since only thirteen percent attend Sunday Mass, and less than five percent perform their Easter duty.¹⁴ Besides not practicing their religion, many Argentines deny the dogmas of the Church regarding papal infallibility and the indissolubility of marriage.¹⁵ These foregoing statistics, while not conclusive, serve to highlight the serious questions facing the Church in Argentina--problems that largely originated out of past Church-State relations.

¹³"Latin America--A Challenge to Catholics," World Mission XI, No. 1, Spring, 1960, pp. 1-2. The serious shortage of Catholic schools is shown by comparing New York to Buenos Aires. In New York City, with a Catholic population of 1,500,000 there were 218,000 children enrolled in the church schools, while in Buenos Aires with over 3,200,000 Catholics, or more than double the New York Catholic population, there were only 100,000 Catholic children attending church directed schools in 1958.

¹⁴Tercera semana, p. 61. Roman Catholic dogma states that every Catholic has an obligation to make his annual Easter duty--that is he must go to Confession and receive Communion at least once a year. Failure to make one's annual duty results in ipso facto excommunication.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 65.

The religious life of the Argentines had reached such a low ebb by 1930 that Protestantism was able to successfully increase its missionizing activities to the extent that the Catholic Church was challenged from another area--that of Protestantism. The growing strength of Protestantism in Argentina has been condemned by many right wing Catholic clerics, but other more liberal prelates have viewed the Protestant successes as a blessing in disguise, since the energetic Protestant mission campaigns have acted as an impetus in arousing the Catholic Church from its lethargy. The half million Protestants in Argentina today have provided a needed challenge to the traditional religion. Their missionizing efforts have proved so successful that the Catholic Church has taken a page from the Protestant book by adopting new Christianizing techniques similar to those of their co-religionists, principally that of intense evangelizing campaigns.¹⁶ A three weeks mission campaign was recently launched by the Catholic Church; twenty-two laymen and nineteen priests participated in daily preaching on the streetcorners. The results were eminently satisfactory among the laboring classes. As one cleric later commented: "We are not too late; if we all work and pray for it."¹⁷

In view of the present weakness of the Catholic Church in Argentina, it might be asked how the Church became such an important political factor in the overthrow of the Peronista tyranny, as its main emphasis had of late been directed toward the social

¹⁶Supra, p. 127.

¹⁷CIF REPORTS, p. 133.

area. One general conclusion is that the Catholic Church, traditionally involved in Argentine political activities, had shifted its emphasis to the social phase of human activity, but had not entirely excluded itself from the political arena. This shift in emphasis was interrupted during the period of the Perón tyranny, when the Church was forced to turn its attention to the political arena once again in order to defend its traditional rights. The fight against Peronist aggression necessitated the suspension of activity in the social area, but this suspension proved only temporary in nature. Once Perón had been ousted, the Church again was free to turn toward the social area with a renewed vigor and greater conviction than previously demonstrated.¹⁸ The persecutions and restrictions endured under the Perón government caused a new welding of clerical opinion, since most of the reactionary clerics were forced by events to make common cause with the left wing clergy at this time. After Perón, much of this new spirit of cooperation was maintained, so that social reforms had greater support from the Church than formerly. An additional factor in the greater unanimity of Church opinion was due to the death of many older prelates and their subsequent replacement by younger priests, educated under different circumstances in a different era.

Most observers of the Argentine political scene have stated that the Church was no more than a rallying point in the final overthrow of Perón--in other words, individual members of

¹⁸Supra, p. 128.

the clergy did not actively take up arms and lead the revolts of June 16 or September 16, 1955. This is a valid hypothesis as presented, but it fails to mention the role played by Catholic Action. Catholic Action, as the "right arm" of the Church, had been accorded the role of official spokesman for the Church along with the hierarchy. On the last fateful days before the final overthrow of Perón, the leaders of Catholic Action became divided in opinion, whether to aid and assist actively in the ousting of the dictatorship or whether to heed the hierarchy's pleas for non-intervention. Some leaders of Catholic Action who favored armed intervention undoubtedly did take up arms in Córdoba and probably became the local block leaders in defense of that city, although adequate statistics on their role are not yet available. It is highly probable that many of the squad or platoon captains under General Félix Balaguer were local leaders of Catholic Action.¹⁹ If these suppositions could be substantiated, then the Church was not only a rallying point for the opposition to Perón, but may have been an active participant in his ultimate downfall, along with the armed services.

