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STATE TERROR, ECONOMIC POLICY, AND SOCIAL RUPTURE  
DURING THE ARGENTINE "PROCESO," 1976-1981

BY

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Report explores varied usage of state terror as a complement to a specific economic and social project under the military-bureaucratic authoritarian regime that governed Argentina from 1976 to 1981. It uses the Gramscian notion of domination to do so, showing how state terror was applied systematically and multivariouly in order to disrupt the economic and political strength of excluded social classes.			
This essay had its genesis during my stay as a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of State and Society (CEDES) in Buenos Aires, Argentina in the Fall of 1983.			
This paper explores the varied usage of state terror as a complement to a specific economic and social project under the military-bureaucratic authoritarian regime that governed Argentina between 1976 and 1981. To do so, it adopts a neo-Gramscian theoretical approach in order to demonstrate that state terror was an essential part			
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of the exercise in dominio that was the so-called "Proceso de Reorganizacion Nacional" (Process of National Reorganizacion). It then demonstrates that both overt and more subtle forms of state terror were used by the military regime and its civilian allies in a systematic attempt to disrupt the economic and political strength of those believed responsible for the chaotic social conditions they inherited: the domestic bourgeoisie and organized working classes. Finally, an appraisal is made of the impact this application of state terror had on collective identities within the victimized classes, as well as on Argentine society as a whole.

16. (continued)

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STATE TERROR, ECONOMIC POLICY AND SOCIAL RUPTURE  
DURING THE ARGENTINE 'PROCESO,' 1976-1981

Death did not always govern. There were rebellions against that severe law. (When) space and time were conquered by peace and life. . . But there are many things between earth and sky which invoke disquiet . . . Not so much what man does to other men, but what he does to himself. . . If the collective conscience does not succeed in exorcising the(se) demons, the future shall be a quagmire.

Miguel Bonasso, Recuerdo de la Muerte, 1984

Introduction

The military regime that held power in Argentina from 1976 to 1983 is best remembered for offering an excellent case study of failed authoritarian rule. Even so, as an extended exercise in dominio (the term Gramsci used to refer to the coercive "moment of force" by which dominant social groups, as represented by political regimes, use the state to physically control subordinate groups and impose their will on civil society), the self-designated "Proceso de Reorganizacion Nacional" (Process of National Reorganization) was unprecedented in its systematic use of state terror to achieve regime objectives. At both the external (foreign relations) and internal (domestic program) levels, the military regime's basic approach towards achieving policy objectives was underscored by a prompt recourse to coercion. Internally, this was manifest in the infamous "dirty war" against leftist subversion, which started out as an anti-guerrilla campaign and degenerated into the death, "disappearance" and torture of at least 9,000 civilians (including scores of children and pregnant women) at the hands of military and para-military death squads. Externally, it was evident in the murder, intimidation, and kidnapping of Argentine exiles aboard, the saber-rattling that accompanied the territorial dispute with Chile over the Beagle Channel islands in 1978, active support for the military coup d'etat in Bolivia in 1978, involvement in the training and supply of right-wing military

and para-military forces in Central America from 1979 to 1982, ending with the forcible re-occupation of the Falklands/ Malvinas islands that year.

However, while much has been made of the fact that the Falklands/Malvinas debacle proved to be the Argentine Cyprus, and while attention has most often focused on the more overt transgressions of the "Proceso"-- the gross violations of human rights and pervasive corruption under the military regime -- less attention has been accorded two other facets that were integral parts of this exercise in dominio: the use of state terror as a complement to a particular economic and social program, and the subtle use of terror to enforce the acquiescence of those most adversely affected by that program. This essay will therefore attempt to address both of these subjects, and thereby garner a more complete picture of the various facets of authoritarian domination imposed by military rule in Argentina from 1976 to 1981.

