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# RESEARCH REPORTS AND NOTES

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## VIEW FROM BELOW : Working-Class Consciousness in Argentina\*

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The majority of the working classes are divided into various factions that display a host of views and attitudes. As E. P. Thompson has portrayed the concept of class, it is at best not a permanent structure or category but something that emerges from time to time when workers band together for one reason or another.<sup>1</sup> The complexity of this phenomenon has been compounded by the growth of various sectors of the working class, adding to its heterogeneity and amorphousness. Marx himself perceived that capitalism had "converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science into its paid wage labourers."<sup>2</sup>

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1. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Pelican Books, 1968), 9.

2. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: International Publishers, 1948), 11. As Antonio Gramsci reminds us, "There exists in the totality of the working masses many distinct wills: There is the communist will, a maximalist will, a reformist will, a liberal democratic will. There is even a fascist will, in a certain sense and within certain limits." See Carl Boggs, *Gramsci's Marxism* (London: Pluto, 1976), 71.

As Peter Winn noted, labor studies have tended to focus on leaders, institutions, and structures: "The workers—the presumed protagonists of labor history—only appear in these studies as institutional, theoretical, or statistical abstractions; the concrete and complex realities of their experience are conspicuous by their absence."<sup>3</sup> But understanding workers as citizens and consumers as well as producers forces scholars to confront the maddening contradictions that workers' needs and wants represent. Attempting even to approximate an understanding of the working class requires analyzing it in real situations and within a manageable country context.<sup>4</sup>

#### REASONS FOR STUDYING THE ARGENTINE WORKING CLASS

The Argentine working class manifests several characteristics that make it a good case for analyzing the many dimensions of the working class in general. First of all, Argentine workers have experienced in just one or two generations a wide gamut of political regimes, ranging from civilian populist governments through military authoritarian regimes to liberal democratic administrations. These experiences distinguish the Argentine political culture from more stable liberal-democratic and state socialist systems of the industrialized world and authoritarian systems of the Third World. Argentina's dramatic institutional changes thus present an opportunity to study ideological and policy impacts of differing regimes on working-class values and attitudes to a degree possible in only a handful of other countries (possibly Brazil, Uruguay, Portugal, or Chile after Pinochet). In this sense, Argentina is an intriguing laboratory for probing working-class values and beliefs within changing political contexts.

Second, Argentina is a developing capitalist country with a high level of salaried urban workers in the economically active population, one

3. Peter Winn, "Oral History and the Factory Study: New Approaches to Labor History," *LARR* 14, no. 2 (1979):131.

4. For examples of this genre, see the works of John H. Goldthorpe, David Lockwood, Frank Bechhofer, and Jennifer Platt, *The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); Studs Terkel, *Working* (New York: Pantheon, 1974); Barbara Garson, *All the Livelong Day* (New York: Penguin Books, 1974); Robert Schrank, *Ten Thousand Working Days* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978); Robert Lane, *Political Ideology: Why the American Common Man Believes What He Does* (New York: Free Press, 1962); Maurice Zeitlin, *Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967); John Low-Beer, *Protest and Participation: The New Working Class in Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Peter Winn, *Weavers of the Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile's Road to Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Ian Roxborough, *Unions and Politics in Mexico: The Case of the Auto Industry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). On Argentina, see José Nun, "Despidos en la industria automotriz argentina," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 40, no. 1 (1979):55–106; and Juan José Llovet, *Las lustrabotas de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: CEDES, 1980). It should be noted that like Winn's study of Chilean textile workers and Roxborough's of Mexican autoworkers, these two works treat only one industrial and occupational sector.

comparable with levels in developed Western European countries.<sup>5</sup> Further, within an ostensibly capitalist political culture, Argentine organized workers display an extraordinarily high level of union affiliation.<sup>6</sup> This characteristic is important in a study of class consciousness because in the theoretical literature on social change and revolution, unions represent not only the evidence of class consciousness but an apparent engine of political progress. The historical role of trade unions in socialist revolutions and their representation of the underprivileged masses in prerevolutionary situations have been the subject of heated debate.<sup>7</sup> Thus in its organized working-class structure with societal influence and leverage far superior to that of the trade unions in most countries, the Argentine case can help clarify these questions, especially because the power of Argentine unions in the councils of government surpasses that of unions in most of the advanced capitalist and socialist countries.

Third, Argentine trade unionism in alliance with Peronism has given the Argentine working class a legitimized, noncommunist political option, namely a potentially militant populist alternative that dramatically improved living conditions under capitalism when it took over the reins of government. Moreover, this alliance between political Peronism and Argentine trade unions has achieved uprisings, mobilizations, demonstrations, general strikes, and election victories that have destabilized five seemingly solid civil and military governments in just two generations (in 1962, 1965, 1969, 1975, and 1983). Thus working-class power in Argentina is a serious issue that invites exploration.

Fourth, previous studies of the working class (defined here as those who by collective bargaining contract or individual negotiations live preponderantly on fixed wages or salaries) have paid insufficient attention to workers beyond their position in society as producers. As Eric Hobsbawm observed, "It has been said: 'Inside every worker there is a human being trying to get out.'"<sup>8</sup> Only an incomplete Marxism assumes that workers' perceptions are entirely framed by the alienating nature of

5. *Estructura sindical en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Trabajo, 1986), 16–17.

6. See Héctor Palomino, "El movimiento obrero y sindical en una larga transición," *El Bimestre*, no. 26 (1986):12–20; and Alvaro Abós, *Los sindicatos argentinos: cuadro de situación, 1984* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios para el Proyecto Nacional, 1985).

7. The opening salvo by Eduard Bernstein, Rosa Luxemburg, and V. I. Lenin initiated an ongoing twentieth-century debate. Among their many contributions, see these landmark works: Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism* (New York: Schocken, 1961); Luxemburg, *Reform and Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970); and Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?* (New York: International Publishers, 1969).

8. See Eric Hobsbawm, *Workers: Worlds of Labor* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 281. Regarding Latin America, Peter Winn writes that research on workers "must become more fully the history of work and workers, studying not just structural and statistical parameters but concrete everyday experience of workers in factory and community, their living standards and life styles, culture and consciousness, internal divisions and relations with other groups." See Winn, "Oral History," 130.

their work experience, a reductionism that trivializes workers' considerable experiences beyond factory walls and office windows. Recent Argentine history provides a striking scenario of the results of the failure of traditional Marxist-Leninist approaches to address the nonproductivist side of workers' lives.