In the overthrow of Perón, the Church was more of a catalyst than a mere rallying point--it was the agent which aided in the transformation without itself being changed and without which the transformation would have been slower or difficult of achievement. Even if the suggestion that leaders of Catholic Action actively took up arms lacks proof or validity, it may still be asserted

¹⁹Supra, p. 120.

that the Church, however visibly weak in Argentina, exerted a vital influence upon the Argentine people--an influence which, though they might choose to ignore it, they would not allow to be destroyed.

Influence of Church on State.--That the Catholic Church was able to rally support against the State epitomized by Perón was not due to its support of democracy. The Church was chiefly concerned with protecting its interests, and when those interests were threatened, it rose up in its own defense. Perón's attack upon the Church was a calculated risk for the outcome could not be predicted. The increasing persecution of the Church rallied not only Catholic opinion, but cut across class lines and gained the Church much sympathy from a vast reservoir of latent good will even though the Argentine people were but nominal Catholics.

Statistics are not available nor has a comprehensive survey yet been made of the Argentine military's religious beliefs and practices, so far as this writer knows, but from other scientific surveys, an assumption might be drawn that the Argentine military officers were more actively Catholic than the nation as a whole; a large percentage of whom could be considered practicing or formal Catholics,²⁰ particularly since the military officers belonged to an above average educational group. A recent survey to determine the religious practices of the French, based upon their educational level of attainment, in Dijon, France, showed that those with a higher or college education were the most active

²⁰Supra, p. 3.

religiously, while those who had only a minimum of schooling were the least active religiously. In the former group--those with the equivalent of a college degree, fifty-five percent were found to be practicing Catholics, while among the latter, the laboring classes, only thirteen percent were practicing Catholics. In the absence of any similar survey for Argentina, the French survey may or may not have much significance for Argentina because its validity in a different environment would be open to question. However, the Argentine military officers are, by and large, drawn from the middle class and have enjoyed the benefits of a better education, and it is possible that they are more religious than the nation as a whole. If this hypothesis is true, then the Peronista attacks upon the Church culminating in the desecration of the churches may have caused a revulsion in the minds of certain military officers. This revulsion of feeling, this shock and outrage activated by the arsonists may have caused the balance of military opinion to shift from support of Perón to initial latent opposition--opposition which finally matured into the open revolt of September, 1955.

Perón had moved for some time toward a position which made him less dependent upon his brothers in arms. At the same time, it is to be expected that certain personal power ambitions of individual officers militated against the dictator's position in 1955. The position of the Church and its relationship with the dissident military officers has remained pretty much of an enigma in spite of some of the general indications.²¹

²¹Lieuwen, p. 69.

Church-State Relations in Retrospect

The Church until the 20th century had been passive in the social sphere and had failed to present a favorable individual image that the masses could follow. The masses viewed the Church as having been present in Argentina for four centuries, and still it had not been able to improve their lives nor even keep up with the changing conditions of society.²² This lack of vigor in the social field was costly to the Church, for the masses largely turned away from religion. The fact that the Argentine Church has once again turned its face toward the social and spiritual needs of its people does not mean that its influence may no longer be felt in the political realm. As the Church gathers strength among the Argentine people, it must, if its message is effective, generate a strong moral feeling among its adherents. The element of morality should, in turn, make its impact on the whole of society, including its political elements. It might be suggested that a strongly Christian element in Argentina might make a substantial contribution to the stability and democracy needed in Argentine political life. Too often in the past the Church had remained silent to dictatorship, and that silence was interpreted as approval by many Argentines. The masses rejected the established order, for it had not helped them, and seeing the Church as part of that order, they rejected the Church.