#### I. Argentina under the "Proceso": A Conceptual and Contextual Overview.

It should not appear incongruous that the Argentine "Proceso" be considered in neo-Gramscian terms. To the contrary, the context in which Gramsci wrote in many respects resembles the Argentine situation after World War Two. The fundamental dichotomy of the agrarian and industrial sectors that resulted from the shift in the Argentine mode of production during the first half of the twentieth century,<sup>1</sup> the ensuing emergence of the urban industrial classes (particularly the domestic bourgeoisie and the organized labor movement) as economic and political actors, and the ongoing situation of chronic political instability marked by frequent regime change and the inability of contending social groups to establish a minimum level of consensus, much less agree to the hegemonic project of any of them in the interest of political stability, combined to produce a period of ongoing

hegemonic stalemate and political crisis during the postwar years that echoed the Italian experience of the late teens and early twenties. Thus, while the fit is by no means hermetic or universally transferable, a neo-Gramscian approach offers a lucid theoretical framework with which to analyze the context in which the Argentine "Proceso" emerged and subsequently ruled.<sup>2</sup>

With this in mind, it should come as no surprise to see that in many respects Gramsci proved remarkably, albeit unknowingly, prescient in forecasting the conditions surrounding the military's assumption of power in Argentina in March, 1976. To wit, the period immediately preceding military intervention can be conceived as "a phase in the class struggle that precedes: either the conquest of power on the part of the revolutionary proletariat. . . or a tremendous reaction on the part of the propertied classes and governing caste . . .".<sup>3</sup> Its most overt manifestation was a full-scale guerrilla war waged by leftist groups against the Army in the northern province of Tucuman, rampant sectarian violence between leftist and rightist terrorist groups in the cities that resulted in an average of over three politically-motivated murders a day, the virtual breakdown of traditional party lines and competition, a sustained wave of strikes, work stoppages, and industrial sabotage that paralyzed production, a huge fiscal deficit, an inflation rate exceeding 500 percent, and rapid disinvestment by foreign capital, which aggravated an already severe balance of payments problem,<sup>4</sup> all of this compounded by the institutional paralysis afflicting the Peronist regime elected in 1973.

It should be understood that Gramsci's remark overstates the case, as the Argentine proletariat was by no means universally revolutionary. In fact, the bulk of the political violence meted out during this period was the work of opposed extremist factions within the Peronist labor movement and their

various political allies both within and without the Peronist regime. What is no exaggeration is the fact that the cumulative effect of the continued and increased level of internecine violence, coupled with the inability of the Peronist regime to govern effectively, much less impose some modicum of social order in the face of daily strife, led to a perception on the part of most Argentines that the country was slipping into anarchic chaos.<sup>5</sup> In the words of General Jorge Rafael Videla, first president of the "Proceso," ". . . in March 1976, our nation was gripped by one of the most profound crises of its existence, and, without a doubt, the gravest in its contemporary history . . . (a) total crisis, whose most salient point was the total breakdown of the institutional system, as power had reached a phase of disaggregation that left Argentina framed in a picture of increased feudalization and headed towards extinction. . . ."6

In Gramsci's terms, this was a period of "organic crisis", that is, ". . . a crisis of authority. . . a crisis of hegemony, or general crisis of the State."<sup>7</sup> In effect, with the charismatic presence of Juan D. Perón removed by death in 1974, and with the government of Isabel Perón wracked by corruption and factional infighting that were in many ways an internal reflection of the external problems confronting it, by early 1976 the situation had become" . . . delicate and dangerous, because the field was open to violent solutions, for the activities of unknown forces, represented by charismatic 'men of destiny'."<sup>8</sup>