Fifth, although Argentina is a Third World country in terms of national income and industrial production, its social structure and modernity indices can be compared with that of many advanced Western countries, a situation that allows extrapolation from Argentine findings to more technically advanced countries. The growth of the tertiary sector (essentially the public and private service sectors of the working class in Argentina) along with a proportional decline of the industrial laboring class and the stability of its self-employed sector present a complex variety of social strata that is traditional yet modern. Since the industrialization of the 1960s, the economic trend has caused the lower ends of the working class to move up in cultural and educational access, while in the late 1970s through the 1980s, income among "middle-class workers" (those exhibiting outlooks of intermediary social strata) has declined. This pattern has resulted in a leveling of the middle portions of the working class, from the ranks of semi-skilled laborers through skilled laborers and employees to technicians and sectors of professional employees.

More and more, Argentine workers are public-sector service employees (like teachers, court officials, employees in hospital and health clinics) or employees in the private commercial sector (mainly in finance, sales, and services).<sup>9</sup> Generally, three out of every five employed Argentine workers today represent the tertiary sector as opposed to the secondary sectors of manufacturing, transportation, and construction. The industrial proletariat has shrunk to less than 15 percent of the economically active work force.<sup>10</sup> In 1973 one out of every eight Argentine voters was a factory worker, but by 1983, the ratio had increased to one out of fourteen.<sup>11</sup> In some sense, Argentina has entered a postindustrial era, due partly to the deindustrialization resulting from the repressive military dictatorship of 1976–1983 (the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional*, or simply "el Proceso") and partly to Argentina's competitive disadvantages vis-à-vis Brazil as an industrial provider combined with Argentina's advantages as a service, information-systems, and financial center.<sup>12</sup> These

9. See Juan Villarreal, "Los hilos sociales del poder," in *Crisis de la dictadura argentina*, edited by Eduardo Jozami, Pedro Paz, and Juan Villarreal (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 1985), 245–81.

10. Palomino, "El movimiento obrero."

11. See Eduardo Lucita, "Elecciones sindicales y auto-organización obrera en Argentina," *Cuadernos del Sur*, no. 3 (July–Sept. 1985):5–54. More generally, see Edgardo Catterberg, "Las elecciones del 30 de Octubre de 1983: el surgimiento de una nueva convergencia electoral," *Desarrollo Económico* 25, no. 98 (July–Sept. 1985):260–67.

12. See Jorge Schvarzer, *Martínez de Hoz: la lógica política de la política económica* (Buenos

economic developments have helped increase the growth of Argentine service employees in the private sector at the expense of the industrial labor force. When this *mélange* is compounded by a large organized civil-service and state-enterprise sector, the result is a complex trade-union structure mirroring a cosmopolitan, modern panoply of intellectual and cultural crosscurrents.

#### SURVEYING ARGENTINE WORKERS

This research attempts to tap the changing dimensions of the Argentine working class by analyzing workers during the period of redemocratization under President Raúl Alfonsín (1983–1989). The quantified data on which the study is based were gathered from structured, open-ended interviews of organized laborers and employees in Greater Buenos Aires in 1985–86. Following Marx's definition of the working class, these groups are the ones who live by the sale of their labor power, receive less than the value of the production or circulation of the goods and services in which they are involved, and do not own the significant means of production. This category is broken down in the subsequent analyses into industrial laborers and service-sector employees.

The specific research project is both more and less than the study of Argentine trade unions, labor officialdom, and labor politics. It focuses on workers in the work place as fundamental producers of Argentina's national wealth but also as consumers of goods, pursuers of leisure and cultural activities, parents, political persons, and repositories of Argentine political culture.<sup>13</sup>

Further, because the political climate in Argentina is mostly dominated by union leaders and delegates from Greater Buenos Aires,<sup>14</sup> my research project attempted to round out the picture of Argentine trade unionism by tapping the views of some of the workers for whom these union heads and district delegates claim to speak.<sup>15</sup>

Aires: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales sobre el Estado y la Administración, 1983).

13. Typical Argentine analyses deal with election returns in which workers are included in voter surveys, national income accounts, strike statistics, and sociostatistical surveys of the Argentine economy and social structure in which the working class is an essential ingredient. Among many others, see Catterberg, "Las elecciones del 30 de Octubre de 1983"; Santiago Senén Gonzalez, *Diez años de sindicalismo argentino: de Perón al Proceso* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Corregidor, 1984); Juan Carlos Torre, *Los sindicatos en el gobierno, 1973–1976* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1983); and Villarreal, "Los hilos sociales del poder," in Jozami, Paz, and Villarreal, *Crisis de la dictadura argentina*.

14. Almost 87 percent of the union federations have their central offices in Buenos Aires. See Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 167.

15. In August and September 1986, a labor study group associated with the Centro de Estudios para el Proyecto Nacional (CEPNA) under the direction of Alejandro F. Lamadrid, conducted a mail survey of union leaders and delegates on internal labor and broader politi-

The research is based on a stratified, random sample of 110 workers chosen from seven unions from Greater Buenos Aires, where most Argentine workers and employees are found. The survey covered seven of the most important industrial and service unions, representing almost one million workers and more than 29 percent of total union rank-and-file membership. These seven also account for some 46 percent of the membership of the largest unions in a country with more than fourteen hundred labor federations, unions, and associations. Three of the surveyed unions are among the top five in numbers of affiliated members. The sample of individual unions included four industrial unions: textile workers in the Asociación Obrera Textil (AOT), autoworkers in the Sindicato de Mecánicos y Afines del Transporte Automotor (SMATA), metalworkers in the Unión Obrera Metalúrgica de la República Argentina (UOM), and light and power workers in the Federación Argentina de Trabajadores de Luz y Fuerza (known as Luz y Fuerza). The sample also included three service unions: telephone employees and technicians in the Federación de Obreros y Empleados Telefónicos de la República Argentina (FOETRA), bank employees in the Asociación Bancaria, and teachers federated nationwide into the Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina (CTERA). The study focused on three of CTERA's most important affiliated unions: the secondary teachers of the national public preparatory schools in the Unión Docentes Argentinos (UDA), municipal primary school teachers in the Unión de Maestros de Primaria (UMP), and industrial arts teachers in the national industrial preparatory schools in the Asociación de Maestros de Educación Técnica (AMET).

