

UNION POLITICAL TACTICS  
AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION  
IN ALFONSIN'S ARGENTINA,  
1983–1989\*

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The proximate cause of democratic breakdown in Argentina has invariably been a military coup. In overthrowing civilian governments, however, the armed forces have not acted in a vacuum. Before the 1966 and 1976 coups, military officers made sure that key landowner, business, and labor leaders would support or at least accept military intervention. The importance that the Argentine military places on civilian opinion raises the question of the conditions under which civilian leaders might become more likely to oppose a coup. One promising development would be for these elites to channel their political demands increasingly through political parties. By investing resources in party activity and becoming more habituated to pressing demands through party channels, Argentine socioeconomic elites would gain a larger stake in the survival of the electoral and legislative institutions that parties require to be effective. This article will analyze the relationship between one such elite, the Peronist union leadership, and one of Argentina's main political parties, the Peronist Partido Justicialista (PJ).

During the government of Raúl Alfonsín (1983–1989), the Peronist union leadership split into four main factions: the 62 Organizaciones (the "62"), the Grupo de 25, the Ubaldinistas, and the Grupo de 15.<sup>1</sup> Each of these factions adopted a different stance toward involvement in the Partido Justicialista. The "62" and "25" involved themselves actively (on opposite sides) in the struggle between the party's orthodox and renewal

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1. Although *Gestión y Trabajo*, the Grupo de 20, and other factions existed during Alfonsín's presidency, the four factions analyzed here were by far the most significant. *Gestión y Trabajo*, the most important faction omitted from the analysis, evaporated in 1985. Its personnel and political tactics displayed substantial continuity with those of the Grupo de 15, which emerged in 1987.

sectors. Both factions fought hard for key positions in party leadership organs and for choice slots on the party's candidate lists for national deputy seats, expending energy and resources to develop party-mediated forms of political influence. In contrast, the Ubaldinistas and the "15" bypassed party and legislative channels, preferring to advance their interests by pressuring or bargaining with the national executive. The Ubaldinistas staged general strikes and mass demonstrations to pressure the executive from the outside, whereas the "15" tried to influence the executive from within by bargaining with Alfonsín's advisors and cabinet ministers or (for six months in 1987) by occupying key posts in the labor ministry.

Combativeness stands alongside party involvement as a second political tactic of union leaders that has important implications for democratic consolidation. The "25" and the Ubaldinistas took a more combative approach to the Alfonsín government than did the "62" or the "15." The fact that the "25" cultivated party-mediated channels of political influence did not prevent that faction from supporting the general strike strategy spearheaded by the Ubaldinistas. Likewise, the "62," even as it sought a foothold in the party and legislative arenas, joined with the "15" in bargaining behind the scenes with the Radical-controlled executive. By promoting massive strikes and demonstrations, the Ubaldinistas and the "25" engaged in political behavior that might at first seem conducive to democratic breakdown. As will be argued in the article's concluding section, however, large-scale strikes promoted by the national union leadership may have positive as well as negative implications for democratic consolidation. In the long run, involvement by union leaders in party activity may be at least as important to democratic consolidation as their adopting a conciliatory stance toward the government.

To argue that party involvement by union leaders promotes democratic consolidation is, for someone who values democratic consolidation, to endorse a political tactic adopted by two specific Peronist factions of union leaders, the "62" and the "25." This line of reasoning, however, does not imply an endorsement of these specific factions in any other respect. Apart from being inappropriate in the kind of analysis undertaken here, such an endorsement would mire the analyst in a mass of contradictions because apart from their Peronist affiliation and their commitment to party activity, the "62" and the "25" had little in common: the "62" was ideologically to the right and conciliatory, whereas the "25" was ideologically to the left and combative. In other words, the normative slant of this article leans toward a specific political tactic, not a specific faction. So too with the analytic emphasis: although the factions are interesting in their own right, it is their political tactics that are the main focus here. Since Carlos Menem became president in July 1989, the factions discussed in this article have become vestigial or non-existent. Their political

tactics during the Alfonsín government remain significant, however, in that they reflected long-standing debates that are still percolating in the Peronist union leadership.<sup>2</sup>

To understand more fully the relationship between union leaders' political tactics and democratic consolidation would require analyzing the reasons why some union leaders chose certain political tactics whereas other leaders opted for different ones. To address this issue systematically is beyond the scope of this study, but a preliminary hypothesis emerges from the first two sections of the article, which describe the factions' emergence and delineate their tactical differences. Central to this hypothesis is the turf battle. Two of the factions, *Ubaldinismo* and the "62," tended to adopt tactics consistent with the personal power interests of their key leaders, Saúl Ubaldini and Lorenzo Miguel, each of whom sought to be recognized as the main interlocutor for Peronist unionism as a whole.

To advance the hypothesis that turf battles among the top union leaders play an important role in shaping their political tactics suggests a corollary: that base-level or structural factors, like the health of the economic sectors under the jurisdiction of the unions comprising a particular faction, play a relatively minor role in shaping these tactics. Union leaders in Argentina are in fact relatively autonomous from the rank and file, not least because many union elections are noncompetitive. Because of their relative autonomy, it is reasonable to speak of Argentine union leaders as having a "choice" about whether to involve themselves in party activity or to adopt a conciliatory stance toward the government. The third section will present some preliminary evidence to support the claim that Argentine union leaders are relatively autonomous from the rank and file. The final section will return to the issue of how the political tactics chosen by union leaders influence democratic consolidation.

#### FACTIONS IN THE PERONIST UNION LEADERSHIP, 1983–1989

The oldest Peronist union faction is the 62 Organizaciones, which must be distinguished from the Confederación General de Trabajo (CGT), Argentina's umbrella labor confederation. The CGT was founded in 1930, sixteen years before Perón was elected president, and is a nominally nonpartisan labor confederation. The "62" was not founded until 1957, two years after Perón was overthrown and exiled, and is a specifically Peronist organization. Until about 1968, the "62" was a faction in relation to the still-significant non-Peronist segments of the labor movement, which had been resurrected by the military government of General Pedro

2. For a discussion of parallel factional differences in Peronist unionism during the government of Arturo Illia (1963–1966), see McGuire (1989, 243–58).

Aramburu (1955–1958). By the late 1960s, however, almost all Argentine unions had come under Peronist control, and this situation has persisted into the 1990s. Thus from 1968 to 1977, the “62” embraced virtually all significant sectors of Argentina’s union leadership. Only after the Grupo de 25 arose in 1977 did the “62” become a faction within Peronist unionism.

During the early 1960s, the “62” held Peronism together. It relayed instructions from the exiled Perón to unionists around the country, named delegates to Peronism’s umbrella leadership bodies, and sent union leaders to the Cámara de Diputados on the ballot of the neo-Peronist party, Unión Popular. Like the rest of the highly personalistic Peronist movement, however, the “62” was poorly institutionalized. Even in the early 1990s, the “62” remains a loosely organized network of “notable” Peronist union leaders. Unlike the CGT, the “62” has no *personería gremial* (a form of legal status). It owns no buildings, has no budget, and publishes no official newspaper.<sup>3</sup> The “62” does have a set of bylaws,<sup>4</sup> but according to one of its leaders in the mid-1980s, “few know about them and no one respects them.”<sup>5</sup> Decisions in the “62” are typically made by “consensus.” If a vote is taken, “the decisions are usually disregarded.”<sup>6</sup> The “62” has an executive board (with nineteen members in 1986) that presides over occasional plenary sessions involving about a hundred unionists from around the country, but the group lacks established procedures for leadership rotation. During its thirty-three years of existence, the “62” has been led by only two persons: Augusto Vandor (1957–1969) and Lorenzo Miguel (1969–1991), both of whom served simultaneously as secretary general of the powerful metalworkers’ union (the Unión Obrera Metalúrgica, or UOM). Had Vandor not been assassinated in 1969, he might well have led both organizations into the 1990s.

The military government in power from 1966 to 1973 left the CGT and the “62” intact but halted all party and electoral activity. Leftist guerrilla groups, including the Peronist Montoneros, filled the political vacuum with bombings and assassinations. In 1972 the military government of General Alejandro Lanusse permitted Perón to return to Argentina, hoping that he would rein in the Montoneros. But when elections were called in late 1973, Perón as presidential candidate instead reined in the powerful and independent “62,” giving control of the campaign to Peronism’s noisier but more easily manipulable leftist and youth sectors. Perón won the election, repudiated most segments of the Peronist left, kept the “62” subordinated, and resurrected the plebiscitarian style of

3. Interview with a former leader of the “62,” 9 Sept. 1986.

4. “Reglamentos de los cuerpos orgánicos de las 62 organizaciones,” unpublished document of the 62 Organizaciones, Buenos Aires.

5. Interview with a leader of the “62,” 22 Sept. 1986.

6. *Ibid.*

leadership that had characterized his first presidency (1946–1955). In July 1974, Perón died, leaving the presidency to his wife and vice-president, Isabel Martínez de Perón. His plebiscitarian model of leadership functioned poorly with Isabel Perón at the helm, and in mid-1975, the “62” regained hegemony within the Peronist movement. But by this time, the deepening economic crisis and renewed political violence had sent the government into a tailspin. When the military intervened in March 1976, many Peronist union leaders had resigned themselves to the coup, although “62” chief Lorenzo Miguel was a notable exception.<sup>7</sup>

The military government repressed the “62,” abolished the CGT, outlawed all political parties, and launched a campaign of repression unprecedented in modern Argentine history. Although unionists of the left (including the Peronist left) were the prime targets of the anti-labor repression, many right-of-center “62” leaders were also caught in the crackdown. Lorenzo Miguel was arrested on the day of the coup, and Oscar Smith, a “62” leader from the light and power workers’ union, “disappeared” in 1977 after escaping the initial wave of arrests. Miguel displayed remarkable fortitude during his two and a half years in prison, earning the respect of his fellow prisoners by not breaking down under brutal interrogation. While others gave in to despair, Miguel, an amateur artist, spent days in his cell painting watercolors.<sup>8</sup>

In 1977 several previously minor unionists who had not been arrested, including Saúl Ubaldini of the beer workers and Roberto García of the taxi drivers, formed an informal network called the Grupo de 25 to occupy the political space vacated due to the top leaders of the “62” being arrested (Ubaldini later formed his own faction, but from 1977 to 1985 he belonged to the “25”). Acting cautiously at first, the “25” soon began to take a more combative stance. This combativeness alienated Jorge Triaca (of the plastics workers) and other members of the original “25,” who perceived the military dictatorship as paving the way for a bright new era of apolitical, “professional” unionism. Triaca’s group viewed Ubaldini and García as outmoded Peronist intransigents who were too short-sighted to cooperate with the government’s market-oriented economic policies and dangerously vulnerable to “leftist subversion” (Pozzi 1988, 120–21). In April 1978, these more conservative and conciliatory unionists seceded from the “25” and formed a new faction, the Comisión de Gestión y Trabajo (GyT), which survived until 1985.