Faced with the near complete disruption of social order and government functions, and already engaged in a violent armed struggle with well-organized groups that proposed to fundamentally alter the Catholic, capitalist socio-economic parameters of Argentine society once they conquered power, the armed forces decided to assume the role of "men of destiny" and steer the



country away from the Marxist abyss. In the words of Guillermo O'Donnell, the level of threat posed against Argentine society was such that the military could no longer refrain from assuming direct political control of the country.<sup>9</sup> In Gramsci's terms, they were compelled to become a "political force that (moved) into action (because) 'legality' was in danger."<sup>10</sup> To that end, the armed forces stepped in and removed Isabel Perón from office in a bloodless coup d'état on March 24, 1976. These were the circumstances surrounding the advent of this exercise in dominio that came to be known as the "Proceso de Reorganización Nacional." As such, we might add hegemonic stalemate and organic crisis to the types of political climate George Lopez has identified as likely to lead to regime change conducive to state terror.<sup>11</sup>

But what is it about the "Proceso" that allows its identification as an exercise in dominio? After all, state terror and government coercion are long-standing facts of human history.<sup>12</sup> If we accept the definition of terrorism as "the purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear and/or compliant behavior in a victim and/or audience of the act or threat,"<sup>13</sup> and that state terror is "a system of government that uses terror to rule,"<sup>14</sup> then what is there to distinguish the "Proceso" from other reigns of terror extending back to antiquity? The reasons, I suggest, are two-fold. First, because of the specific, yet subtlety demarcated and cross-cutting class content of both the regime and the audience towards which state terror was directed. Second, because of the systematic way in which it was utilized in pursuit of specific policy objectives.

## II. The Rationale of a neo-Gramscian approach.

For Gramsci, a social group (or groups) is dominant, that is, exercises dominio, when ". . . it tends to 'liquidate,' or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force. . ." antagonistic groups, and "leads kindred and allied groups."<sup>15</sup> After the March, 1976 golpe de estado, this was precisely the relationship of the military regime with the domestic bourgeoisie and organized working

classes, on the one hand, and the transnational/ agro-export sectors on the other. Like any political regime,\* in gaining control of the Argentine state apparatus the military junta formally assumed a monopoly of legitimate violence over a given territory, since "the exercise of repression is juridically absent from civil society. The State reserves it as an exclusive domain"<sup>16</sup> (although it should be clear that private institutions within civil society often use coercion on behalf of the state, particularly in times of crisis). More importantly, in assuming control of the state, the armed forces tacitly accepted Gramsci's conception of the state as "a political society-i.e. a dictatorship, or coercive apparatus to ensure that the masses conform to the type of production and economy of a given moment."<sup>17</sup> In effect, the armed forces envisioned the state during the "Proceso" as "the site of the armed domination or coercion of the (here transnational and landed) bourgeoisie over the exploited classes. . . ".<sup>18</sup>

In this context, state terror can be conceived of as government repression involving "the use of coercion or the threat of coercion against opponents or potential opponents in order to prevent or weaken their capability to oppose the authorities and their policies."<sup>19</sup> Closer to the specifics of the regime examined here, it also includes "any action taken by the government which reduces the power of social classes,"<sup>20</sup> in this case the organized working classes and domestic bourgeoisie that were the mass political support base of the Peronist regime that had preceded the "Proceso," and which the military elite and its civilian allies consequently held responsible for the chaotic conditions they inherited. What is significant about this case is that while coercion is one of several policy

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\*A (national) political regime being the collection of social groups and political actors that gain control of the apex of the state, or what is commonly known as government. This includes (re) formulating the basic framework and rules of interaction governing the behavior of incumbents in policy-making positions, as well as the rules that govern modes of access to those positions.

instruments available to all regimes, during exercises in dominio such as the "Proceso" it becomes the primary policy instrument, to which all others (such as persuasion, exchange, compromise, and reasoned, legitimate authority) are subsumed. We should recall that this conception of the state as primarily a coercive instrument of specific dominant groups was facilitated by the severity of the crisis that had confronted it in the period preceeding military intervention, when not only were non-coercive policy instruments ineffectual, but the very state monopoly of legal violence within the country was being challenged at a variety of levels. The weakness of the state under the Peronist regime, in other words, is what allowed the succeeding military regime to reduce the very concept of state to its most basic, primitive, and coercive level in an effort to re-assert its superordinate national authority.