AOT, SMATA, and UOM workers, with a few exceptions, represent industrial textile, auto, and metalworkers from the private sector,<sup>16</sup> whereas nearly all the Luz y Fuerza light and power workers are employed by the state-sector electrical enterprise of Greater Buenos Aires known as SEGBA. The telephone employees work for the state telephone company, ENTEL, the teachers represent state and public sectors, and the bank employees represent state- and private-sector foreign and domestic banks. Thus the sample of workers interviewed represented laborers and

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cal questions. It was published as *El nuevo sindicalismo: opiniones y actitudes de su dirigencia media* (Buenos Aires: CEPNA, 1987). A year later, Lamadrid issued a more detailed breakdown of intra-union leadership tendencies, published as *Política y alineamientos sindicales: opiniones del nuevo cuadro gremial* (Buenos Aires: Puntosur, 1988). Several of its key findings were also referred to in Julio Godio, "La ideología de los cuadros sindicales intermedios," *La Ciudad Futura*, no. 5 (June 1987):8-11. Several of the questions lend themselves to comparisons with my study of rank-and-file Argentine workers, particularly because that study was undertaken toward the end of my survey period.

16. The UOM also includes a large minority of iron and steel workers, particularly in SOMISA (the state iron and steel enterprise) and ACINDAR (a very large private iron and steel enterprise), which are located on the eastern seaboard in the industrial cities of San Nicolás and Villa Constitución, respectively.

employees from the public and private sectors, national and foreign capital, and state enterprises.<sup>17</sup>

The interviews were conducted between September 1985 and August 1986. Workers' names were drawn by lot using a table of random numbers to ensure a nonbiased sample in each workplace. At least fifteen workers were chosen from each union. The middle strata in each work site were chosen, comprising the semi-skilled, skilled, and technician categories of employees. These segments represent most of the Argentine working class.<sup>18</sup> Half of the workers were between the ages of thirty and forty-nine, and more than a quarter of them were women. Explicitly excluded were supervisors, foremen, department heads, managerial staff in factory and office settings and principals in the schools, as were custodial and caretaker personnel at all sites.

The structured, largely open-ended, in-depth questionnaire was administered by four Argentine social science assistants and me.<sup>19</sup> I con-

17. In terms of the typology established by Alejandro Portes or Kenneth Coleman and Charles Davis, three of the union samples (namely metalworkers, autoworkers, and half the bank employees) could be categorized in the strategic, autonomous private sector based on their significance and impact on economic life. The balance of the bank employees along with the light and power and telephone workers belong to the strategic governmental sector. From the nonstrategic, autonomous private sector, the sample included textile laborers, while the teachers represented the nonstrategic, governmental union sector. See Alejandro Portes, "Latin American Class Structures: Their Composition and Change during the Last Decades," *LARR* 20, no. 3 (1985):33; and Kenneth M. Coleman and Charles L. Davis, "How Workers Evaluate Their Unions: Exploring Determinants of Union Satisfaction in Venezuela and Mexico," paper delivered at the meetings of the Latin American Studies Association, Boston, 23–25 Oct. 1986, 3.

18. Among textile workers (AOT), three factories were chosen randomly (among hundreds of textile factories in Greater Buenos Aires) from the most representative branches of the textile industry, which are cotton, wool, and stitching: a large factory with more than five hundred workers (Sudamtext), a medium-sized factory with two hundred workers (Ponieman), and a smaller factory with one hundred workers (Pravia). Among Luz y Fuerza workers, I chose the large installation and prototypical electrical plant in Buenos Aires known as Puerto Nuevo, which employs some eight hundred workers. Among SMATA autoworkers, I chose Ford Motors Argentina as a very large plant (three thousand workers) that would be typical of all major automobile assembly plants in Argentina. Among metalworkers (UOM), I selected Pirelli, a representative multinational medium-sized plant employing more than five hundred workers in manufacturing cables and wires, and Koval y Blanck, a typical Argentine-owned smaller-sized metallurgical plant producing auto horns. Among service unions, I undertook interviews with FOETRA employees at one telephone exchange in the Belgrano district and one administrative complex in the Palermo district, both in the user-dense capital of Buenos Aires, ensuring a proportional mix of operators, technicians, linemen and splicers, and administrative staff. Among the Asociación Bancaria unionists, I chose the largest banks from the public, private, foreign, and domestic sectors, those with the most numerous employees. The survey included the Banco Central de la República Argentina (BCRA), the Banco de la Nación, and two giant private banks, the Banco de Boston and the Banco de Galicia y Buenos Aires, each representative and dominant in the foreign and domestic spheres. Among teachers, three elementary and two secondary schools were chosen. I was careful to include a variety of residential settings, one academic high school (*colegio nacional*), and one industrial high school.

19. The four research assistants were a *licenciada* in sociology from the University of Buenos Aires, a *licenciada* in international relations from the University of El Salvador in Buenos

ducted 53 percent of the interviews, while assistants taped the balance to provide verification, accuracy, and a “feel” for the interview. The average interview lasted about two hours and covered six major categories: biographical data, personal and family life aspirations and expressions; labor union, work, and job experiences and attitudes; political experiences and attitudes; judgments on current issues of import and opinions on key contemporary groups and institutions; and the workers’ overriding values and beliefs. Seventy major questions combined with follow-up questions yielded a total of 103 queries in the interview schedule.<sup>20</sup>

## RESULTS

### *The Question of Democracy and Authoritarianism*

Working-class outlooks in Argentina translate into a series of ideological adherences that do not fit the typical left-right spectrum. Rather, they assume a more complicated and seemingly contradictory orientation that is social-democratic on questions of income distribution but liberal or sometimes conservative on questions of politics and social structure. Although Argentine workers are largely predisposed toward Peronist options, they do not view this commitment as leftist. Peronism’s historical association with welfare capitalism and social justice presumes neither radical restructuring of society nor revolutionary political upheaval to attain these ends.