Whereas Ubaldini and García remained in the “25” and organized general strikes against the dictatorship in 1979 and 1982, Gestión y Trabajo forged cordial relations with the military. The incipient rapport

7. Interview with former labor minister Miguel Unamuno as cited in Cardoso and Audi (1982).

8. “Soy lo que soy: gremialista y peronista,” *Siete Días*, 19 Dec. 1984, pp. 8–9.

between *Gestión y Trabajo* and the military worried imprisoned “62” chief Miguel, who shared *Gestión y Trabajo*’s conservative and conciliatory stance but realized that Triaca, the astute and urbane leader of *Gestión y Trabajo*, might use his access to government favors to make himself a powerful rival. Hence when Miguel was released from house arrest in April 1980, he went against his own ideological and programmatic instincts and threw his support behind the more left-leaning and combative “25.” It would not be the last time the wily “62” chief would subordinate ideology and program to his interest in preserving his autonomy and power against a budding challenger.

The alliance between the “62” and the “25” lasted from 1980 to 1983. When Miguel was freed in late 1980, he and his closest “62” allies picked Saúl Ubaldini of the “25” to head a newly resurrected clandestine CGT. The “62” leaders viewed Ubaldini as ideologically more moderate than some of his leftist “25” counterparts and thought of him as a “nice guy whom everybody likes” (Cordeu, Mercado, and Sosa 1985, 73–74). Perhaps more important from Miguel’s standpoint, Ubaldini, a secondary official in the fermentation branch of the relatively minor beer workers’ union, was in 1980 a little-known unionist who could not pose an immediate threat to the “62” chief’s behind-the-scenes hegemony. The alliance between Miguel’s “62” and Ubaldini’s “25,” consummated in the formation of the clandestine CGT, effectively marginalized Triaca’s *Gestión y Trabajo*. With the tacit consent of the military government, Triaca formed his own unofficial CGT to oppose the one led by Ubaldini. Triaca’s more conciliatory CGT was known as the CGT-Azopardo, after the street on which its headquarters were located; for a similar reason, the more combative CGT led by Ubaldini was called the CGT-Brasil.

In 1982 came the tragic South Atlantic conflict between Argentina and Britain, which sealed the fate of the military regime. By early 1983, when Argentina began to prepare for presidential elections, the “62” had regained its status as kingmaker in the Peronist movement. Miguel, now in his fourteenth year as “62” chief, engineered the nomination of Italo Luder as the Peronist presidential candidate (Cordeu, Mercado, and Sosa 1985, 19–42) and picked many of the Peronist national deputy nominees (see table 1).<sup>9</sup> In late 1983, moreover, Miguel was elevated to the top effective-leadership post in the Partido Justicialista. Because of his prominent role in the party and in candidate selection, Miguel bore the brunt of

9. Information on the union backgrounds of Peronist deputies was compiled during July 1989 from unpublished materials supplied by Eduardo Feldman, Liliana de Riz, the Junta Nacional Electoral, the Secretaría Parlamentaria, the national headquarters of the Partido Justicialista, and the headquarters of the Capital Federal branch of the Partido Justicialista. This information was supplemented by the author’s interviews with members of the congressional and political party staff of the Partido Justicialista. The author is grateful to the foregoing individuals and institutions for providing these materials.

TABLE 1 *Peronist Union Leaders from the Capital Federal and the Province of Buenos Aires Elected to the National Cámara de Diputados, 1983–1989*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank on List</i>	<i>Union</i>	<i>Faction Affiliation</i>
<b>1983 Capital</b>			
Minichilo, J.	3	retail clerks	"62"
Blanco, J. C.	5	textiles	"62"
García, R.	7	taxi drivers	"25"
(Fino, T.	1	lawyer for "62")	
(Casale, L.S.	4	advisor to "62")	
(Unamuno, M.	6	former bank clerks)	
<b>1983 Buenos Aires</b>			
Ibáñez, D.	1	state oil workers	"62"
Donaires, F.	4	paper	"62"
Ponce, R.	6	grain silos	"62"
Cabello, L.	10	bakers	"62"
Papagno, R.	13	construction	"62"
Carranza, F.	16	retail clerks	"62"
Flores, A.	22	bus drivers	"62"
Pepe, L.	28	railway	"25"
Basualdo, H.	31	retail clerks	"62"
(Imbelloni, N.	7	former metalworkers)	
<b>1985 Capital</b>			
Digón, R.	3	tobacco employees	"25"
<b>1985 Buenos Aires Renewal</b>			
Rodríguez, J.	2	autoworkers	"25"
Borda, O.	5	rubber	"25"
(Blanco, J.	6	former light and power)	
<b>1985 Buenos Aires Orthodox</b>			
Triaca, J.	2	plastics	"62"
(Iglesias, H.	1	former metalworkers)	
<b>1987 Capital</b>			
García, R.	2	taxi drivers	"25"
(Ruckauf, C.	1	former insurance employees)	
<b>1987 Buenos Aires</b>			
Castillo, J. L.	5	shipyard workers	"25"
Curto, H.	9	metalworkers	"62"
Pepe, L.	13	railway	"25"
(Duhalde, E.	2	former municipal workers)	
<b>1989 Capital</b>			
Monteverde, R.	4	metalworkers	"62"
Abdala, G.	5	state workers	"25"



TABLE 1 (continued)

Name	Rank on List	Union	Faction Affiliation
1989 Buenos Aires			
Camaño, D.	3	hotel and restaurant workers	"15"
Borda, O.	12	rubber workers	"25"
Hernández, A.	17	haircutters	Ubaldinistas
Fernández, R. F.	18	bus drivers	Ubaldinistas
(Camaño, G.	9	spouse of L. Barrionuevo)	

Note: In 1983, the "62" held twelve seats and the "25" had two. In 1985, the "62" had one representative and the "25" had three. In 1987, the "62" held one seat and the "25" held three. In 1989, the "62" had one seat, the "25" two, the Ubaldinistas two, and the "15" one.

the blame when Raúl Alfonsín of the Radical party made history by outpolling a Peronist in a free presidential election (Luder was defeated by a margin of 52 to 40 percent). Contributing to the defeat was the overly aggressive campaign conducted by the Partido Justicialista, which included burning an effigy of Alfonsín at the Peronists' final campaign rally. Also, rumors abounded that the "62" leaders had secretly agreed to support an amnesty for military officers accused of having committed human rights violations during the dictatorship (CISEA 1984, 102–3; Beliz 1988, 168–69; Abós 1984, 148).

Miguel's perceived responsibility for the Peronist electoral defeat helped to undermine his position in the union leadership. In December 1983, the Alfonsín government submitted to congress new legislation governing union elections. By providing for minority representation on union secretariats and stricter supervision of elections by the labor ministry, the government's legislation would have significantly diminished the power of the traditional Peronist union leadership (Portiantiero 1987, 151–54). In response to this challenge, Ubaldini and Triaca merged their rival CGTs under a four-member collegial leadership, which excluded the discredited Miguel and his allies.<sup>10</sup>

Miguel's hold on the Partido Justicialista was similarly weakened by the Peronist electoral defeat. In 1984 an anti-Miguel faction emerged in the party, and in early 1985, the Partido Justicialista split into rival camps. The pro-Miguel faction, which came to be known as "orthodox" Peronism, consisted primarily of the core "62" leadership and urban political bosses from the working-class suburbs of Buenos Aires. This faction defended the Partido Justicialista's tradition of behind-the-scenes accords on political strategy and candidacies. The anti-Miguel faction, which came to be known as "renewal Peronism," consisted of urbane Buenos Aires politicians, some provincial Peronist strongmen with clientelistic

10. *Informes Laborales*, no. 210 (Feb. 1984):3.53.



followings, and unionists from the "25." The pro-renewal Peronists called for turnover in party leadership and more open procedures for selecting candidates. This division of the Partido Justicialista into orthodox and renewal wings was one of the most significant events in thirty years of union-party relations in the Peronist movement. It belied the long-standing claim of the "62" to represent not just a faction but "the political arm of Peronist unionism" as a whole and marked the emergence of the "25" as a major player in the party and electoral arena.

In March 1984, after the government's bill on union elections was narrowly defeated in the Senado, the common objective that had promoted the fusion of the two unofficial CGTs disappeared. Once the bill was no longer a threat, centrifugal forces began to manifest themselves within the four-member CGT leadership. In mid-1985, particularly after Triaca's widely criticized testimony at the human rights trials, the plastics workers' leader began to lose ground to Ubaldini, whose militant calls for general strikes also contrasted sharply with Triaca's more conciliatory approach toward the Alfonsín government. Enthusiastic rank-and-file support for Ubaldini enabled him to push Triaca out of the CGT leadership, whereupon Triaca allied his forces with Miguel's still-marginalized "62." From an ideological and programmatic standpoint, the alliance between Triaca and Miguel was more natural than the alliance that each had previously forged with the "25." Triaca and Miguel shared a conservative ideology and a propensity for negotiating with governments of all political stripes. Their rivalry proved to be little more than a turf battle that evaporated after Triaca could no longer pose a challenge to the metalworkers' chief.

In September 1985, Ubaldini became the CGT's sole secretary-general. During his rise to prominence in the previous year, he had begun to distance himself from the "25." Whereas the rest of the key "25" leaders remained staunch supporters of renewal Peronism, Ubaldini declared neutrality in the orthodox-renewal dispute. His increasingly distinctive profile produced a three-way polarization in the Peronist movement. Orthodox Peronism continued to be dominated by the "62," while renewal Peronism operated under the hegemony of politicians allied with the "25." Ubaldini's supporters meanwhile emerged as an independent faction known as the Ubaldinistas. Instead of struggling for control of the Partido Justicialista, the Ubaldinistas set about making the CGT the main pole of opposition to the Alfonsín government.

This three-way polarization raised an issue relevant to the problem of democratic consolidation. Despite their differences, the "25" and "62" developed a strong stake in the continued operation of the Partido Justicialista and in the ongoing functioning of the electoral mechanisms through which the party gained access to legislative and (ultimately) executive posts. Although Ubaldini's personal commitment to the continued func-

tioning of parties and elections was beyond serious dispute, his preferred mode of political expression—CGT general strikes and thunderous denunciations of government economic policies—tended to marginalize the party system and the legislature as arenas of opposition. As will be argued in more detail in the concluding section, what was most problematic for democratic consolidation was not Ubaldini's pushing ahead with the general strike strategy but his failure to take party and legislative activity more seriously as channels of opposition.