In assuming this role as "men of destiny," the Argentine military hierarchy envisioned themselves in quasi-gnostic terms along the lines Gramsci had once offered for the Italian revolutionary classes. That is, they were "at once a force of movement and a repository of past and present cultural values"<sup>21</sup> who, in the absence of hegemony as the normal form of control, were forced to resort to coercion, which becomes dominant only in times of crisis.<sup>22</sup>

The concept of hegemony (egemonia) has a long history in Marxist thought, and has been the subject of considerable, often bitter debate.<sup>23</sup> This is not the place to engage lengthy discussion of the precise -- or preferred -- meaning of the term. What is relevant to our concerns is that, contrary to Leninist conceptions of hegemony as dictatorship of a class, with all the coercive implications it is said to entail, Gramsci conceived of egemonia as "a socio-political situation, a moment in which the philosophy of society fuse

or are in equilibrium, an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious, and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotation."<sup>24</sup> Hegemony therefore requires of dominant social groups that "account be taken of the interests and tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain balance or compromise be formed -- in other words, that the leading groups should make sacrifices of an economic-corporative kind."<sup>25</sup> This opens the way for the establishment of potentially counter-hegemonic apparatuses such as trade unions, alternative media and educational networks, etc., on the part of subordinate groups.

It is in our use of the concepts of hegemony and domination where the logic of a neo-Gramscian approach to the "Proceso" becomes apparent. Unlike Lenin's rigid class approach and orthodox Marxist notions of hegemony and domination, Gramsci's perspective displays a degree of subtlety that best captures the nuances and complexities of the "Proceso." In doing so, it also extends the thrust of recent debates over the nature of authoritarianism in the Southern Cone.

Lenin's view of hegemony can essentially be equated with class dictatorship, of the proletariat preferably, but of a single class in any event.<sup>26</sup> This assumes a degree of cohesiveness and unanimity of consensus on the part of socioeconomic classes that seldom has been seen anywhere, much less in modern Argentina. We only need to consider the dilemmas inherent in dependent capitalist development to see that cross-cutting cleavages are integral parts of both civil and political society, to which can be overlapped the specific cultural idiosyncracies pertinent to each case.

In modern Argentina, these cleavages cut across classes at the economic, cultural, ideological, and political levels; recall the factional warfare going on within the Peronist movement at the time of golpe. This argues strongly against a rigid class analysis. Instead, a Gramscian conceptualization of the base-superstructure relationship is needed. Gramsci "narrowed the economic base to include only the material and technical instruments of production; he broadened the superstructure to include political society, civil society, and the state . . . (this) allowed for a more complex superstructure but also reconsidered its relation to the base."<sup>27</sup>

In fact, we shall see that agro-export and transnational/financial sectoral interests converged with conservative military and civilian interests on security and negative ideological grounds (i.e. anti-Peronism). These were posed against the interests of the domestic bourgeoisie and working classes at the economic, political, and social levels, since the latter constituted the social bases of the Peronist movement, and hence were considered the ultimate culprits in the debacle of the Peronist regime. Similarly, it will take a more flexible class-based approach to adequately understand the way in which the strategic placement of military officers in the state apparatus was designed to mask the differentiated class content of the regime.

The importance of the latter trait stems from the fact that the state is the primary vehicle for achieving and reproducing hegemony. Gramsci's . . . "concept (of hegemony) focused on the capitalist state as distinct from the capitalist class. The political class consciousness of capitalists manifests itself through a hegemonic system in which the 'dominant group is coordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups' . . . (A)s important as material conditions are as a basis for hegemony, political and ideological conditions are even more important. The hegemonic system is

political in that it uses the state apparatus as its central organ. Political class consciousness is the basic underpinning of the hegemonic system, and it coexists with the corporate economic interest that propels the economic machine of the capitalist system."<sup>28</sup> Given the Gramscian emphasis on non-economic factors, it should be obvious that differences in political culture (understood as a set of political values, behavior patterns, and historic memory common to a society) fundamentally condition the environment in which distinct hegemonic projects emerge, and in the case of Argentina in the early 1970s, precluded the emergence of a hegemonic project of any sort.<sup>29</sup> Most relevant to our concerns here, it was in its use of the state apparatus to disarticulate the existing political culture that the "Proceso" revealed itself to be lacking in genuine hegemonic aspirations.