When asked to classify their political position along a left-right continuum, Argentine workers fell largely into the center of the political spectrum (see table 1). Almost two-thirds of the workers sampled chose a generally centrist orientation, with laborers tilting slightly to the right and employees slightly to the left. Overall, the workers’ median position is somewhat right of center. These findings seem to indicate that while many workers saw themselves as center, center-right, and right in outlook, they still sympathized predominantly with Peronism and Radicalism and would not at all consider themselves to be on the conservative or traditional right.<sup>21</sup>

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Aires, a licenciada in political science from Catholic University in Buenos Aires, and a third-year student of political science at the John Kennedy University in Buenos Aires.

20. The open-endedness of the structured interviews allowed for in-depth probing of individual answers. The interviews were meant to be free-flowing and relatively casual uninterrupted conversations with little attempt to channel answers, as is often done by multiple-choice and restrictive questionnaires. Although this approach made the responses much harder to collate and categorize into a survey data book for computerization, it allowed me to delve more deeply into workers’ responses and to make the kind of assessments that a closed-ended survey would not have permitted.

21. An overall voter survey conducted during the Alfonsín administration showed that almost 60 percent of the population identified with corporatist, liberal, or traditional political values and 40 percent with social democratic or leftist orientations. See Manuel Mora y Araujo, “The Nature of the Alfonsín Coalition,” in *Elections and Democratization in Latin America, 1980-1985*, edited by Paul Drake and Eduardo Silva (La Jolla: University of California, San Diego, 1986), 186.



TABLE 1 *Argentine Workers' Ideological Self-Identification, 1985-1986*

<i>Political Position</i>	<i>Laborers</i> (%)	<i>Employees</i> (%)	<i>Total</i> (%)
Left	3.3	16.0	9.1
Left-center	8.3	14.0	10.9
Center	41.7	42.0	41.8
Center-right	11.7	16.0	13.6
Right	16.7	8.0	12.7
Don't know/no answer	16.7	4.0	10.9
Other	1.6	0.0	1.0
Total	100.0 (N = 60)	100.0 (N = 50)	100.0 (N = 110)

TABLE 2 *Argentine Workers' Preference for Type of Government, 1985-1986*

<i>Choice</i>	<i>Laborers</i> (%)	<i>Employees</i> (%)	<i>Total</i> (%)
Democratic	68.3	68.0	68.2
Populist	16.7	10.0	13.6
Socialist	5.0	16.0	10.0
Conservative	0.0	4.0	1.8
Military	3.3	0.0	1.8
Indifferent	6.6	0.0	3.6
Other	0.0	2.0	0.9
Total	99.9 (N = 60)	100.0 (N = 50)	99.9 (N = 110)

Corroborating some of the current literature, the study found that workers are not more authoritarian than other members of society, nor are they less inclined toward liberty and democratic procedures.<sup>22</sup> For example, workers were asked, "What kind of government do you prefer: populist, military, democratic, conservative or socialist?" Their responses demonstrated a powerful propensity for democracy (see table 2).

Democratic government was the overwhelming favorite among all workers, with populist government (the traditional term that often implies Peronism) as a distant second choice and socialism as third. The ranking indicates that laborers as well as employees perceived no contra-

22. See John A. Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson, "The Political Culture of Authoritarianism in Mexico: A Reexamination," *LARR* 19, no. 1 (1984):106-24; Susan Tiano, "Authoritarianism and Political Culture in Argentina and Chile in the Mid-1960s," *LARR* 21, no. 1 (1986):73-98; and David Halle, *America's Working Man: Work, Home, and Politics among Blue-Collar Property Owners* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

TABLE 3 Party Preferences of Argentine Workers, 1985–1986

Governmental Preference	Party Preference		
	Peronism (%)	Radical (%)	Others (%)
Democratic	68.4	84.2	50.0
Populist	26.3	2.6	11.8
Other	5.3	13.2	38.2
Total	100.0 (N = 38)	100.0 (N = 38)	100.0 (N = 34)

Note: Chi-squared = 22.559; four degrees of freedom, and probability is significant at the .001 level.

diction between the Peronist movement and democratic governments. Only a minority of Peronist workers saw Peronism as necessarily incompatible with democracy. This finding reaffirms the notion that Peronist workers who view themselves as politically center or even center-right do not support a conservative or a military government but rather a democratic government that maintains its distance from left-revolutionary socialist solutions implying governmental intervention in the society and the economy. Cross-tabulating workers' political party preferences with their governmental preferences reaffirmed this tendency (see table 3).

It appears that many "democratic" workers have voted for Peronism, particularly since 1985, and that the "populist" vote represented a shrinking minority view within Peronism. This finding would tend to indicate the need for contemporary Peronism to continue emphasizing (as it has since 1985) traditional liberal concerns with democracy and liberty in order to prevent the Radical party and the Conservative party (the Unión del Centro Democrático, or the UCD) from monopolizing these issues.

When asked to explain the reasons for their preferences, workers overwhelmingly responded in terms of traditional Western concepts of democratic forms of government. They valued representative government, majority rule, and the safeguarding of civil liberties.<sup>23</sup> Some 57 percent explained their choice of government in terms of one that would be most representative, preserve basic civil liberties and freedoms, and allow for majority rule. The second and third most common explanations mentioned the type of government favorable to workers (15 percent) and the most humane or just (13 percent). Only 7 percent of workers preferred a government that provided peace and stability and defended society

23. Halle's study of New Jersey chemical workers found similar evidence of laborers' classic visions of democratic government. See Halle, *America's Working Man*, 198.

against license, a traditionally conservative response. At the other extreme, only 5 percent opted for a government that would be anti-elitist, assure income equality, and control the means of production, a response traditionally associated with the left.

Workers were also asked to explain their understanding of democracy and its advantages, if any. They responded by eloquently defending democracy and its traditional meanings. Ninety percent mentioned either constitutional guarantees of civil rights and liberties (63 percent) or full political representation and participation (27 percent) as the cornerstone of democracy. The few reservations expressed about democracy focused on its inability to protect society against license and delinquency (6 percent) and its often regressive socioeconomic policies (8 percent). (Multiple responses yielded percentages that do not add up to 100.) Thus although a minority views democracy as either too permissive or too anti-labor, most workers gave it solid marks as the best possible political system. A large majority of Argentine workers perceived democracy as an independent political good.