Underscoring the depth of the divisions in Peronism, the orthodox and renewal wings of the Partido Justicialista ran separate lists of candidates in the November 1985 legislative elections. The Radicals outpulled the Peronists nationwide, but in the intra-Peronist contest, the renewal sector won by a landslide. Meanwhile, support for the Ubaldinistas was growing steadily. Although the government's Austral Plan initiated in March 1985 had reduced inflation, it had done little to bolster workers' real incomes. In any case, by 1986 workers had suffered a decade of declining living standards. Spurred on by Ubaldini's combative rhetoric, many felt that it was time for action. The four general strikes called by the CGT in 1986 failed to convince the government to alter its economic policy, but they attracted widespread participation and gave the CGT chief new power and independence within the union leadership. This independence became evident at the CGT "normalizing" congress in November 1986, which gave unionists legal control of the confederation for the first time since the 1976 coup. During negotiations to fill the twenty-one slots on the CGT executive board, the Ubaldinistas participated as a third faction equidistant from the "62" and the "25."<sup>11</sup> Ubaldini kept the secretary-generalship, and his Ubaldinista allies won a small but definite plurality on the executive board.

The CGT "normalizing" congress in November 1986 represented the pinnacle of Ubaldini's influence. But signs had already emerged that Ubaldinismo had reached its zenith. Miguel, who had previously given reasonably strong support to the CGT's general strikes, was becoming more skeptical about the effectiveness of Ubaldini's combative stance, which had not induced the government to change its economic policy.<sup>12</sup> In July 1986, Lorenzo Miguel surprised everyone by sending a telegram to economy minister Juan Sourrouille, the favorite target of CGT anti-government proclamations, thanking him for helping the metalworkers conclude a wage agreement with the industry's employers' organizations.<sup>13</sup> From the perspective of Miguel, and certainly that of Triaca, a less confrontational strategy seemed to be needed.

11. *Informes Laborales*, no. 244 (Dec. 1986):3.601-3.610.

12. *Informes Laborales*, no. 243 (Nov. 1986):3.609.

13. *La Razón*, 10 July 1986, p. 19.

The Alfonsín government also sought a less confrontational unionism. Because Ubaldini's new mandate indicated a long string of general strikes, the government decided to try to split the CGT chief's base of support by making a pact with the more conciliatory unionists. The pact was concluded in March 1987 and marked the emergence of the Grupo de 15 as a fourth Peronist union faction, alongside the "62," the "25," and Ubaldinismo. The key "15" leader was Jorge Triaca. In helping to organize the pact, Triaca called into question the alliance he had maintained with Lorenzo Miguel since late 1985, now eighteen months old. Wary of losing turf to Triaca, Miguel adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward the initiative and maintained fluid contacts with Ubaldini, who was furious over the new pact.

The pact consisted of an exchange of resources between the government and the "15." The government agreed to name "15" leader Carlos Alderete (of the light and power workers) as its labor minister and to grant big wage hikes to workers in unions led by the "15" (collective bargaining did not return until new labor laws were passed). In exchange, the "15" promised to discourage strikes and to lobby orthodox Peronists in the Cámara de Diputados to support labor legislation recently introduced by the government. The broader purpose of the "15," as one of the group's newspaper advertisements announced, was to "search for new conditions of consensus in a social, economic, and political situation characterized by immobilism and crisis."<sup>14</sup> A major cause of "immobilism" was clearly held to be Ubaldini's strategy of general strikes. As a member of the "15" said, "eight general strikes haven't accomplished anything, so the best thing to do is to search for another kind of relationship" (cited in Beliz 1988, 186).

The pact produced basically the results expected by the government and the "15." The government convinced the metalworkers to allow a three-month no-strike clause to be inserted into their contract, which historically has served as a prototype for other labor agreements. No general strikes were called during Alderete's six months as labor minister, and an alliance between the Radicals and orthodox Peronists overcame renewal Peronist opposition to approving a modified version of the government's labor packet.<sup>15</sup> Numerous "15" leaders were appointed to posts in the labor ministry,<sup>16</sup> and prominent "15" unions received wage settlements exceeding government guidelines.<sup>17</sup> But the "15" had no input into wage and price policy, which remained in the hands of Economy Minister

14. *Clarín*, 7 July 1988, p. 6.

15. *Informes Laborales*, no. 247 (Mar. 1987):3.657; and no. 248 (Apr. 1987), 2.127; see also *Clarín*, 20 July 1987, p. 14.

16. *Informes Laborales*, no. 248 (Apr. 1987):3.673.

17. *La Nación Internacional*, 30 Mar. 1987, p. 2.

Sourrouille. Frustrated by this key failure, Alderete declared on 3 September 1987 that “the economy [ministry] is the structural enemy of the ministry of labor.”<sup>18</sup> Three days later, when the Peronists won a landslide victory in the 1987 gubernatorial and legislative elections, Alfonsín jettisoned Alderete and the pact between the “15” and the Radicals collapsed.

The exit of the “15” from the labor ministry put the “15” in a difficult position. One of its main antagonists (Ubal dini) controlled the CGT, while its other main antagonist (the “25”) was influential in the renewal wing of Peronism, which was about to displace the orthodox sector from the formal machinery of the Partido Justicialista. Unlikely to secure turf within the PJ or the CGT, the “15” seemed destined for extinction. Fortunately for its continued survival (and future hegemony), the “15” found a new resource in a surge of popular support for the presidential candidacy of Carlos Menem.

September 1987 to July 1989 was an eventful period in Argentine politics, marked by two military uprisings (in January and December 1988), a bloody attack by a guerrilla group on an army barracks (January 1989), acute recession and hyperinflation punctuated by food riots (March through July 1989), and the presidential victory of Carlos Menem (May 1989). President Alfonsín, who at one time maintained uncannily high popularity ratings despite his country’s increasingly desperate economic problems, finally saw his public image deteriorate. Constitutionally barred from succeeding himself as president, Alfonsín did not suffer the indignity of losing the 1989 election. That experience devolved on the Radical party’s consensus candidate, Eduardo Angeloz.

Menem, who had won the Peronist presidential primary in July 1988 and the general election in May 1989, dominated intra-Peronist politics during the last two years of Alfonsín’s presidency. A colorful figure with bushy muttonchop whiskers, a passion for race-car driving, a penchant for high-society parties, and a celebrity’s coyness about his year of birth, Menem had been governor of La Rioja, an impoverished and underpopulated province where his family owned a winery, during the government of Isabel Perón (1973–1976). Educated as a lawyer at the University of Córdoba, Menem came from the non-union wing of the Peronist movement, which is particularly strong in some of Argentina’s interior provinces. In 1975 Menem had led a group of “ultra-verticalist” Peronist governors in opposing efforts by Peronist legislators to find a legal way to replace Isabel Perón with someone less vulnerable to a military coup (Viola 1982, 574–75). Menem was a longtime opponent of military rule. In 1966 a police truncheon had fractured his collarbone at a rally called by the Peronists during the first months of the Onganía

18. *Clarín*, 4 Sept. 1987, p. 21.

government (Leuco and Díaz 1989, 71). Imprisoned for the entire presidency of Jorge Videla (1976–1981), Menem was rearrested in 1982 for joining an anti-government demonstration.

When Peronism split in 1985, Menem gained attention as one of the three “referents” of renewal Peronism. All three “referents”—Menem, Antonio Cafiero, and Carlos Grosso—represented the non-union sector of Peronism, highlighting the fact that the 1983 electoral defeat had convinced most of the renewal Peronists, including the “25,” that a Peronism thoroughly subordinated to union leaders would be unable to attract many votes from outside the working class. Both Menem and Cafiero aspired to the presidency, and in September 1987, the struggle between the two came out into the open. Just a few hours after Cafiero was elected governor of Buenos Aires (the traditional stepping-stone to the presidential nomination), posters appeared on the outskirts of Buenos Aires announcing Menem’s presidential candidacy, setting the stage for a lively ten-month political battle between the two Peronist leaders.

In July 1988, for the first time in history, the Peronists nominated their presidential candidate by direct primary election. The race pitted Cafiero, backed by the “25” and more ambiguously by the Ubaldinistas, against Menem, backed by the “15” and more ambiguously by the “62.” Menem was the more colorful candidate, but Cafiero had the organizational edge as president of the Partido Justicialista and governor of Argentina’s largest province. Menem’s alliance with the “15,” however, did much to offset some of Cafiero’s organizational advantages. The “15” contributed to Menem’s campaign, signed up new party members, printed campaign posters, mobilized the vote, and provided more than half of the fifteen thousand officials assigned to oversee intraparty balloting (Leuco and Díaz 1989, 45, 173).<sup>19</sup>

On 9 July 1988, Menem outpolled Cafiero by 53 to 46 percent. Although the organizational resources provided to Menem by the “15” were important to his victory,<sup>20</sup> Menem’s personal appeal was equally significant. As early as November 1984, public opinion polls placed Menem’s approval rating among national political figures second only to that of Alfonsín, who was then at the height of his popularity.<sup>21</sup> By mid-1986, Menem had become more popular than Alfonsín and twice as popular as Cafiero in the working-class district of La Matanza (Leuco and Díaz 1989, 34, 43). A third factor in Menem’s victory was his ability to tag Cafiero as a “social democrat.” This epithet, long wielded by orthodox Peronists against their opponents in the renewal sector, served a dual purpose: it characterized the renewal sector as falling to the left of Peron-

19. Information about campaign posters came from the author’s direct observation.

20. Editorial by Ricardo Kirshbaum, *Clarín*, 3 July 1988, p. 3.

21. “El otro peronismo,” *Somos*, 21 Dec. 1984, p. 12.

ism's traditional "third position" between capitalism and socialism; and it suggested that the renewal sector was being manipulated by the German Social Democrats, whose Buenos Aires branch of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation included labor specialists who at times provided technical assistance to the "25." Menem's supporters also insisted that a Cafiero presidency would be indistinguishable from that of Alfonsín. This claim gained credibility when, in December 1987, Cafiero and Alfonsín made a pact on legislation involving tax policy, labor law, and the allocation of central government revenue to the provinces.<sup>22</sup> Henceforth the press started to talk of "Alfonsierismo," and Menem began to link his Peronist opponent with the Radical president by arguing that Cafiero would "continue the policies of Raúl Alfonsín because both are patterned by social democracy."<sup>23</sup>

Following Menem's presidential nomination, the Peronists tried to regroup for the general election campaign but managed only superficial unity. Menem and the "15" were now taking a much more moderate line than Ubalдини and the "25," and not just on tactical questions like the timeliness of general strikes but also on long-term strategic issues like negotiations over the foreign debt. During the general election campaign, the "15" emerged as Menem's favored interlocutor in Peronist unionism. No group, union or non-union, was more influential than the "15" in organizing and financing the campaign. Juan José Zanola (of the bank clerks) plastered downtown Buenos Aires with posters promoting Menem's candidacy. Triaca and Armando Cavalieri (of the Buenos Aires retail clerks) obtained campaign funds from business magnates like Carlos Bulgheroni and Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat (Leuco and Díaz 1989, 34). Luis Barrionuevo (of the hotel and restaurant workers), who had argued that most union statutes permitted using union funds for campaign purposes,<sup>24</sup> was widely rumored to have helped Menem's candidacy with his union's health and pension funds, a charge he denied.<sup>25</sup>

Ubalдини did what he could to help Menem's campaign. Because the CGT's combative stance was perceived as alienating to middle-class voters, Ubalдини agreed to moderate its position. Despite hyperinflation and massive suspensions and layoffs of workers, he vowed not to call a general strike before the presidential contest. As Ubaldinista Juan José Lingeri (of the water works employees) commented, "to go by the situation and by the mood of the union leaders, we should be in the streets right now on a general strike, but we have to act, unfortunately, with due prudence. . . . We'll have the general strike on May 14 when all Argen-

22. *Bimestre* (Nov.-Dec. 1984):44.