With regard to domination, the Leninist view is limited to the physical and political subordination of one socioeconomic class to another (however couched in non-coercive terms). While this is an essential element of exercises in dominio, the Leninist view reduces the relationship of domination and hegemony to an instrumental level. In fact, they are often confused as synonyms (i.e. class dictatorship = hegemony). This is because Lenin believed that hegemony is achieved via the domination of one class over others. That is, class dictatorship, and thus hegemony, is imposed by force upon subordinate classes, and eventually results in the elimination of these classes.<sup>30</sup>

This is precisely what distinguishes the Gramscian conceptualization of these terms. For Gramsci, hegemony implies the willing consent of subordinate classes to the leadership of a dominant bloc that often cuts across class lines, which in turn grants a series of superstructural concessions. It is fundamentally a non-coercive relationship (albeit discreetly buttressed by the

"armour of coercion"). T.J. Jackson Lears states the case nicely: "For Gramsci, consent and force nearly always coexist, though one or the other predominates. The Tsarist regime, for example, ruled primarily through domination -- that is, by monopolizing the instruments of coercion. Among parliamentary regimes only the weakest are forced to rely on domination; normally they rule through hegemony, even though the threat of officially sanctioned force always remains implicit. Ruling groups do not maintain their hegemony merely by giving their domination the aura of moral authority through the creation and perpetuation of legitimating symbols; they must also seek to win the consent of subordinate groups to the existing social order."<sup>31</sup> Hence, dominio is more properly seen as fundamentally a coercive relationship, one that exists precisely because hegemony has not been obtained (or has been lost). It is this notion of domination that pertains here. Yet here also, the state is the primary instrument through which dominio is exercised. As we shall see, this was well reflected in the orientation and organization of the state apparatus under the "Proceso."

A distinguishing feature of regimes such as the "Proceso" is their de-mobilizational orientation. Unlike European Fascism, which attempted to reforge collective identities by mobilizing society on the basis of ideology punctuated by state terror, the recent authoritarian experiments in the Southern Cone were -- and are -- de-mobilizational in character. Their major social object is to disrupt subordinate group collective identities through the systematic use of exclusionary policies backed by state terror in an effort to alter and reconstitute the historic memory of these groups.<sup>32</sup>

To these general characteristics can be added the more discreet idiosyncracies of the "Proceso": the specific class content of the regime, the de-industrializing economic project (which stood in marked contrast to the

economic projects promoted by similar regimes in Brazil and Chile during the same period, as well as a previous Argentine experiment from 1966 to 1973), and the social project underlying the use of state terror. As shall become apparent, use of a neo-Gramscian approach, especially his notion of "historical bloc" along with hegemony and domination, will allow us to extend the thrust of recent debates over the nature of authoritarianism in the Southern Cone, and thereby achieve a more precise idea of the variations that exist within this particular regime type.

It is obvious that hegemony did not obtain in the period of immediately preceding the advent of the "Proceso." As I shall clarify further on, neither did it afterwards. The point is that without hegemony as the normal form of control, and given the magnitude of the crisis at the time, it should not be surprising that the military regime opted for dominio, of which state terror is an integral part. As Sergio Zermeno aptly phrased it: "Are not military dictatorships (such as the Proceso) the most obvious manifestation of hegemonic incapacity at all levels, an incapacity that has been reiterated since the demise of the oligarchic order? These military dictatorships, as emergent instruments of coercion without consensual constraints, demonstrate in patent fashion the triple [social, economic, and political] crisis of hegemony that placed them on the scene numerous times, and which today makes them inevitable."<sup>33</sup> When such moments occur, the balance between integrative and repressive functions within the state apparatus sways inexorably towards the latter.<sup>34</sup>