In explaining the advantages of democracy, one textile worker said that it guaranteed "the right to your opinion, the participation of people in their government, . . . like a home where the children also are allowed to express their opinion."<sup>24</sup> As a metalworker explained, under democracy, "you can go around freely and say what you think; with the military government you had to be so careful, as if you were putting eyedrops in your eye."<sup>25</sup> One light and power worker commented, "I go where I want, I speak what I feel, and I feel good about things even though economically, life is difficult. Compared with the repression, which is the only other system I really know, [democracy] is a world apart."<sup>26</sup>

Only a fifth of the workers felt that there is too much freedom in contemporary Argentina ("giving license to criminality, drugs, delinquency, lack of respect for elders, authority"). Two-thirds thought that democratic liberties were fine, and 12 percent favored their expansion. A typical response came from a female bank employee: "The balance at the moment is fine. After the dictatorship, there was an explosion of freedom at first, but now it's finding a good medium."<sup>27</sup>

The workers nevertheless expressed antagonism toward both the right and the left on the political spectrum, predicated on their conceptions of democracy and liberty and their fears of needless violence, revolutionary upheavals, social instability, and the concomitant repression. For example, almost four-fifths believed that communism had nothing to offer

24. Interview with a textile worker, 1 Nov. 1985, Buenos Aires.

25. Interview with a metal worker, 8 Aug. 1986, Buenos Aires.

26. Interview with a light and power worker, 3 Jan. 1986, Buenos Aires.

27. Interview with a bank employee, 26 Apr. 1986, Buenos Aires.

Argentina, that it was “out of step with Argentine culture” or “too authoritarian.” Only 9 percent had anything positive to say about communist “solutions” for Argentina and even this group framed their approval in noticeably skeptical theoretical terms. For example, one metalworker said of communism, “even though it can move you ahead, the people will end up being exploited by [communists], and before I want that, I prefer the exploitation of Peronists or imperialists.”<sup>28</sup> Nor did most workers believe in the efficacy of a political party dedicated exclusively to the working class. Fifty-nine percent rejected that as a feasible alternative. As a female textile worker explained, a party “can’t just represent workers—it would be too divisive. Then doctors would have their own party, and what would teachers and clerks do, for example . . . ?”<sup>29</sup> Another textile worker responded, “A party just for working-class doesn’t mirror all the classes of the country. The party has to have the middle class and professionals to be effective and respected.”<sup>30</sup> The survey responses underscored that one of Peronism’s strengths among workers is its multiclass orientation. For example, 53 percent of the workers considered Peronism an “effective representative” of the working class. This affirmation jumped to 72 percent when combined with those who held this opinion of earlier phases of Peronism under Perón.

Workers were asked whether “anything in the last several years that they had read in the newspapers really gave them satisfaction.” The most frequent answer was President Alfonsín’s victory and the return of democracy (28 percent). In response to another query, 82 percent of the workers hoped and expected that Alfonsín would complete his constitutional term of office and turn power over to a civilian successor.

Many workers seem to support working-class goals of distributive justice without perceiving these goals as belonging exclusively to populist governments. This phenomenon (and the concomitant negative association of right-wing Peronism and the military dictatorship, the Proceso of 1976–1983) apparently gave Alfonsín his initial majoritarian advantage in 1983. Such support seemed to ebb, however, with the implementation of stabilization policies driven by the International Monetary Fund, which were largely construed as anti-labor. For example, 54 percent of the workers perceived the Austral Plan in a negative light, even in the 1985–86 period, when prices and wages were relatively stable and inflation seemed to be under control. As hyperinflation reasserted itself, these preexisting attitudes help explain the steady deterioration of Radical vote totals in the 1985, 1987, and 1989 legislative and presidential elections.

Argentine workers split their political party affinity equally be-

28. Interview with a metalworker, 19 Aug. 1986, Buenos Aires.

29. Interview with a textile worker, 28 Sept. 1985, Buenos Aires.

30. Interview with a textile worker, 1 Nov. 1985, Buenos Aires.

TABLE 4 *Political Party Preferences of Argentine Workers, 1985–1986*

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Laborers (%)</i>	<i>Employees (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
Peronist (Partido Justicialista)	45.0	22.0	34.5
Radical (Unión Cívica Radical)	36.7	32.0	34.5
Partido Intransigente	5.0	20.0	11.8
Left (Movimiento al Socialismo and Partido Comunista Argentino)	1.7	12.0	6.3
Right (Unión del Centro Democrático)	0.0	4.0	1.8
Others	6.7	10.0	8.2
None	5.0	0.0	2.7
Total	100.1 (N = 60)	100.0 (N = 50)	99.8 (N = 110)

tween the Peronists and the Radicals, each receiving 35 percent. The left received 6 percent and the traditional right less than 2 percent (see table 4).

Moreover, when asked which political party they considered furthest from their own, 24 percent of the workers singled out the Communist party and 26 percent the conservative UCD (37 percent mentioned the left, and 27 percent mentioned the right). Only 3 percent had friends who belonged to leftist parties, while 6 percent had friends who belonged to the UCD right. The data seem to indicate that although the right was more ideologically incompatible with working-class values, it was socially more acceptable in their family circles than the left, a possible aftereffect of the psychological pressures of the “dirty war” of military repression. For example, according to this survey, in the legislative elections of 1985, the laborers largely returned to the Peronist fold despite the overall Radical victory that year (foreshadowing election results in 1987 and 1989) while conservative support remained thoroughly eclipsed (see table 5).

### *The Question of Class Consciousness*

If any specific aspirations shaped Argentine workers most, they were the desire for homeownership for their families and for better educational opportunities for their children. These apparent departures of actual workers from their theoretical counterparts make it increasingly necessary to rethink the very idea of class in specific country contexts. E. P. Thompson made the case for a complex response to the question of class consciousness when he wrote:

the class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born—or enter involuntarily. Class consciousness is the way in which

TABLE 5 *Argentine Working-Class Vote in 1985 Legislative Election*

<i>Party</i>	<i>Laborers (%)</i>	<i>Employees (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
Peronist (Partido Justicialista)	50.0	18.2	34.1
Radical (Unión Cívica Radical)	29.5	31.8	30.7
Partido Intransigente	6.8	25.0	15.9
Left coalition (Frente del Pueblo Unido)	4.5	11.4	8.0
Right (Unión del Centro Democrático)	0.0	9.0	4.5
Other	9.2	4.5	6.8
Total	100.0 (N = 44)	99.9 (N = 44)	100.0 (N = 88)

these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas and institutional forms. If the experience appears as determined, class consciousness does not. . . . There is a cultural superstructure through which this recognition dawns in inefficient ways. These cultural “lags” and distortions are a nuisance, so that it is easy to pass from this to some theory of substitution: The party, sect, or theorist who disclose class-consciousness, not as it is but as it ought to be.<sup>31</sup>

There are of course struggles in which workers participate. But it is doubtful that they act strictly as a class, that class interests are paramount, or that they are even readily identifiable.