23. *Clarín*, 3 July 1988, p. 3.

24. *Bimestre*, no. 18 (Sept.-Oct. 1988):53.

25. Interview with Luis Barrionuevo cited in Daiha and Haimovichi (1989, 65).



tines cast their votes for Peronism.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, instead of holding the traditional mass rally on 1 May, which Menem feared might degenerate into a riot (violence had broken out at a rally associated with a general strike in December 1988), the CGT leaders settled for a celebratory lunch. A reporter described candidate Menem as “tense and frowning” after being informed that a thousand union leaders had been invited to the lunch. After delivering a short speech, Menem left without even waiting for Ubaldini to speak.<sup>27</sup>

Economic disaster, highlighted by food riots and hyperinflation, meant that the incumbent Radical party’s presidential candidate faced an uphill battle.<sup>28</sup> Ubaldini’s toning down his combative stance and the raising of campaign funds by the “15” helped make sure that Menem did not lose this advantage. On 14 May 1989, Menem outpolled Radical candidate Eduardo Angeloz (his old classmate at the University of Córdoba) by a margin of 47 to 37 percent. For the “15,” Menem’s victory represented a chance to gain access to power resources that their weakness in the CGT, the Partido Justicialista, and the Cámara de Diputados had denied them for the past six years (except for their brief 1987 stint in the labor ministry, when their power resources derived not from Peronism or unionism but from Alfonsín). For Ubaldini, however, Menem’s victory was pyrrhic: only by challenging a popular Peronist president could he continue to pursue the general strike strategy that had showcased his personal charisma and reinforced his combative image.

#### A TAXONOMY OF PERONIST UNION LEADER FACTIONS

It is now possible to undertake a more systematic analysis of differences among the main Peronist union-leader factions across the dimensions of ideology, combativeness, and party involvement. Before beginning the analysis, however, a couple of clarifications should be made. First, ideology, unlike combativeness and party involvement, is not a political tactic. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that the prospects for democratic consolidation are affected much by the ideological bent of the trade-union leadership, as long as the ideology is not explicitly anti-democratic. The factions’ ideologies will be discussed simply to provide a more informative picture of the nature of the factions and to highlight the ideological heterogeneity of the Peronist movement. Second, it is important not to overstate the cohesiveness of the factions, each of which experienced internal disputes and defections to other factions. Yet union leaders, journalists, government officials, party leaders, and others all

26. *Informes Laborales*, no. 272 (Apr. 1989):3.930.

27. *Informes Laborales*, no. 273 (May 1989):3.934.

28. During July 1989, prices rose 197 percent, i.e. at an annualized rate of 50,000,000 percent.



recognized that the factions existed. All key unionists and sometimes entire unions were identified with specific factions. Moreover, the "62" established bylaws, the "25" held a plenary session in 1986, the Ubaldinistas acted as a cohesive entity within the CGT, and the "15" met as a body with political leaders like Alfonsín and Menem.

Although this section is devoted primarily to classifying the factions, it will take a step toward explaining why the leaders of particular factions chose certain political tactics while leaders of other factions chose different tactics. It will be argued that personal power interests were among the factors that prompted Ubaldini to take a combative stance toward the Alfonsín government and that similar interests impelled Miguel to shift periodically between combativeness and conciliation. Although it would be unfair to suggest that these leaders neglected the interests of their constituents, each individual chose a position on the combativeness issue that, given the balance of forces, was consistent with maintaining or capturing turf within the Peronist union leadership.

### *Ideology*

The diffuseness of the original Peronist ideology lies at the root of the movement's current ideological heterogeneity. Peronism revolved from the outset around Perón himself, whose slogan "Justicia social, independencia económica y soberanía nacional" embraced a bewildering range of policies (Perón 1973, 15). For Perón, social justice included policies ranging from the *aguinaldo*, a mandatory wage bonus paid once or twice a year, to the two-year wage freeze that accompanied the 1952 economic stabilization plan. Economic independence and national sovereignty embraced both nationalizing British-owned railways (in 1947) and signing oil-exploration contracts with U.S. petroleum giants (in 1954). As is evident from Perón's high level of electoral support throughout his first presidency (1946–1955), most Peronists were content to leave to their "Jefe Supremo" the choice of specific actions that would realize the diffuse ideals he articulated from time to time.

Between 1973 and 1976, the ideological heterogeneity of Peronism contributed heavily to a national tragedy as hundreds of Argentines lost their lives in internecine war between armed factions of the Peronist left and right. Ideological incoherence also characterized individual Peronists. For example, Mario Firmenich and other leaders of the left-wing Montoneros had belonged to extreme right-wing groups in the early 1960s. In the 1980s, intra-Peronist ideological disputes rarely led to violence, but the movement was just as diverse ideologically as it had been earlier. The ease with which Peronist leaders (including union leaders) have shifted back and forth between right- and left-wing stances (depending on the issue and the moment), along with the key roles that personalism and oppor-

TABLE 2 *Ideological Differences in Peronist Unionism on Major Issues, 1983–1989*

	"25"	Ubaldinistas	"62"	"15"
Human rights trials	left	left	right?	right
Military uprisings 1987–88	left	left		right
Debt moratorium	left	left		right
U.S. Central America policy	left	left	right	right
Legalization of divorce	left		right	right

Note: A question mark indicates that available information is not conclusive enough to make more than a tentative evaluation of the faction's position on the particular issue. If no information was available, the corresponding space in the table was left blank.

tunism have long played in the Peronist movement, suggests that the ideological differences discerned here among the factions of union leaders should be taken as general tendencies rather than as hard-and-fast distinctions.

Among the Peronist union factions of the 1980s, the "25" was ideologically most to the left. Ubaldinismo leaned toward the Christian Democratic left (to borrow a European term), while the "62" and the "15" were unambiguously right-of-center groups. Each faction's location on the left-right ideological spectrum can be detected in its leaders' statements and actions on a range of ideologically charged issues: the human rights trials, the military revolts in 1987 and 1988, Argentine foreign debt, U.S. policy in Central America, and the legalization of divorce (see table 2). Because it was not possible to identify positions for all factions on all issues, this section will merely paint a composite picture indicative of the ideological stance of each faction. To this end, it will be useful to examine some of the more general statements by Peronist union and political leaders that highlight the movement's ideological heterogeneity.

On the left, the "25" had no qualms about denouncing "transnational capitalism" in language that would fit in with an avowedly Marxist account of Argentina's contemporary position in the world economic system. According to one document, "The development of the crisis at the international level and the consequent recomposition of the balance of forces at the backbone of the new transnational order has made us the chosen victims of financial interests and the World Bank—impregnable bulwarks of a transnational capitalism that has reinforced its plan of domination over three-quarters of the planet's population."<sup>29</sup>

On the right, Lorenzo Miguel frequently reminded reporters that he was "anti-Marxist and anti-leftist"<sup>30</sup> and that he opposed "foreign

29. Movimiento Sindical Peronismo Renovador, "Documento final dado por el primero plenario nacional del Movimiento Sindical Peronismo Renovador (MSPR)," 1986 unpublished document, Carlos Paz, Provincia de Córdoba.

30. *Bimestre* (July–Aug. 1988):37.

ideologies" including "social democracy."<sup>31</sup> Herminio Iglesias, a former UOM leader who had become a political boss in Avellaneda and a conspicuous figure in orthodox Peronism, once deplored in a single statement the "defamation" of the armed forces, cultural permissiveness, redistributionist economic policies, and those critical of his heavy-handed style of politics:

[The Alfonsín government has been conducting] a propaganda campaign to defame not only men but institutions, like the armed forces and the Church, in order to impose a decadent lifestyle where pornography and nudity appear to be more important than the hunger and misery of the people. . . . The best help we can give to our Latin American brothers is to get our country moving . . . , but to do so we cannot keep threatening landowners, raising taxes, or withholding [foreign exchange earnings from agricultural exporters]. . . . Those who worry about the methods that must sometimes be used do not seem to be equally concerned by the aims of those who govern. A party of *señoritas* will not suffice to confront those who seek to dissolve the nation.<sup>32</sup>

One of the few issues that united Argentina's Marxist, left-Peronist, and other leftist groups was the desirability of prosecuting military officers accused of human rights violations. Among the factions in Peronist unionism, the "25" was most outspoken on the human rights issue. Ricardo Pérez (of the truckers) was the CGT's secretary for human rights, and Victor De Gennaro and Germán Abdala (of the state workers' union) became vocal advocates for the families of the *desaparecidos*.<sup>33</sup> Other "25" leaders endorsed and attended human rights demonstrations,<sup>34</sup> and the renewal Peronist deputies, "25" unionists among them, voted in 1987 against the legislation known as "Obediencia Debida" that eventually gave amnesty to military officers who, in violating human rights, were "just following orders."<sup>35</sup>

Another strong advocate for those who suffered human rights violations during the dictatorship was Saúl Ubaldini, who attended human rights demonstrations, publicly embraced the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (a group of women whose children "disappeared" after the 1976 coup), and declared his opposition to the bill known as Obediencia Debida (Due Obedience).<sup>36</sup> In June 1988, Ubaldinista and "25" representatives issued a joint statement: "The armed forces . . . [should] subordinate themselves to the democratic system and guarantee the people that

31. *El Periodista*, 20–26 Sept. 1985, p. 11; and *Bimestre*, no. 40 (Nov.–Dec. 1987):29.

32. Interview with Herminio Iglesias, reprinted in *Mirador* (the monthly newsletter of the glass workers' union) (Oct. 1985):10.

33. Author's interview with an anonymous legal advisor to Ricardo Pérez, 12 July 1989, Buenos Aires.

34. *La Razón*, 10 July 1986, p. 13.

35. *Bimestre*, no. 33 (May–June 1987):17, 36, 39.