### III. State Terror.

The coercion associated with state terror comes in many guises and forms. Most obvious is "active coercion," involving the use and threat of use of violent force. Less visible, but often no less effective, is "covert" or



"subtle" coercion, where the "power of a class is reduced by changes in the rules of the game which define the structure of socio-economic activity, that is, rules by which power is exercised in the struggle among classes over the direction of society."<sup>35</sup> Moreover, there are differences and gradations within these two types of coercion. John Sloan has called attention to the different types of active coercion known as repression (i.e. the use of governmental coercion to control or eliminate actual or potential opposition) and the more extreme variant of repression known as enforcement terrorism, which is more likely to be lethal and cruel.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, we can distinguish between different types of covert or subtle coercion. Here again, Gramsci understood that "the state had instruments of control far more subtle and effective than dictatorial force, that the threat of force was only one of a number of state functions, and that variations in the legal-political forms of the state were highly significant. . .".<sup>37</sup> Thus, measures such as press censorship, rescinding of basic welfare legislation for selected groups, direct government intervention and control of social group organizations such as labor unions, prohibitions on the right to assembly, speech, and thought, bans on literature, changes in school curriculums, outlawing of political parties or social interest groups, economic controls such as wage ceilings and the elimination of collective bargaining, closure of public health facilities, rises in public transportation rates, etc., represent some of the more subtle coercive measures authoritarian regimes use to control those they view as antagonistic to their rule.

Even the state apparatus itself reflects the different types of coercive approaches. At a broad level, "concrete reorganizations in the state apparatus reflect readjustments in the balance (or in Gramscian terms,

"relation of forces") between social classes."<sup>38</sup> That is to say, "the state apparatus, understood as the hierarchy and configuration of specific branches, agencies, and functions of the state, adapts chameleon-like to the mutable strategies used by the dominant classes against the dominated classes, and to the dynamics of the internal balance of power within the dominant bloc."<sup>39</sup> In effect, "it is possible to conceive of the concrete distribution of functions within the state apparatus, their degree of hierarchical-functional concentration or separation, as forms of reproduction. . . imposed by the development of social contradictions."<sup>40</sup>

During an exercise in dominio, this becomes most apparent in the consolidation, expansion, and promotion of the internal security apparatus, most notably specialized agencies such as the intelligence services, secret police, border guards, and gendarmes, as well as in the growth of para-military groups and the reorientation of the armed forces' role towards internal, rather than external security concerns. It is more subtly, although no less evident in the transfer, decentralization, or demotion of the institutional referents of specific social groups such as organized labor (in this case most often embodied in a Labor Ministry), as well as in the amount of resources allocated to and character of those employed in each of them. The same applies for those agencies more generally concerned with the provision of basic public goods such as health, welfare, and social security, and social services like water and electricity, public housing and transportation, etc. In most of these agencies, it is in the application of negative measures where coercion becomes apparent. That is to say, upgrading of agencies and services in these latter areas is most often used as an incentive, inducement, or reward for cooperation, while the down-grading, elimination, or curtailment of agencies and services is most often used a

disincentive, constraint, or punishment for uncooperative or antagonistic groups. Again, whatever the precise combination of measures used, "it is in the sphere of dominio that change in structure becomes immediately apparent, and dominio is always associated with coercion, state power, the 'moment of force'."41

During an exercise in dominio, the use of coercion -- in all of its particular guises -- is "designed to force compliance through a climate of fear."42 Its goal is to intimidate into utter submission the body politic in general, but more specifically those groups that may be opposed to the regime or some of its policies. It is this climate of pervasive fear promoted by the systematic and varied usage of coercion that, regardless of the precise characterization applied, ultimately defines "state terror."