Class consciousness comes in many forms, under different guises, always partial and rarely full-blown. In this vein, Saúl Ubaldini, the general secretary of the CGT, responded instructively when asked why he is a Peronist. According to a newspaper account, “he had seen Juan Perón only from afar, but . . . he had a special recollection of Eva Perón whom he described as ‘practically the champion of the poor.’ As an 11-year-old studying at an industrial school in Buenos Aires he won a prize for best student, and she came to make the presentations. The prize, he said, was 20 days in a first-class hotel in the beach resort of Mar del Plata for him and his mother.”<sup>32</sup>

Historical Peronism continued to be a major ingredient in Argentine workers’ self-orientation. As one light and power worker declared, “I’m neither on the left, the right, or the center; I’m a Peronist.”<sup>33</sup> When asked about their earliest political memories as a child, 60 percent of the workers recalled the words and deeds of early Peronism (25.5 percent) or the struggles between Peronism and anti-Peronism in the period after

31. E. P. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 10.

32. “A New Voice Is Preaching Perón’s Creed,” *New York Times*, 7 Mar. 1987, p. 3.

33. Interview with a light and power worker, 12 Feb. 1986, Buenos Aires.

Perón (34.5 percent). One light and power worker recounted, "We were extremely poor. There were six of us children. We ate one day-old loaf of bread. There was one chicken for eight, and being the youngest I always got the rear end of the chicken. My mother bought used clothing. My brothers and I divided the suit vest, jacket, and pants—none of us dressed properly. Once Perón arrived, we could buy good shoes. We had three chickens for the family, and I got a third of a chicken for myself."<sup>34</sup> All other political memories not directly bearing on Perón accounted for 23 percent, and 17 percent of the workers had no specific recollection.

When asked to describe their earliest political ideas or sentiments as adolescents, almost half recalled either the words and deeds of early Peronism (21 percent) or the issues and experiences of Peronism and anti-Peronism between 1955 and 1976 (28 percent). All other memories accounted for 39 percent (such as previous Radical governments and policies or the Proceso), while 9 percent had no such recollections. A light and power worker gave a typical response, "When I was eighteen years old, I experienced a complete change with Perón's social benefits for the workers. It was a really extraordinary thing that changed my life."<sup>35</sup> Perón or Evita Perón or both were mentioned by almost four-fifths of the workers as among the three public figures they admired most as adults.

Overall, the evidence that emerges from the survey leads one to question the notion of the working class in general or the industrial proletariat in particular as the proximate agency or source of revolutionary historical changes.<sup>36</sup> Rather, it seems that the Argentine organized working-class views revolutionary methods as unnecessary and counterproductive. For example, a resounding 89 percent repudiated the Montonero guerrilla movement's goals and particularly its means.

Thus the classical Marxist notion of the working class as repressed, hobbled, and stultified, yet in principle benign, ethical, and moral is belied by the far more complicated picture of the contemporary Argentine working class.<sup>37</sup> For example, when workers were asked if they liked their work, 14 percent of the working-class sample said "very much," 76 percent said "so-so," and only 11 percent said "no." But when questioned further about "what they least liked about their job," 54 percent complained about working conditions like daily shifts and schedules, routine, and boredom while another 14 percent spoke of disorganization and bureaucratic problems. Only 6 percent focused exclusively on low sal-

34. Interview with a light and power worker, 26 Dec. 1985, Buenos Aires.

35. Interview with a light and power worker, 19 Feb. 1986, Buenos Aires.

36. This forecast is best depicted in *The Communist Manifesto* and *The German Ideology*.

37. This notion of the working class is most notably elaborated in Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. See, for example, the selections in Robert C. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 56ff; or the selections in *Marx's Concept of Man*, edited by Erich Fromm (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966), 90ff.

TABLE 6 Argentine Workers' Responses to Exploitation Issue, 1985–1986

<i>Exploited?</i>	<i>Laborers (%)</i>	<i>Employees (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
No	46.7	32.0	40.0
Yes	21.7	42.0	30.9
No, but working conditions, pay are poor	31.7	26.0	29.1
Total	100.1 (N = 60)	100.0 (N = 50)	100.0 (N = 110)

aries. Yet these and other quantifiable frustrations with the job experience in Argentina did not add up to an unequivocal sense of self-deprivation. Table 6 summarizes responses to the question, “As a worker, do you feel exploited?”

In sum, 69 percent of the workers do not see themselves as being exploited, while 29 percent expressed reservations concerning hours, working conditions, and pay. In fact, in answering other queries, 70 percent responded that they were not getting along well on their present wage or salary level, and 46 percent named wages and salaries as the salient problem facing their particular union. It became obvious that workers associate exploitation almost exclusively with conditions that have not been acceptable to the Argentine working class since the first Perón government of 1946. As one metalworker explained, “Exploited by the firm, no. I do my job. If it wasn’t here, it would be somewhere else. I feel exploited by the situation the country is in. But here too, no, because these are circumstances one must endure so that tomorrow will be a better day. Other countries have passed through periods like this too and have then moved forward.”<sup>38</sup>

Workers’ personal goals and aspirations for their children invariably focus on improving their own work situation through continued training and study and on wanting their children to far exceed them in education and potential professionalization. In other words, cultural and educational institutions held out the promise and prospects for self-improvement on the job and upward mobility for their children. Although average workers were not union or political activists, they were by no means particularly fatalistic about their work life in general. For example, the respondents typically sought greater participation in decision making in their unions and especially in their companies, enterprises, or institutions.<sup>39</sup>

38. Interview with a metalworker, 21 Aug. 1986, Buenos Aires.

39. These data have been compiled but are too detailed to include here. They will be part of a book-length manuscript.



Marx's notion about the desire of the working class to recapture the spirit of artisan life of the middle ages seems to mirror more of the essence of the contemporary Argentine worker than any propensity to overturn capitalist relationships. Diverging from Marx's reading of nineteenth-century proletarians,<sup>40</sup> today's Argentine workers, especially the laborers, share with the bourgeois class many values concerning nationhood, law, morality, religion and family life as well as ideas about property, culture, citizenship, civil liberties, and freedom. Only a few findings can be cited here. For example, the workers' leading aspiration for themselves was to study and increase their knowledge (31 percent), while those with children hoped that their offspring would attain a better education or professional level than their own (66 percent). Workers were asked, "Of the things that your present salary doesn't permit you to have, what do you miss most?" Forty-two percent responded not being able to finish fixing up or repairing their homes or to build or buy a home. Of the workers who had a personal friend whom they much admired as a model of behavior, those cited most often personified industry, ambition, and the ability to "struggle" and "get ahead in life" (25 percent).