36. *Informes Laborales*, no. 229 (Sept. 1985):3.361; and *Bimestre*, no. 33 (May–June 1987):36.

nothing will stand in the way of the prosecution of those who, using the [military] institution, violated human rights."<sup>37</sup>

The political right in Argentina has also been divided, ideologically between liberal *laissez-faire* and economic nationalist factions and organizationally among numerous political parties. The right during the Alfonsín government nonetheless managed to forge broad unity on the question of the military and human rights—in favor of forgiving the “excesses” of the *guerra sucia* in the interest of “national conciliation.” Sharing the “national conciliation” position among the Peronist union factions were the “62” and the “15.” By joining their orthodox Peronist allies in abstaining on the vote on the Obediencia Debida bill, the “62” unionists in the Cámara de Diputados helped assure its passage.<sup>38</sup> Within the Peronist union leadership, Jorge Triaca of the “15” was the most visible advocate of the “national conciliation” approach. Like Lorenzo Miguel, Triaca had been arrested after the 1976 coup, but his detention was apparently less unpleasant. In his March 1985 appearance at the human rights trials, Triaca testified that he had received “exemplary” treatment during his eight-month detention on a navy ship. When asked whether he knew of any union leaders who had been killed, kidnapped, tortured, or illegally detained between 1976 and 1982, he recalled only the notorious case of Oscar Smith of the light and power workers, neglecting to denounce even his own illegal detention<sup>39</sup> (the most reliable calculations suggest that workers, many of them unionists, made up some 30 percent of 8,960 persons who “disappeared” during the military regime).<sup>40</sup> Triaca’s apparent willingness to overlook the military’s persecution of unionists generated an angry response from the “25,” and Ubalдини threatened to resign from the CGT if Triaca did not clarify his statements.<sup>41</sup> At least one prominent union leader who later joined the “15” argued more broadly that the human rights trials constituted a “political issue” that the judicial branch of government had been inappropriately charged with resolving. Regarding the Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (the name by which the military government referred to its seven-year reign), the future “15” luminary stated:

You have to judge the *proceso* globally, and not just in terms of the violation of human rights. The drop in the gross domestic product, the increase in speculation, the imprisonment of Isabel Perón are also violations of human rights. The military coup itself is a violation of the constitution and the law. We need an overall judgment, and the citizenry itself made such a judgment [in 1983] by voting

37. *Informes Laborales*, no. 262 (June 1988):3.837.

38. *Bimestre*, no. 33 (May–June 1987):27, 36, 39.

39. *La Razón*, 25 Apr. 1985, p. 14.

40. These calculations are based on the 1984 work of the Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparación de las Personas, *Nunca Más*, published by CONADEP in Buenos Aires.

41. *Clarín*, 27 Apr. 1985, p. 12.

against the *proceso*. [The human rights trials] might sound good to international public opinion, but there's no political backing for them in Argentina. . . . I think [the human rights trials] have put the judiciary in the position of resolving a political issue.<sup>42</sup>

As on the human rights question, the left and right took different stances toward the three military revolts that occurred during 1987–88. The left (along with most Argentines) generally condemned the uprisings; the right, although it did not endorse the rebellions, generally expressed sympathy for the rebels' grievances. Ubalдини denounced the April 1987 rebellion and called a general strike in defense of democracy, but the situation was defused before the strike was to have taken place. Armando Cavalieri of the "15" responded more tepidly to the uprising: "These boys [the leaders of the April 1987 military uprising] just want to express their lack of an important role, because they feel attacked by society. . . . [T]he military aren't trying to jeopardize the constitution. . . . these boys just want to be heard."<sup>43</sup> These remarks were immediately denounced by "25" leader Guerino Andreoni.<sup>44</sup>

Economic policy, especially the foreign debt issue, was another area in which the "25" and Ubaldinismo stood to the left of other sectors of Peronist unionism. Whereas the "25" and Ubalдини called for a moratorium on the foreign debt and for distinguishing its "legitimate" components from its "illegitimate" ones, the "15" considered a moratorium to be obsolete.<sup>45</sup> As Luis Barrionuevo observed, "talk about a moratorium is archaic in the debtor countries. . . . A lot of old hobbyhorses have ceased to be relevant at a time when we need proposals about how to escape from the crisis."<sup>46</sup> The "15" were joined in their opposition to a moratorium by Argentina's business leaders, with whom Triaca and his allies had such excellent contacts that their "25" rivals labeled them "captains of unionism" (Beliz 1988, 195).

The "25" viewed geopolitical issues primarily in North-South terms. As evidenced by the final statement produced at the faction's first congress in 1986, the renewal unionists reserved special criticism for U.S. policy toward the Third World: "[W]e respect the principle of non-intervention and are vigilant in defense of the right to self-determination that today, unfortunately, is placed in jeopardy by the hegemonic interest of imperialism in the Central American region and by the recent bombing of the Republic of Libya."<sup>47</sup>

42. Interview with a future leader of the "15," 22 Sept. 1986.

43. *Informes Laborales*, no. 249 (May 1987):2.1299.

44. *Informes Laborales*, no. 248 (Apr. 1987):2.1258.

45. *Informes Laborales*, no. 262 (June 1988):3.837; and *Informes Laborales*, no. 264 (Aug. 1988):3.859.

46. *Bimestre*, no. 35 (Sept.–Oct. 1987):27.

47. MSPR, "Documento final del Movimiento Sindical Peronismo Renovador," p. 13.

Particularly on the ideologically charged issue of Nicaragua, the "25" stood clearly to the left of the "15" and the "62." In 1986 Víctor De Gennaro and Germán Abdala of the "25" signed a statement protesting U.S. Congressional approval of one hundred million dollars for the Contra war<sup>48</sup> (a year later renewal Peronist politician Antonio Cafiero sided explicitly with the Sandinistas against the U.S.-backed Contras).<sup>49</sup> Perhaps uniquely among Latin American unionists of equal stature, the "15" and "62," who tended to view international conflict in East-West terms, stood distinctly to the right on the Nicaragua issue. According to a key leader of the "62," "there are some Peronist deputies who agree with the Sandinista regime; I don't agree with them. . . . I'm not sure, but I don't think anyone in the orthodox wing [dominated by the "62"] agrees with the Sandinista regime."<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps the most important social issue debated in the Argentine Congreso during Alfonsín's presidency was a 1986 proposal to legalize divorce. The renewal deputies largely supported the divorce bill, with seven of the nine renewal ("25") unionists in the chamber voting for it. In contrast, several orthodox deputies abstained from the vote, and only one of nine orthodox ("62") unionists voted in favor of it.<sup>51</sup> Diego Ibáñez of the pro-Miguel core of the "62" publicly opposed the legalization of divorce,<sup>52</sup> and Jorge Triaca took a place on the podium in a church-sponsored rally "to defend the family" against the divorce law.<sup>53</sup> Despite Ubaldini's close ties to the Catholic Church (which was spearheading opposition to the divorce legislation), he took no public position on the divorce issue.

Peronist union leaders during the Alfonsín presidency were thus deeply divided on the major issues of the day. All would have endorsed Perón's motto "Justicia social, independencia económica y soberanía nacional," but so too would most leaders of the rival Radical party. The Peronists shared a reverence for Perón, but their internal differences on ideology and issues were as great as any that separated the Peronists as a group from the Radicals, another ideologically heterogeneous party whose reverence was reserved for former president Hipólito Yrigoyen. Ideological heterogeneity and differences over issue positions are probably even greater within the Peronist and Radical parties of Argentina than within the Democratic and Republican parties of the United States, which are often considered among the most ideologically heterogeneous parties in the industrialized world.

48. This statement was published in *La Razón*, 22 July 1986, p. 12.

49. *Bimestre*, no. 35 (Sept.–Oct. 1987):27.

50. Interview with a leader of the "62," 22 Sept. 1986.

51. *Clarín*, 21 Aug. 1986, p. 8.

52. *Clarín*, 13 Aug. 1986, p. 11.

53. *Bimestre*, no. 28 (July–Aug. 1986):29.



Combativeness

The combativeness dimension may itself be viewed usefully as a composite of two independent subdimensions: the degree to which the leaders of each faction tend to express their political demands through large-scale strikes and demonstrations (rather than through bargaining and conciliation) and the planning horizon that the leaders of each faction seem to have in mind when they choose between combativeness and conciliation. The leaders of each faction can thus be classified not only as predisposed toward a more combative or a more conciliatory stance but also as predisposed toward adopting a long-term “strategic” perspective as opposed to a short-term “tactical” one. The positions of the four factions of union leaders on these subdimensions of combativeness are summarized in table 3.

The Ubaldinistas fall into the combative-tactical category. As the driving force behind the thirteen general strikes called by the CGT against the Radical government, the Ubaldinistas clearly took a combative approach to influencing public policy. Demonstrating the tactical nature of this approach is the fact that the CGT continued to call general strikes long after it became evident that the strikes were failing to achieve their goal of forcing the government to change its economic policy. The twenty-six points announced by the CGT in March 1985 represented an attempt by Ubaldini and his allies to articulate a broader political project, but their proposal amounted to little more than a wish list of measures deemed capable of simultaneously promoting investment, raising workers’ real incomes, and increasing social spending—in the midst of the worst economic crisis in modern Argentine history. A contributor to the renewal Peronist magazine *Unidos* called the twenty-six-point program “irresponsible and incoherent . . . , useful for a frontal clash [with the government] but not as a general political alternative” (Palermo 1989, 79).

Desperation, base-level pressure, and lack of imaginative leadership probably all sustained the general strike tactic in the face of its conspicuous total failure to induce economic policy changes. Yet the general strikes also had the effect, intended or not, of allowing Ubaldini at periodic intervals to mobilize mass support behind his continued leadership of the CGT. This effect may well explain in part why the general strike tactic was maintained. As a second-rank leader of the six-thousand-member beer workers’ union, Ubaldini had a personal interest in continuing the general strike strategy. Lacking a strong organizational base of his own, his power resided in his combative oratory and in public awareness of his militant opposition to the dictatorship. The mass demonstrations and media attention that accompanied the general strikes offered Ubaldini an indispensable forum for calling on these power resources, without which he surely would have disappeared into obscurity as a minor official in a minuscule union.



Ubalдини's pressing ahead with the general strike strategy is a prime example of the degree to which internal struggles in the Peronist union leadership have strongly shaped the labor movement's external behavior (for example, toward the government). Although students of Argentine labor have often argued that factions in Peronist unionism emerge from arguments over how closely to cooperate with the government in office (Epstein 1979, 458; Torre 1974, 72-73), it is likely that the causality runs in both directions: some union leaders seem to incline their views on cooperation with the government toward the position they perceive as best preserving or enhancing their power against rivals in the union leadership.