The Perón tyranny was not entirely harmful to religion for it did have a beneficial effect upon the Church in that it moved

²²Look, October 9, 1942, p. 32.

the Catholic laity to a keener appreciation of civil and religious rights, too often in the past taken for granted.²³ Before Perón, the Church had been characterized as being preoccupied with irresolute routines that led nowhere. In the post-Perón period this idea has been somewhat dispelled due to the intense efforts of Catholic Action and the visible laical response in the organizing of a Catholic association of doctors and teachers with a membership of 7,000 and 34,000 respectively.²⁴

There still exists much routine Catholicism, but it appears to be on the wane with the growth of an apostolic spirit, especially noteworthy among the younger generation. Another aspect of present Church resurgence is the rapidly increasing role of American missionaries in Argentina. The number of American Catholic missionaries in Latin America has increased by 335 percent--from 489 in 1940 to 2,580 today.²⁵ The American hierarchy is pursuing an intensified and vigorous campaign in conjunction with the Holy See's efforts to rectify the critical shortage of priests and schools. New parishes are being created, new religious schools being built and a more religious atmosphere is said to prevail.²⁶ The Argentine hierarchy has openly pressed the

²³John J. Considine, New Horizons in Latin America (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1958), p. 96.

²⁴Ibid., p. 97.

²⁵Yorke Allen Jr., A Seminary Survey (New York: Harper and Bros. Publishers, 1960), p. 296.

²⁶Tercera semana, p. 66.

oligarchy to raise wages, partition lands and carry out reforms. Additionally, a network of centers, fostering social and economic projects, are being built, and young priests (largely foreign) are entering depressed areas which previously have received only a perfunctory religious care.²⁷

The activities of the Church among the university students through the Union of Catholic Students is having an important effect. Formerly, graduates of Catholic universities, like most Argentine university graduates, had little faith in the masses. This is no longer as true today.

In conclusion, a word about Argentine democracy should be included. The Church-State study which has just been made pointed out some glaring defects in Argentine democracy. Real democracy and individual freedom can exist only where a diversity of opinion and ideas exist--a diversity that the Argentine government has been unwilling to permit, either in the past or at the present time. Dissent from the official position has not been allowed to stand for long. As long as Argentine prelates, intellectuals, and public officials are not free to differ from the official governmental position without fear or danger of removal or dismissal, democracy will be no more than an empty façade in Argentina. Ignoring or pretending that forces which weaken Argentine democracy do not exist is no solution for the problem.

In spite of a high level of education and a relatively sound economic base, democratic ideals have not been achieved.

²⁷Look, October 9, 1942, p. 32.

Argentina is a prime example of the fact that true democracy calls for more than a high level of economic and educational attainment. These are necessary pre-requisites, but political stability is equally important to the effective functioning of a democracy. Without an adequate system of checks and balances upon the power of the State, all the cures and panaceas offered serve to little avail. The State should not be permitted to intervene in the provinces under the guise of protecting the public interest, because this power has been abused too often and too long. Neither should lax laws permitting the declaration of a national emergency under the slightest pretext be allowed to stand, for this instead of protecting the nation and its people, merely promotes the rise of authoritarianism with the consequent subjugation, rather than protection, of the people. Equally important is the fact that the State has abused its power of patronage over the Church in the appointment of ecclesiastics. This abuse of federal power has gone so far that university heads and faculty have been dismissed on the slightest pretense, simply because they disagreed with prevailing government opinion. Provincial freedom is tenuous, Church freedom is restricted and academic freedom is illusory in Argentina. Under these conditions can democracy be attained in Argentina? As this is being written the "president" of Argentina, José María Guido, has called upon the Church to aid the State in maintaining a semblance of order in the forthcoming elections of June, 1963--which in likelihood will be cancelled because of army pressure. It is a sad state

of affairs when the head of a nation feels obliged to call upon the spiritual powers in order to help maintain national stability. The present impasse (1963) does not seem to augur well for the future of the Argentine people--nor does the confused Church-State relationship appear to be any nearer a solution.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Alberdi, Juan Bautista. Bases y puntos de partida para la organización de la república Argentina. Buenos Aires: Francisco Cruz Ed., 1914.
- Alexander, Robert J. The Perón Era. New York: Columbia University Press, 1951.
- Allen, Yorks Jr. A Seminary Survey. New York: Harper & Broe., 1960.
- Blanksten, George I. Perón's Argentina. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.
- Bruce, James. Those Perplexing Argentines. New York: Longman, Green & Co., 1953.
- Casiello, Juan. Iglesia y estado en la Argentina. Buenos Aires: Imprenta López, 1948.
- Conelidine, John J. New Horizons in Latin America. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1958.
- Crawford, William Rex. A Century of Latin American Thought. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961.
- De Andrea, Mgr. Miguel. El catolicismo social y su aplicación. Buenos Aires: Domingo Viau & Cia., 1941.
- _____. Las causas que favorecen la difusión del comunismo. Buenos Aires: Lajouane & Cia., 1937.
- De La Torre, Lisandro. La cuestión social y un cura. Buenos Aires: Colegio libre de estudios superiores, 1943.
- Dunne S. J., Peter M. The Catholic Church in World Affairs. "The Church in Latin America." Edited by Waldemar Gurian and M. A. Fitzsimons. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1954.
- Durá, Francisco. Iglesia y estado. Buenos Aires: Cultura Católica, 1927.
- Franceschi, Mgr. Gustavo J. En el humo del incendio. Buenos Aires: Editorial difusión, 1938.