On some of the dominant issues of the day, Argentine workers revealed notably nonradical positions. For example, 71 percent agreed with Alfonsín's initiatives to privatize certain inefficient and deficit-ridden state industries, and 84 percent favored Alfonsín's economic reactivation plans implying some degree of privatization of nationalized enterprises.

Varying degrees of alienation on the job continue to be a fact of life for the typical Argentine worker. But workers often translate their frustrations on the job into satisfactions outside the workplace. Workers realize that a living wage provides access to cultural, educational, and recreational pursuits for themselves and their families and that accumulating consumer goods makes their lives outside the factory and office more civilized and comfortable. Regarding preferred use of free time, 28 percent of Argentine workers cited spending time with their families and another 20 percent, fixing up their homes. Thirty-five percent of laborers chose fixing up their house as their favorite pastime. In this survey of workers, 74 percent either owned their house or apartment or lived with parents who owned a home. Argentine census data show private homeownership in Argentina increasing from 17 percent in 1946 to 64 percent in 1986, although 9 percent of the housing in Greater Buenos Aires is considered rudimentary.<sup>41</sup> Argentine workers value homelife, which they

40. See *The Communist Manifesto*, 17ff, and *The German Ideology*, 140ff, both in Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*.

41. *Anuario Estadístico, 1981-1982* (Buenos Aires: INDEC, 1984), 366-67; and *Argentina: Social Sectors in Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1988). Figures were derived from my calculations of absolute figures for the capital and Greater Buenos Aires.

associate with family, friendships, leisure, and the good life. When asked to cite the most important event in their lives, two-thirds of the workers cited marriage or the birth of their children. The home thus represents a basic center of gravity in their lives, something solid amidst the whirlwind of economic and political changes. For workers, the home represents greater autonomy, freedom, and leisure, the same values sought by the managerial classes, the petty bourgeoisie, and owners of the means of production. Thus contrary to Marx's interpretation, Argentine workers further themselves indirectly through their productive selves. In the exchange of commodities in which workers are admittedly a factor of production, they manage to humanize themselves in the process.

Consumption becomes a means for attaining human satisfaction. For example, private homeownership can be viewed as overconsumption, or it can be seen as furthering a worker's independence and autonomy from the landlord. Automobiles too can be viewed as superfluous consumption, or they can be seen as strengthening the worker's ability to have new experiences due to greater mobility, such as autonomous travel, and recreation. Similarly, the desire to equip one's home with electronic audio and video equipment can be perceived as slavish conformity. But such products can also be seen positively (and more accurately, in my opinion) in terms of their emancipating informational and educational context, not to mention their capacity to give pleasure. In such ways, the Argentine working class spoke indirectly of translating consumption into autonomy, recreation, and the pursuit of what it is to be human.<sup>42</sup>

As Ruth Thompson detected in her study of Argentina's more volatile period of labor unrest immediately after World War I, Argentine workers have most often tilted against the establishment rather than against capitalism as such. Thompson observed that confrontation with the establishment, even among anarchist and sindicalists, was always mitigated and "never wholehearted as long as they nurtured dreams . . . of becoming part of the upper echelons of that structure. On the other hand, the attractions of stable labor organizations for material improvements, job security and other marginal checks on the full force of the market economy to which they found themselves subject were plain."<sup>43</sup>

These values continue in Argentina today. Table 7 summarizes the responses to the question, "Do you consider yourself middle-class or lower-class?" To workers, access to middle-class status meant being able to aspire to cultural and educational institutions and property ownership, not to an absolute income per se. Argentine workers view the middle and

42. On the question of the commodification of workers through the exchange of labor for wages, see Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 196ff.

43. Ruth Thompson, "The Limitations of Ideology in the Early Argentine Labour Movements: Anarchism in the Trade Unions, 1890-1920," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 16, pt. 1 (May 1984):98-99.

TABLE 7 *Class Perceptions of Argentine Workers, 1985–1986*

<i>Class Perceptions</i>	<i>Laborers</i> (%)	<i>Employees</i> (%)	<i>Total</i> (%)
Middle-class	48.3	77.6	61.5
Lower-class	48.3	20.4	35.8
Other	3.3	2.0	2.7
Total	99.9 (N = 60)	100.0 (N = 49)	100.0 (N = 109)

lower classes as two fractions of the working class separated by a considerable gulf from the upper class and also from the poorer, marginal sectors of society. In their opinion, maximization of consumption, leisure, culture, and education made intraclass moves quite feasible. Only 16 percent defined the middle class purely according to income levels.

Argentine unionized workers were also asked this question: "Some say that different social classes want different things and enter into conflict with each other. In your opinion, how important is this class conflict in Argentina?" The answers reflected the complex nature of class conceptualization in Argentina. A recognition exists of the porous boundaries between the lower and middle strata of the working class, yet the seemingly impregnable wall between the bourgeois class sector and laborers as well as employees is fully appreciated. Laborers were more likely to describe class differences in individual terms or to ascribe the same wants and aspirations in life to everyone in general. Employees were more prone to recognize the reality and, in many ways, the inevitability and irreversibility of class differences. But the idea of class conflict as a mobilizing prelude to class struggle was almost totally absent from all the workers' responses. Rather, they recognized the existence of class conflict but attributed it to a natural phenomenon in all societies that cannot be countervailed. In their view, it was simply a matter of those who made it and those who would like to be in their shoes if given the chance, scarcely ammunition for class warfare.