The position of the "25" may be characterized as combative-strategic. The "25" have been recognized as a combative group ever since they organized the 1979 general strike against the military dictatorship. During the Alfonsín government, the "25" (unlike the conciliatory "62" and "15") invariably backed the CGT's general strikes. But the "25" confronted the major issues facing the labor movement on a parallel and perhaps more constructive track by showing more concern than the Ubaldinistas for long-term issues like worker self-management, changes in the labor process, and the incorporation of new technology. Important "25" unions like the state workers' ATE (Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado) and the tobacco employees' SUETRA (Sindicato Unico de Empleados de Tabaco de la República Argentina) established highly developed research institutes where studies were made of these broader issues as well as of technical issues relevant to the industries under each union's jurisdiction. The "25" were also more involved than the Ubaldinistas in politics, providing the Partido Justicialista with five times as many national deputies between 1983 and 1989 (see appendix 1). During Alfonsín's presidency, the "25" suffered fewer major defections than any of the other factions, suggesting that adherence to a common project played a greater role in the "25" than in other factions where opportunism was more conspicuous. Still, "25" members defected en masse in the early months of Menem's term in office, suggesting that the strategic project of the "25" was somewhat less solid than it appeared during Alfonsín's presidency.

The leaders of the Ubaldinistas and the "25" implicitly acknowledged that their differences lay along a tactical-strategic dimension. As "25" leader Guerino Andreoni (of the retail clerks' confederation) explained, "Ubaldinismo is behind a leader; we in the "25" are behind a project. We see the debate much more from a political standpoint. . . . [W]e might be able to achieve the same results without establishing a direct relationship with politics, but it would take a much longer time" (quoted in Beliz 1988, 117).

Ubaldinista Miguel Candore (of the civil service workers) confirmed that the unity of his faction was indeed defined by allegiance to

one leader, but he questioned whether the "25" really looked as much to the long-term as its leaders claimed:

I'd like to see the famous political project of the "25." They've been working in politics for a while, in what is sometimes called renewal [Peronism], but not everyone in the "25" thinks alike. [Julio] Guillán, who [went over to the "15"], is not the same as [Roberto] Digón, nor is [Víctor] De Gennaro the same as [Guerino] Andreoni. If nothing else, this prevents them from expressing a political project. Around here we all talk about a project, but what I want to know is, where is it? We in the CGT have one goal: to strengthen Ubaldini throughout the country. . . . [W]e . . . move very cautiously in politics. But look here, we think that *el número uno*, the referent of everything, is named Saúl Ubaldini. (quoted in Beliz 1988, 117–18)

Lorenzo Miguel and his followers in the "62" took a stance classifiable as *conciliatory-tactical*. Unlike the Ubaldinistas and the "25," Miguel was never intransigent in his opposition to the government. In mid-1986, when relations between the CGT and the Alfonsín government had reached an all-time low, Miguel made public his telegram thanking Economy Minister Sourrouille for helping the metalworkers' union reach a wage agreement with the industry's employers' associations.<sup>54</sup> A few months later, Miguel declined to give full support to the October 1986 general strike.<sup>55</sup> Far from being intransigent, Miguel enjoyed a long-standing reputation as an astute behind-the-scenes negotiator. His metalworkers' union (the UOM) was powerful enough that bargaining was likely to produce concessions from employers and from the government. Another union strong enough to win concessions through negotiation on a consistent basis was the oil workers' SUPE (Sindicato Unico de Petroleros del Estado), which was controlled by Miguel's close ally Diego Ibáñez.

Miguel's approach to the government was generally conciliatory but not uniformly so. On numerous occasions, Miguel strongly supported CGT general strikes and anti-government rallies. Revealing the tactical nature of his approach, Miguel moved easily back and forth between conciliatory and combative stances. These tactical shifts were determined in part by the government's perceived or demonstrated willingness to permit generous wage increases for the metalworkers' union. Perhaps more important, however, were motives involving the balance of forces in Peronist unionism itself. In order to avoid being overshadowed by unionists who suddenly found themselves possessing new power resources, Miguel typically sided with the factions that were temporarily on the "out" side. When Ubaldini's faction gained control of the newly revitalized CGT in 1986, Miguel shifted toward the conciliatory Triaca;

54. *La Razón*, 10 July 1986, p. 19.

55. *Informes Laborales*, no. 243 (Nov. 1986):3.609.

when Triaca's faction gained access to the labor ministry in 1987 and 1989, Miguel forged an alliance with the combative Ubaldini.

Miguel's shifting alliances were consistent with the model of "balancing behavior" laid out in Kenneth Waltz's analysis of international alliances, which contemplates an asymmetrical bipolar situation (where one great power is stronger than the other) and seeks to explain the conditions under which weaker peripheral states will engage in "bandwagoning" behavior (siding with the stronger great power) versus "balancing" behavior (siding with the weaker great power) (Waltz 1979, 102–28). Assuming that the main goals of the peripheral states are to defend their national identities and advance their interests in the international arena, Waltz has argued that they should engage in "balancing" behavior when the first goal is considered paramount (they retain greater independent bargaining leverage when they side with the weaker of the two great powers), and in "bandwagoning" behavior when their national integrity is sufficiently assured to permit them the luxury of giving primacy to advancing their secondary interests in the international arena.

Miguel, who seemed to place primary emphasis on maintaining his power and independence, opted repeatedly for balancing behavior, as if playing the role of peripheral state. When it appeared in 1980–1983 that Triaca (who had forged close ties with the military government) was becoming a powerful competitor, Miguel threw his support to the "25." When it looked in 1985 as if Ubaldini was becoming a significant rival after being named sole secretary-general of the CGT, Miguel threw his support to Triaca. When it looked in 1989 like Triaca, after being named by Carlos Menem to head the labor ministry, was posing a challenge to the metalworkers' chief, Miguel threw his support to Ubaldini. In each case, Miguel sided with the weaker against the stronger of two "powers," one of whom (Ubaldini) had access to the resources of the CGT while the other (Triaca) had frequent access to those of the labor ministry.

Continuing the analysis, the "15" is properly characterized as a *conciliatory-strategic* current. Whereas Miguel tended to opt for conciliation as a tactic to be used according to circumstance, the major "15" leaders viewed negotiation with employers, the military, and the Radical government as the most strategically useful way to achieve long-term gains for themselves and their constituents. A union leader who later became prominent in the "15" contrasted his conciliatory approach with the combative stance taken by the "25": "Our vision is one of reaching agreement with the [various] sectors that comprise society and the economy. By contrast, the '25' have a practice of confronting other social sectors. . . . I believe in political solutions, I don't believe in strikes."<sup>56</sup>

56. Interview with a future leader of the "15," 22 Sept. 1986.

Much more than Miguel and the "62," who invariably focused on short-term concerns like fluctuations in real wages, the key leaders of the "15" took a more global view of Argentina's economic problems and placed much more emphasis on increasing the size of the economic pie than on slicing it up more equitably. In this sense, their posture was conciliatory-strategic rather than conciliatory-tactical. The vision of the "15" had nothing to do with the radical populism espoused by the (revered) Perón of 1945–1948 and everything to do with the sober developmentalism of the (forgotten) Perón of 1952–1955. According to "15" leader Armando Cavalieri, Argentina needed to "push for a new model of accumulation not centered on state investment" and to "get production moving before trying to redistribute resources that don't exist."<sup>57</sup> Roberto Digón of the "25" (of the tobacco employees' union) viewed the project of his arch-rivals in less charitable terms.

There have been two projects in the time that has passed since the military dictatorship. The one for which the "15" would become the main protagonist is the same as the one espoused by those who, a few years ago, were close collaborators of General Viola, and who shared a political project with [former economy minister José Alfredo] Martínez de Hoz, with the captains of industry, and with officials of the United States Embassy. They sought then and continue to seek a small country with only twenty or thirty important firms, with neither small nor medium industry, and with space for only fifteen million or so Argentines. The "15" are nothing more than the reincarnation of the [GyT-sponsored] CGT-Azopardo or, going back a bit further, the *participacionistas* [a group of collaborationist unions] during General Onganía's regime. (Beliz 1988, 121)

To summarize, then, Ubaldinismo took a combative-tactical approach and the "25" a combative-strategic one; the "62" took a conciliatory-tactical stance and the "15," a conciliatory-strategic one (see table 3). As should now be evident, combativeness divided the factions along the same lines as ideology: the combative "25" and Ubaldinista factions lay politically to the left of the conciliatory "62" and "15." Although the issue will not be pursued here, an attentive reading of the statements of the main leaders of each faction would reveal that the strategically oriented "25" and "15" groups shared a modernizing discourse while the tactically oriented Ubaldinista and "62" factions shared a traditionalist one.

### *Party Involvement*

Despite their differences in ideology and combativeness, the "25" and the "62" resembled each other in one crucial respect: both factions were heavily involved in the Partido Justicialista. Similarly, the Ubaldinistas and the "15," despite their differing ideologies and propensities

57. *Informes Laborales*, no. 271 (Mar. 1989):3.924.

toward dialogue, resembled each other in that neither faction was deeply involved in the party. Whereas the "62" and "25" viewed the Partido Justicialista as a useful vehicle for making their mark on politics and policy, the Ubaldinistas and the "15" circumvented the party and sought to leave their imprint by gaining direct influence over the national executive. Party involvement thus split the factions along a dimension perpendicular to combativeness and ideology (table 3).

Evidence that the "62" and the "25" were more heavily involved in the Partido Justicialista than the Ubaldinistas and the "15" is provided by the number of deputies each faction supplied to the party's congressional block. Between 1983 and 1989, the "62" and "25" provided, respectively, thirteen and ten deputies to the party's Capital Federal and Buenos Aires delegations to the Cámara de Diputados. During the same six years, the "15" supplied only two deputies (although future "15" leader Jorge Triaca was elected to the Cámara in 1985, he won his seat as a member of the "62"), and the Ubaldinistas furnished only one (see table 1 and appendix 1). Moreover, the "62" and the "25" participated respectively in the competing orthodox and renewal sectors of the Partido Justicialista, whereas Ubaldini maintained neutrality in the orthodox-renewal dispute and tried to convert the CGT into the main pole of political opposition to the Alfonsín government. The "15" began to gain ground in the party leadership in 1989, but their real stake lay in Menem's control of the national executive, which gave them control of the labor ministry.

Although the "62" and the "25" shared the view that the Partido Justicialista was an important vehicle for expressing interests, the two factions differed over what its ideology and program should be and how it should be run. The ideological and programmatic differences between the "62" and the "25" have already been discussed; another important distinction between the factions was that the "62" tried to dominate the party whereas the "25" ceded hegemony to non-union professional politicians. A comparison of national deputy lists graphically illustrates this difference. In 1983, when Lorenzo Miguel had control of the lists, "62" unionists got choice positions; in 1987, when the renewal sector had control, the "25" unionists were fewer and were placed in more precarious positions (table 1).