- Frías, Félix. Escritos y discursos. Vol. III, Buenos Aires: Imprenta y librería de Mayo, 1884.
- Grandes Escritores Argentinos. Vol. XXVII: "La iglesia y el estado." José Manuel Estrada. Buenos Aires: El Ateneo Press, 1929.
- Ingenieros, José. La evolución de las ideas Argentinas. Book IV. Buenos Aires: Tallers gráficos Argentinos, 1925.
- Kennedy, John Joseph. Catholicism, Nationalism, and Democracy in Argentina. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958.
- Legón, Faustino J. Doctrina y ejercicio del patronato nacional. Buenos Aires: Imprenta nacional de Lajouane y Cia., 1920.
- Levene, Ricardo. A History of Argentina. Translated and edited by William Spence Robertson. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1937.
- Lieuwen, Edwin. Arms and Politics in Latin America. New York: Praeger Inc., 1960.
- Mecham, J. Lloyd. Church and State in Latin America. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1934.
- Patee, Richard. El catolicismo contemporaneo en Hispanoamérica. "Argentina." Msgr. Gustavo J. Franceschi. Buenos Aires: Editorial Fides, 1951.
- Piaggio, Msgr. Augustín. Influencia del clero en la independencia Argentina. Barcelona: Luis Gill ed., 1912.
- Rennie, Isabel F. The Argentine Republic. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1945.
- Rippy, J. Fred, Martin, Percy Alvin and Cox, Issac Joslin. Argentina, Brazil and Chile since Independence. Edited by A. Curtis Wilgus. Washington, D. C.: The George Washington University Press, 1935.
- Ryan, Edwin. The Church in the South American Republics. Westminster, Md.: The Newman Book Shop, 1943.
- Tessi, Francisco S. Vida y obra de José Manuel Estrada. Buenos Aires: Casa Jacobo Feuser, 1928.
- Whitaker, Arthur Preston. Argentine Upheaval. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1956.

Articles and Periodicals

- America. XCII, No. 22 (February 26, 1955), 549-550.
- Coleman, M. M., William J. "Latin-American Catholicism," World Horizon Reports, No. 23 (1953), pp. 1-88.
- "Damage Control," Time, LXVI, No. 2 (July 11, 1955), 30.
- Fonseca, Jaime. "Latin America--A Challenge to Catholics," World Mission, XI, No. 1 (Spring, 1960), 15-31.
- Gross, Leonard. "The Catholic Church in Latin America," Look (October 9, 1962), pp. 28-35.
- Langford, Walter M. "The Role of Catholic Culture in Argentina," Catholic Historical Review, XXVI, No. 11 (April, 1940), 51-66.
- La Prensa (Buenos Aires), January 2, 1947.
- Matthews, Herbert L. "Juan Perón's War with the Catholic Church," The Reporter, XII, no. 12 (June 16, 1955), 20-21.
- New York Times. 1923-1960.
- Matthews, Herbert L. "Perón Facing Fight on Church," February 23, 1955.
- Morrow, Edward. "Big Catholic March Defies Perón Ban," June 12, 1955.
- McMahon, Francis E. "Perón and the Church," Commonweal, LXI, No. 26 (April 1, 1955), 670-674.
- "Perón's Big Blow?" Newsweek, XLI (August 29, 1955), 43.
- "Politics in Latin American Countries," CIF (Center of Intercultural Formation) Reports, I, No. 3 (June, 1962), 109-124.
- "River Plate Republics: Argentina," Hispanic American Report, X, No. 1 (January, 1957), 35-39.
- "River Plate Republics: Argentina," Hispanic American Report, X, No. 7 (July, 1957), 372-382.
- "State vs. Church--Perón's New Fight," U. S. News and World Report, XXXVIII, No. 15 (April 15, 1955), 50-54.