Although more than three out of five Argentine workers acknowledge the existence of class conflict, only little more than a third frame it in terms of a divergence of class interests. Even these workers do not extend this conflict into struggles beyond the action of various interests pulling and pushing in different directions. The existence of privileges of the bourgeoisie are accepted, if not always appreciated. Argentine unionized workers view class conflict as a competition in which they are at some disadvantage but one in which the rules of the game allow room for political and trade union measures aimed at a more equitable and just situation.

TABLE 8 *Workers' Ratings of Groups in Argentine Society, 1985–1986*

Group	Laborers		Employees		Total	
	pos. (%)	neg. (%)	pos. (%)	neg. (%)	pos. (%)	neg. (%)
Foreign companies	81.7	8.3	40.0	25.0	62.7	18.2
Labor unions	61.7	40.0	52.0	64.0	57.8	51.0
Large landowners	31.7	56.7	34.0	54.0	32.7	55.5
Argentine business	38.3	55.0	26.0	70.0	32.7	61.8
Military	21.7	55.0	6.1	77.6 <sup>a</sup>	14.5	64.5
	(N = 60)		(N = 50)		(N = 110)	

Note: Percentage responses do not add up to 100 because of multiple responses.

<sup>a</sup>In this category, the number of employees responding was 49, for a total number of 109.

Some continuity exists today with the role of labor unions in the period before 1920, as described by Ruth Thompson. The Argentine workers' opinion of the general role of labor unions is moderately positive at 58 percent, with 49 percent of them speaking of the unions as a crucial representative of the working class against owners and the state. As one bank employee elaborated, labor unions "have been a political force to contend with, but sadly they are not well led, and leadership is tainted with collaboration with all types of governments and even with coups. Nevertheless, without unions we would be slaves."<sup>44</sup> Argentine labor unions received the only positive institutional endorsement, except for foreign capitalists. In the survey, the Argentine military,<sup>45</sup> industrialists, and landowners all received negative evaluations from the workers. Although the workers' view of the role of Argentine capitalists is very negative, their opinion of foreign enterprise in Argentina is mostly positive (63 percent), swelling to 90 percent approval of foreign investments under state supervision. Workers believe that foreign enterprises bring in needed technology, create jobs, pay better and promptly, and generally treat workers more fairly than Argentine business owners. These attitudes are categorized in table 8.

In the contemporary period, Argentine working-class militancy can be described as a measured and potentially militant reformism that has been mediated historically through Peronism and union combativeness. Argentine workers know who runs Argentina. Forty percent mentioned the upper-class oligarchy, referring mainly to large landowning

44. Interview with a bank employee, 14 Apr. 1986, Buenos Aires.

45. The workers supported the trials of the nine military junta leaders, with 35.5 percent calling them justified and another 50 percent feeling that the sentences were too lenient or that the indictments should go deeper into the ranks of the military officer class. Only 8.2 percent of the workers defended the "Proceso" methods with such comments as "they were only doing their job."

interests. Seventeen percent cited the industrial class and 14 percent, leading governing circles, while 12 percent focused on foreign interests, mainly international banks and the IMF. When asked to cite groups that had "too much power," 45 percent named the moneyed oligarchic landed class, 33 percent the military, and 20 percent the Catholic Church (despite the fact that 72 percent of those surveyed were practicing or nominal Catholics). "Those with too little power" in the workers' view were the lower and working classes (49 percent) and the poor (27 percent).

## CONCLUSION

Organized workers in Argentina continued to perceive trade unions as the only feasible way of applying countervailing pressure on private employers or the state in their attempts to squeeze workers through poor wages, unfair labor contracts, and bad working conditions. Although Argentine workers do not admit to being exploited, they know well that profits are dynamic and wages represent a sliding scale of social and political values translated into economic and labor policies. Workers feel that unions authentically defend their interests by blunting the capitalists' drive for profits via union negotiations, pronouncements, protests, and strikes. For workers, it is not control of the means of production that is largely at stake but control over the means of consumption.

Argentine workers see themselves as sharing in the liberal capitalist political system and in its culture and consumption pattern. They find it irrelevant that they are far from being collective owners of the means of production, which they basically cede to the bourgeois class in exchange for being individual property owners and having the possibility of becoming self-employed somewhere down the road. Workers enjoy and value bourgeois-democratic ideology, liberty, and consumerism, but this attitude does not necessarily weaken their sense of social justice.

Eduard Bernstein once said that England was a country where people sought equality in freedom, whereas in France, people sought freedom in equality.<sup>46</sup> Argentina seems to be much closer to the French model. My survey indicates that Argentine workers substantially support democracy as a political system because it assures a modicum of autonomy. Their commitment to democracy seems to have reached a new plane after experiencing the contrast between the repressive Proceso and the new democracy. In the main, workers supported the democratic principles institutionalized under Alfonsín despite having voted against his Radical party for socioeconomic reasons. Previous assessments of the Argentine working class have underestimated their commitment to de-

46. Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, 116.

mocracy, which ranks high in their hierarchy of values. In this sense, democracy has become an integral demand of Argentine workers. They should therefore be absolved of the "original sin" ascribed to them in earlier analyses, which depicted an inherent working-class propensity toward authoritarianism of the right or the left.<sup>47</sup>

Although Argentine workers often view themselves in class terms, they do not consider themselves a special class, a predestined class, a class above all classes, or the only class with unique problems, needs, and aspirations. Thus the Marxist recipe does not include the contradictory feeling of workers that they belong to the social system they are supposed to destroy. As the survey showed, Argentine workers do not see themselves in homogeneous or monolithic terms but rather as a heterodox group that is conciliatory toward other sectors of society. They do not claim to have the answers, and therefore they expect to share power, not to monopolize it. Built into their notion of society are inevitable conflict and competition, with conciliation as the operative force. In sum, Argentine workers perceive the existence of elements of conflict between classes in terms of competing class interests, but they do not translate that into class warfare or believe that such competing interests require making a violent change in class differentials or obliterating the rungs of the ladder that society offers them as individuals.

47. As examples of this genre, see Theodore W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper, 1950); Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1960); Gino Germani, *Pólitica y sociedad en una época de transición: de la sociedad tradicional a la sociedad de masas* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1962); and Torcuato Di Tella, "Populism and Reform in Latin America," in *Obstacles to Change in Latin America*, edited by Claudio Veliz (London: Oxford University Press, 1965). Marx himself promoted a distrust of the lowest social classes in his description of the Parisian "lumpen" in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963).

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