The hotly contested issue of the Partido Justicialista's *tercio* system of leadership recruitment provides additional insight into how the "62" and the "25" differed in their views of how the party should be run. In principle, the *tercio* system allowed each of the three branches of the Peronist movement—the men's political branch, the women's political branch, and the union branch—to nominate one-third of the candidates for party leadership posts, national deputy seats, and other positions allocated on a proportional basis. The "62" leaders liked the *tercio* system because the financial and organizational weakness of non-union Peron-

TABLE 3 Factional Differences in Peronist Unionism, 1983–1989

Characteristic	"25"	Ubaldinistas	"62"	"15"
Left ideology	yes	yes <sup>a</sup>	no	no
Combative stance	yes	yes	no <sup>b</sup>	no
High party involvement	yes	no	yes	no
Strategic planning horizon	yes	no	no	yes

<sup>a</sup>Ubaldinismo's ideology is best characterized as center-left.

<sup>b</sup>The "62" is basically conciliatory but sometimes takes a combative stance.

ism assured them control of the nomination process in all three branches. The right of the women's branch to nominate a third of the candidates was simply ignored; women never made up more than a small percentage of Peronist deputies or party officials. Non-unionists made up a majority of the candidates from the men's political branch, but these individuals were often nominated or manipulated by the "62." In 1983, for example, Lorenzo Miguel's intimates Luis Santos Casale and Torcuato Fino, both non-union advisors to the "62," represented the men's political branch on the list of national deputy candidates from the Capital Federal.

Given their ability to control the nomination process under the semi-fictitious *tercio* system, it is not surprising that the "62" leaders were annoyed when the renewal sector linked to the "25" proposed in 1987 to change the party constitution to eliminate the *tercio* system entirely. In the end, the system was not completely abolished, but the Partido Justicialista's peak authority, the Consejo Directivo Nacional wound up reserving only 17 of 110 posts for unionists.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, it was not specified that the 17 unionists would be nominated by the "62," as in the past. In mid-1989, in fact, 7 of the unionists on the party's Consejo Directivo Nacional came from the "15" (more a sign of their alliance with the charismatic Menem than of any sudden change of heart regarding the importance of party activity), 5 from the "25," 4 from the Ubaldinistas, and only 1 from the pro-Miguel core of the "62."<sup>59</sup> A similar compromise on the *tercio*, slanted toward the position of the renewal sector, was made in the party's branch in the Capital Federal (Palermo 1989, 85).

Just as the "62" and the "25" approached the party from different angles, the "15" and the Ubaldinistas, who both sought direct influence over government policy, approached the national executive in different ways. The "15" tried to shape government policy from within, primarily by controlling the labor ministry. Ubaldini's faction, by contrast, tried to constrain government policies from without, by launching general strikes,

58. Partido Justicialista, "Carta orgánica nacional," unpublished document, Buenos Aires, 1987.

59. Partido Justicialista, "Consejo nacional," unpublished document, Buenos Aires, 1989.



mobilizing unionists for mass demonstrations, and denouncing the government in the mass media. As table 3 indicates, the Peronist union factions have little in common apart from a reverence for Perón and his perceived historical role.

#### UNION CHARACTERISTICS AND UNION LEADER POLITICAL TACTICS

Clear ideological and tactical differences distinguish the four main factions of Peronist union leaders. What explains why the leaders of the union factions choose the tactics that they do? Two possibilities are the interests and preferences of the union leaders themselves and the interests of union members as determined by the characteristics of the unions to which they belong. It has been argued here that union leaders' personal power interests together with their views on the best strategies for defending the interests of their constituents and organizations were the primary factors behind their decisions about whether to adopt a combative or conciliatory stance toward the Alfonsín government. This section will consider an alternative hypothesis: that union leaders adopt particular positions on combativeness (and party involvement) in response to pressure from union members whose interests are strongly shaped by the characteristics of the economic sectors in which their unions operate.

Ideological differences among the factions are not readily explicable in terms of the economic sectors from which their leaders come. By contrast, factional differences on combativeness and party involvement might indeed have something to do with the characteristics of the unions that furnished each faction's leaders. It is possible to formulate and test a set of hypotheses about this relationship. The more combative factions should include a disproportionate number of unionists from public-sector and low-wage unions. Public-sector workers in Argentina have been particularly hard hit by government efforts to cut the budget deficit, and low-wage unions tend to be too weak to satisfy their demands by means of bargaining and conciliation. The factions that bypass political parties should also include a disproportionate number of public-sector and low-wage unions. Party involvement is a long-term strategy, and the more desperate public-sector and low-wage unions need short-term results. Operationalizing the hypotheses, public-sector and low-wage unions should be most prevalent in the combative and party-bypassing Ubaldinista faction. The combative and party-involved "25," along with the conciliatory and party-bypassing "15," should contain an intermediate level of such unions. Finally, the conciliatory and party-involved "62" faction should contain the lowest proportion of public-sector and low-wage unions.

To test the hypothesis that low-wage and public-sector unions



would be most prevalent in the Ubaldinistas, next most prevalent in the "25" and "15," and least prevalent in the "62," a list of unions was generated for analysis. Information on factional affiliation was available only for the most "notable" union leaders, and it was therefore decided to restrict the universe of unions analyzed to those whose leaders during the Alfonsín government held top posts in the CGT, the Partido Justicialista leadership, or the Cámara de Diputados. Operationally, this universe consists of the twenty-one unions represented on the CGT's Consejo Directivo chosen in 1986, the seventeen unions represented on the Partido Justicialista's Consejo Nacional chosen in 1988, and the nineteen unions represented in the party's Capital Federal and Buenos Aires delegations to the Cámara de Diputados in 1983, 1985, 1987, and 1989. Given the considerable overlap in the unions represented in each body, the resulting sample included thirty-five unions.

It proved impossible to assign every one of these unions to one of the four factions in a clear-cut way. Some unions shifted from faction to faction, and by 1989 only two of the thirty-five unions belonged to the "62." To deal with these problems, the trajectories of the thirty-five unions were analyzed across the factions that existed in 1983, 1986, and 1989.<sup>60</sup> Three main clusters of unions emerged from the analysis: those that never left the "25";<sup>61</sup> those that once belonged to the Ubaldinista faction; and those that never belonged to any faction except *Gestión y Trabajo* (the conciliatory faction from 1978 to 1985), the "62," or the "15." Eight of the thirty-five unions did not fit into any of these categories and were therefore excluded from the analysis.<sup>62</sup> The twenty-three remaining unions are listed in table 4 under their appropriate factional clusters.

Using clusters of factions rather than individual factions required only a slight modification of the hypothesis. The clustering process re-

60. The main factions changed somewhat between 1983 and 1989: in 1983 they were the "62," the "25," and *Gestión y Trabajo*; in 1986, the "62," "25," and Ubaldinismo; and in 1989, the "62," "25," Ubaldinismo, and the "15." Thirty-six paths were logically possible across the three periods, such as "25"- "25"- "25" and GyT-"62"- "15." The author mapped the trajectories actually taken by each of the thirty-five unions and observed that these trajectories fell into three main clusters.

61. In this category were also placed the state workers' and retail clerks' unions, both of which joined the "25" after their first post-1983 internal election. The inclusion of the retail clerks in the "25" may be the most debatable characterization in the entire analysis. Guerino Andreoni, the leader of the retail clerks' national confederation (the *Confederación General de Empleados de Comercio*, or CGEC) belonged to the "25," but Armando Cavalieri, the leader of the affiliated yet independently powerful retail clerks' federation in Greater Buenos Aires (the *Sindicato de Empleados de Comercio*, or SEC) followed Triaca's trajectory of GyT-"62"- "15."

62. Three of the thirty-five unions were affiliated with the "Grupo de 20" (a minor faction usually aligned with the "62"), one with the Radical party, and one remained nonaligned. Two were not categorized for lack of information, and the final exclusion was for the auto-workers union SMATA (*Sindicato de Mecánicos y Afines de Transporte Automotor*), which foiled the scheme by switching from the "25" to the "15."

TABLE 4 *Peronist Union Clusters, 1983–1989*

Straight "25"	Ubaldinistas	Gestión y Trabajo, "62," "15"
Retail clerks	Construction workers	Metalworkers
Railway workers	Bank clerks	Private hospital workers
State workers	Food packagers	Hotel and restaurant workers
Truckers	Civil service workers	Meatpackers
Pharmaceutical workers	Textile workers	State oil workers
Taxi drivers	Light and power workers	Plastics workers
Miners	Bus drivers	Grain silo workers
Rubber workers	Water works employees	
Shipyard workers	Beer workers	
Tobacco workers		

TABLE 5 *Characteristics of Unions in Three Main Peronist Union Clusters, 1983–1989*

Union Characteristic	Ubaldinistas (%)	"25" (%)	"62" and "15" (%)
Public-sector	33	20	14
Low wages	89	40	71
Competitive elections	25	57	33

quired in effect that the "15," which was expected to contain an intermediate level of public-sector and low-wage unionists, be combined with the "62," which was expected to contain a low level of such unionists. This aggregation is justified by more than analytical convenience. As shown in appendix 1, five of the eight major unions that belonged to the "62" in 1986 had gone over to the "15" by 1989, when Miguel's UOM was the only major union left in the "62." The hypothesis can thus be restated in modified form. If union characteristics play a significant role in explaining why a union's leader favors a combative instead of a conciliatory stance or favors involvement in the Partido Justicialista instead of direct pressure on or influence within the national executive, then the Ubaldinista faction should contain a high level of public-sector and low-wage unionists, the "25" an intermediate level, and the "62"- "15" a low level of such unionists. The results of the analysis are given in table 5.

As predicted by the hypothesis on union characteristics, the Ubaldinistas included the highest proportion of public-sector unions, followed in order by the "25" and the "62"- "15" combination. In view of the small sample size and the small differences in the proportions, however, the differences were not highly significant. In a finding that gives somewhat stronger support to the hypothesis, the Ubaldinistas had by far the high-

est proportion of low-wage unions. But the same hypothesis also predicted that low-wage unions would be more prevalent in the "25" than in the "62"-15," whereas the opposite was true. In short, the hypothesis on union characteristics was not confirmed. The interests and preferences of individual union leaders proved to be more important than the characteristics of the unions they led (which in this analysis serves as a proxy for the interests of union members) in explaining union leaders' stances on combativeness and party involvement.

A lack of union democracy may help explain why union characteristics are related only weakly and inconsistently to union leaders' stances on combativeness and party involvement. In the absence of periodic competitive elections, union leaders do not run the risk of losing their posts if they adopt conciliatory stances and long-term strategies at times when their constituents favor combative stances and short-term strategies. In fact, between 1987 and 1989, competitive elections were held in only eight of the twenty-one sampled unions for which data were available. In the other thirteen unions, workers could vote only for or against a single list of candidates. Yet pointing to the lack of union democracy to explain the weak relationship between union characteristics (and presumed rank-and-file preferences) and stance on combativeness and party involvement is itself open to question. The faction whose unions displayed the least internal democracy (the Ubaldinistas) showed the most correspondence between the presumed preferences of the union rank and file and union leaders' positions on combativeness and party involvement.