This was, in sum, the underlying rationale of the "Proceso." Alain Rouquié characterized it thus: "The amplitude of the repression, the brutality and decentralized character of the methods used. . . the impunity of unit leaders within the armed forces, the use of torture, reprisals, and summary executions, the disappearance of suspects, all point towards creating a climate of dissuasive fear."43

This climate of fear was dissuasive in the sense that it was designed to intimidate the economically and politically out-of-favor -- the organized working classes and domestic bourgeoisie -- from pressing revindicative claims that would interfere with the regime's "liberal" or "neo-classic" economic program (which was oriented towards reasserting the primacy of the agro-export sector and transnational finance capital in the Argentine mode of production, in order to fully exploit those areas where it was believed Argentina held a competitive advantage in the world capitalist market).

The climate of fear was dissuasive, also, in the sense that it was designed to cower all those who were otherwise predisposed to object to the overt class content and whole-scale abridgement of basic human rights of the repressive campaign, particularly after the guerrillas were defeated in late 1977. This included all non-Peronist political parties, intellectual, legal, professional, and human rights groups, and the resident foreign communities.

The sowing of fear was dissuasive, finally, in that it was designed to show international Marxism that it could and would not find fertile ground in Argentina so long as the armed forces were able to prevent it.

#### IV. Regime Type and the State.

During an exercise in dominio such as the "Proceso," the concept and functions of the state are narrowed and reduced to their most primitive form. It becomes "a political society, dictatorship, apparatus of coercion (army, police, administration, courts, bureaucracy, etc.), government (which equals the state in the strict sense), apparatus of power, and domination."<sup>44</sup> As a particular form of dependent capitalist state, "it maintains and structures class domination, in the sense that this domination is rooted principally in a class structure that in turn has its foundation in the operation and reproduction of capitalist relations of production. . . From this perspective the state is, first and foremost, a relation of domination that articulates in unequal fashion the components of civil society, supporting and organizing the existing system of social domination."<sup>45</sup>

More importantly, as a form of "bureaucratic-authoritarian"<sup>46</sup> rule, the "Proceso" was a response "to important modifications of the relations of production and to important stages of the class struggle."<sup>47</sup> In other words, the Argentine state apparatus under the "Proceso" reflected a particular type of authoritarian response on the part of a specific coalition of social groups (the "coup coalition" mentioned by O'Donnell) to the intense socio-economic

conflicts surrounding their assumption of power. "From the point of view of the dominant social groups that exercised power during these years. . . this process signified an exceptional opportunity to consolidate their social domination."<sup>48</sup>

Gramsci's notion of "historical bloc" allows us to achieve better depth when probing the nature of this particular "coup coalition." Succinctly stated, Gramsci believed that "structures and superstructures form a 'Historical bloc'.<sup>49</sup> Here is where his implicit narrowing of the base and expansion of the superstructure becomes apparent. "The idea of a historical bloc departs significantly from notions of class embedded in the Marxist traditions; it promotes analysis of social formations that cut across categories of ownership and nonownership and that are bound by religious or other ideological ties as well as those economic ties. . . And yet he remained faithful to the Marxist tradition in granting casual priority to the economic sphere under most conditions. The base does not determine specific forms of consciousness, but it does determine what forms of consciousness are possible. The process of interaction between spheres is characterized by the formation and reformation of historical blocs, which, depending on their success in forming alliances and disseminating a coherent ideology, may or may not come to exert a hegemonic influence. . .