- "Strongman vs. Church," Time, LXV, No. 14 (April 4, 1955), 32.
- "Task Force for Catholicism," Time, LXXVI, No. 18 (October 31, 1960), 28.
- "The Church Defies Peron," Time, LXV, No. 16 (April 18, 1955), 46.
- "The Ravished Churches," Time, LXVI, No. 2 (July 11, 1955), 30-31.
- "Times Getting Hard for Dictators," U. S. News (September 30, 1955), pp. 38-39.
- "Unexploded Bomb," Time, LXV, No. 19 (May 9, 1955), 42.
- "University Students: A Real Pressure Group," CIF (Center of Intercultural Formation) Reports, I, No. 3 (June, 1962), 109-124.
- Velez, Claudio. "Anti-Catholic Perón--A Struggle for Power," The Nation, CLXXX, No. 5 (January 29, 1955), 100-101.
- _____. "The Argentine Crisis--Perón Rides the Storm," The Nation, CLXXXI, No. 1 (July 2, 1955), 3-4.
- Whitaker, Arthur P. "Argentina: Recovery from Perón," Current History, XXXII, No. 188 (April, 1957), 205-210.
- _____. "The Argentine Paradox," The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science, CCCXXXIV (March, 1961), 103-112.

Documents

- Argentina. Constitution of 1853.
- Peru. Tercera semana interamericana de acción católica (Lima, Chimbote, 1953) p. 60-61.

THE EVOLUTION OF CHURCH AND STATE IN ARGENTINA:

1892-1960

by

JAMES MALCOLM AYE

B. S. in Foreign Service
Georgetown University, 1950

ABSTRACT OF MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History, Political Science and Philosophy

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1963

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The primary purpose of undertaking a study of Church-State relations in Argentina was to determine what effect past historical events had had upon Church-State relations as they evolved down to the Perón era and what changes in the spiritual-temporal spheres of society had occurred since the end of the 19th century.

Most of the source materials for this thesis were not readily available and some twenty or more books were obtained by means of the interlibrary loan system. Almost all of these were books published in the Spanish language.

The first part of this thesis--the Introduction--was purposely long in order that certain aspects of the Church-State problem, particularly the nature of the Church and of patronage might be examined, thereby facilitating better comprehension of later chapters.

The second section of the thesis was a summary of past historical events, divided into specific periods which this writer felt to be chronologically important, beginning with the Argentine Independence movement and continuing through the period of Rivadavian reform, the Rosas tyranny, the Constitutional period, down to the rise of the secularist state, which germinated in the next to the last decade of the 19th century.

The third section of the thesis deals with the problems of a changing society and a changing Church with particular emphasis being placed upon how the Church had shifted its emphasis from the former political to the social field of human activity, being interrupted only once during the Perón era, but only temporarily since it renewed its concern with social problems after the demise of the Peronista dictatorship.

A chronological recitation of events is related in the fourth section of the thesis--events that occurred during the the Perón period and show how the Church became the catalyst--a rallying point of opposition to Peronista absolutism.

The last section of the thesis is in the form of a conclusion that seeks to relate the various elements within one part of society to another and at the same time formulates definitive conclusions. The composition of the State is thus studied and each component part is examined in its relations with the Church, which is distinct, but yet a part of the entire social structure.

In summation, this thesis has proved that not only did the Church change, but the State changed as well--that both elements within the social framework were in a state of transition. From time to time areas of friction would arise between these two elements, especially in the field of education and patronal rights. These areas of friction were solved for the most part through the formulation of a modus vivendi or unwritten agreement between these two powers.

In the Perón era, compromise no longer became possible due to the intransigence of the Perón dictatorship, and Church-State relations rapidly reached a climax when the Church, not ordinarily an active political force became the motivating factor--the rallying point which culminated in the ultimate downfall of the Perón dictatorship. The Church as a political force in Argentina is amply demonstrated in this section.

The post-Perón period witnesses the Church once more engaged in the social field of human activity--a field of activity in which the State is also engaged. Whether these two forces can work and cooperate together in the future remains to be seen.