Defects in the analysis may have suppressed a stronger underlying relationship between the interests of the rank and file and the tactical positions taken by the union leaders. The sample size was small, and it may be wrong to assume that more desperate workers will favor combative stances over conciliatory ones and short-term over long-term strategies. But the weight of the evidence seems to suggest that the factors discussed in the second section—union leaders' personal power interests and personal opinions about which tactics will best serve those whom they represent—provide the best explanation for union leaders' choices between combativeness and conciliation and for their decisions about whether to involve themselves in party activity. The latter decision has particularly important implications for the consolidation of democracy in the broader political system.

#### COMBATIVENESS, PARTY INVOLVEMENT, AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

In what ways might the behavior of a powerful trade-union movement affect the possibilities for democratic consolidation in a country that has recently undergone a transition from authoritarian rule? It could be argued that the crucial factor is the degree of union combativeness, too

much of which may impede economic growth or create a climate of instability propitious for an authoritarian reversion. This section presents an alternative argument: first, that certain kinds of union combativeness are not only compatible with but may even contribute to a process of democratic consolidation; second, that the dimension of behavior of the labor movement most important to evaluating the prospects for democratic consolidation is not the degree of combativeness but rather the degree to which union leaders become habituated to pressing their broad political demands through channels that can remain open only under democratic regimes, as opposed to channels that potentially can remain open (and in Argentina actually have remained open) under authoritarian regimes. The prospects for democratic consolidation will be enhanced to the extent to which the labor movement expresses its broad political demands through party, legislative, and electoral channels rather than through mass mobilization or direct bargaining with the national executive.

Some plausibility can be found in the usual assumption that the more a country's unions express their grievances through general strikes, mass demonstrations, and ringing condemnations of government policy, the more difficult the consolidation process will be. Such expressions of protest tend to discourage investment, shorten planning horizons, and make it hard for the government to enact a consistent economic policy, thus impeding the process of economic recovery and development, a central task faced by the new political leadership. Moreover, if large-scale protest actions like general strikes are extensive, persistent, or radicalized enough to generate a perception that public "order" is breaking down, sectors of society prone to forget or overlook the worst aspects of the preceding authoritarianism may begin to look back with nostalgia on the "order" that prevailed under the recent dictatorship. Once this nostalgia comes to the fore, these social sectors may well become more receptive to suggestions that an authoritarian reversion is the lesser of two evils when compared with widespread radicalized labor protest uncontrolled by the national union leadership. In short, from economic as well as political points of view, a plausible argument can be made that high levels of union combativeness may impede the process of democratic consolidation in countries that have recently made a transition away from authoritarianism.

There are even stronger reasons to suppose, however, that the relationship between union combativeness and democratic consolidation is contextually specific rather than uniformly negative. First, union combativeness has often played a key role in spurring the initial transition away from authoritarianism. Argentina provides some well-known examples. Union combativeness in the wake of the 1969 Córdoba uprising was central to convincing the military government (1966–1973) that a democratic opening was preferable to further explosions of protest. During the subsequent dictatorship (1976–1983), union combativeness helped create

a democratic opening by increasing the military government's sense of isolation and desperation both before and after the 1982 conflict with Britain in the South Atlantic.

Second, in addition to promoting the initial transition, union combativeness can contribute to democratic consolidation. By increasing workers' sense of political efficacy, general strikes and mass demonstrations can reduce fear and apathy and help rebuild habits of political participation. If sponsored and controlled by the national union leadership, strikes and demonstrations can also help organize and channel worker protest, reducing the likelihood that it will assume more violent and fear-inspiring forms like bombings and assassinations. Where the previous authoritarian regime (like Argentina's from 1976 to 1983) has tried to splinter rather than domesticate the labor movement (see Valenzuela 1989, 448), the national union leaders may lose contact with base-level militants. If at the same time labor protest is energized by pent-up demand, then factory occupations and isolated acts of violence may erupt. Intense, decentralized protest can be convenient for those nostalgic for authoritarian rule, who can then argue that "agitators" have gotten hold of segments of the working class and a "strong hand" is needed to reduce a threat that the national union leaders seem unable to contain.

Weighing these arguments, it appears that on balance large-scale strikes and demonstrations called by national-level union leaders do not have a uniformly negative effect on democratic consolidation. They can help to precipitate the initial transition from authoritarian rule, rebuild habits of political participation, and guide labor protest away from channels potentially more dangerous to democratic consolidation. If sponsored and controlled by national-level union leaders, a high level of union combativeness can be compatible with, and in some ways conducive to, democratic consolidation.

Although union combativeness may be the most spectacular aspect of union behavior in the period following transition, more central to democratic consolidation is the degree to which union leaders choose to express their broad political demands through political parties. Because parties function in the electoral and legislative arenas that form the core of liberal democracies, union leaders who commit themselves to party activity gain an immediately recognizable stake in democratic consolidation. By contrast, general strikes, mass rallies, and bargaining with the national executive may be difficult under authoritarian rule, but such activities are far from impossible, as was demonstrated clearly by the Argentine experience from 1966 to 1973. Party activity requires elections and a legislature while syndical activity does not.

In some countries, it may be obvious that the labor leadership has a stake in the survival of parties, legislatures, and elections, but the issue is less clear in Argentina, where significant sectors of the labor leadership

have supported or resigned themselves to military coups, as happened in 1966 and 1976 respectively. Why has the Argentine labor leadership historically been relatively unconcerned with the survival of parties, elections, and legislatures? One explanation frequently advanced is that the Peronist movement with which most Argentine union leaders are affiliated was banned from many elective offices during the period of anti-Peronist repression (1955–1973). Yet few Peronist union leaders resisted the 1976 overthrow of Isabel Perón, who had led a Peronist government elected without proscriptions in September 1973.

A more complete explanation for Argentine unionists' low commitment to parties and elections should refer back to the 1880s and 1890s, when the labor movement first began to expand. During this era, perhaps half of Argentina's urban workers were disenfranchised by their status as immigrants. Native workers meanwhile grew skeptical of liberal democracy as the landowning oligarchy rigged elections and as anarchism and syndicalism gained large followings. But any such explanation should focus even more heavily on the 1940s and 1950s, when the vast majority of Argentine workers forged a strong personal allegiance to Perón without forging links to a well-institutionalized Peronist party (McGuire 1989) and without becoming habituated to strong legislative and electoral institutions.

Perón, himself a military officer, first became known to unionists as an official in the military government that held office from 1943 to 1946. This route to power subsequently lent credibility to the unfortunate notion that a new Perón might arise after another coup. After falling out with his military colleagues in 1946, Perón became president via clean elections. But soon after taking office, he replaced the parties that had sponsored his candidacy with a weak, highly personalized organization that did not survive his overthrow. After subordinating the congress to the executive branch, he began to imprison opposition candidates, manipulate electoral rules, and deny opposition forces access to the mass media. Elevating the end of achieving social justice above the means of procedural democracy, he tried to establish direct, plebiscitarian links between himself and his individual supporters while neglecting or devaluing the institutions that form the basis for procedural democracy.

More than the proscription of Peronism between 1955 and 1973, Perón's plebiscitarian legacy helps explain the long delay in Peronist union leaders' acquiring a stronger stake in parties, legislatures, and elections. This plebiscitarian legacy, embodied in numerous writings and speeches in which Perón denounced parties and politicians, has served as an indispensable resource for unionists whose personal power interests are best served by maintaining only the most tenuous ties between the unions and the Partido Justicialista. During the Alfonsín government, however, two union factions—the "62" and the "25"—began to develop a



stronger stake in the Partido Justicialista and in the electoral and legislative institutions through which it acts. If more Argentine unionists were to develop a similar stake, Perón's plebiscitarian legacy could begin to fade. The future of democratic consolidation in Argentina hinges no more on union leaders' behavior than on that of military officers, cabinet members, business executives, big landowners, or decision-makers in large international banks. But given the social and political weight of Argentine unions, the Peronist union leaders, by involving themselves more heavily in the Partido Justicialista and thereby increasing their stake in the survival of elections and the congress, can make a major contribution to democratic consolidation.

APPENDIX 1

*Factional Affiliations of Unions with Representatives on the CGT Consejo Directivo, on the PJ Consejo Directivo Nacional, or in the Buenos Aires and Federal Capital Delegations of the PJ Block in the Argentine Cámara de Diputados, 1983-1989*

<i>Union Affiliation</i> 1987-1989	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Key Leader</i>	<i>Faction</i> in 1983	<i>Faction</i> in 1986
<i>With the "15"</i>					
FATSA	Private hospitals	170,900	West Ocampo	GyT	62
AB	Bank clerks	156,070	Zanola	62	Ub
UTGRA	Hotel and restaurant	85,481	Barrionuevo	62	62
AOT	Textile workers	73,646	Giménez	GyT	Ub
FATLyF	Light and power	69,952	Alderete	GyT	Ub
UTA	Bus drivers	56,214	Palacios	62	Ub
SMATA	Autoworkers	53,976	Rodríguez	25	25
FGPIC	Meatpackers	37,667	Romero	62	62
SUPE	State petroleum	25,588	Ibáñez	62	62
UOEP	Plastics	17,975	Triaca	GyT	62
SOIVA	Glass	13,000	Millán	Indep.	Indep.
<i>With the "25"</i>					
CGEC	Retail clerks	408,000	Andreoni	62	25
UF	Railway workers	143,304	Pedraza	25	25
ATE	State workers	85,927	De Gennaro	62	25
FNTCOTAC	Truckers	38,964	Pérez	25	25
FATF	Pharmaceuticals	28,112	Mujica	25	25
FNCT	Taxi drivers	24,000	García	25	25
AOMA	Miners	19,057	Cabrera	25	25
SOC	Rubber workers	12,189	Borda	25	25
SAON	Naval workers	3,117	Castillo	25	25
SUETRA	Tobacco workers	2,059	Digón	25	25
<i>With the "62"</i>					
UOM	Metalworkers	267,000	Miguel	62	62
URGA	Silo workers	1,656	Ponce	62	62



## APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Union Affiliation 1987-1989	Sector	Members	Key Leader	Faction in 1983	Faction in 1986
With the					
Ubaldinistas					
UOCRA	Construction	186,614	Fariás	62	Ub
FTIA	Food packagers	148,703	Morán	62	62
UPCN	Civil service	133,188	Candore	GyT	Ub
FENTOS	Water works	18,930	Lingeri	62	Ub
FONOPP	Haircutters	7,550	Hernández	?	?
FOCARA	Beer	6,000	Ubaldini	25	Ub
With no faction					
COEMA	Municipal workers	250,000	Izetta	62	Indep.
FOEIPCQA	Paper	22,000	(83-Donaires)	62	Indep.
SOMU	Maritime	12,074	Gargiulo	?	?
With the					
Radical Party					
AATRA	Telegraph	14,400	Prado	Rad	Rad
Affiliation unknown					
FAUPPA	Bakers	12,000	Romero	62	?

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