. . . This vision is manifestly more complex than most anti-Marxist critics have realized; it rejects the economic determinism of the Second International; it broadens the notion of ideology rooting it in spontaneous philosophy; it rejects the obsession with objective determinants of class by introducing the idea of historical bloc; it acknowledges the role of the state as a complex political entity, not merely a tool of the bourgeoisie. . . 50

It is the Gramscian notion of historical bloc, imbedded in his conceptualizations of hegemony and domination, that allow the particulars of different military-bureaucratic regimes to become intelligible. Here it incorporates and makes clear the cross-cutting ties and cleavages that constitute the social boundaries of the "Proceso" with a degree of facility not shared by either orthodox Marxist analyses or the current literature on bureaucratic-authoritarianism. In fact, we might say that it is the particulars of specific historical blocs, along with whether or not they have a hegemonic project -- and if so, the precise content of that project -- that allows us to generally distinguish between military-bureaucratic regimes.

In any event, because of the gravity of the threat posed by the crisis leading up to the installation of the "Proceso", and the fact that the very nature of social relations had changed significantly during the crisis, it was felt that, as Gramsci once remarked, "so too must be the political methods used, the resort to violence and the combination of legal and illegal forces."<sup>51</sup> Specifically, it was believed that only through the systematic use of state terror could the challenge to basic societal parameters posed by Marxist subversion be decisively overcome.

Finally, the virtual "colonization of the State by the military," as Rouquié labels it,<sup>52</sup> (the details of which will be elaborated upon shortly), was by no means a product of chance. To the contrary, it was done precisely to bestow an aura of professional neutrality on what was basically the transparent intent of the financial/transnational and agro-export elites to reassert their dominance over the rest of Argentine society after a period during which this dominance had been seriously -- and often violently -- questioned. In a sense, the military leaders of the "Proceso" well understood Poulantzas' hypothesis that the state "best serves the interests of

the capitalist class only when members of this class do not participate directly (or at least overtly or as a majority) in the state apparatus, that is to say, when the ruling class is not the politically governing class."<sup>53</sup>

Phrased differently, the military as an institution agreed to assume control of government while their civilian allies formulated and implemented economic policies that both groups believed would promote a basic restructuring of Argentine society. This division of labor was amply evident in the state apparatus. More broadly, this type of arrangement was replicated to greater or lesser degree under the military-bureaucratic regimes installed in Brazil (1964), Chile (1973), Peru (1968), and Uruguay (1973). Differences in the programs attempted by each responds to differences in the composition of their respective coup coalitions cum historic blocs. In this case, the economic interests of the agro-export and transnational elites were juxtaposed against those of the domestic bourgeoisie as well as the working classes, since the former were considered "traitorous" because of their historical identification with the Peronist movement.<sup>54</sup>

As a result, the military-bureaucratic regime installed in 1976 consisted of the upper and most transnationally-oriented fractions of the Argentine bourgeoisie, the traditional landed and agro-export sectors, to which were joined, on ideological grounds, the armed forces leadership and the conservative church hierarchy. In turn, the "Proceso" economically and politically turned its back on the subordinate fractions of the bourgeoisie as well as the lower and working classes. This was done with the understanding that the "State can only truly serve the ruling class in so far as it is relatively autonomous from the diverse (and here subordinate) fractions of this class, precisely in order to be able to organize the hegemony of the whole of this class."<sup>55</sup> Whether the agro-export elites and transnational

sectors of the Argentine bourgeoisie did in fact have a hegemonic project, or were instead content to reassert their economic and political dominance over the more national and urban industrial sectors of the bourgeoisie, is open to question. What is fact is that during the initial phase of their rule (1976-1981), they and their military and civilian allies deemed it necessary to impose a period of dominio in order to cleanse Argentine society of the economic and political malignancies that had brought the country to the verge of collapse.<sup>56</sup>

I will now proceed to develop the details of this project, at least as it was manifest in the varied use of state terror as a complement to economic and social policy. For the moment, what I have tried to do is phase the context in which the "Proceso" emerged in terms that are most consonant with the realities of the Argentine experience. One need not hold a strong ideological position to realize that the recent economic and political conflicts between Argentine social groups have generally been played out both along class lines and in zero-sum fashion. Thus, rather than offer it as a rigidly ideological explanation, I have undertaken this conceptual-contextual excursion in order to address three main concerns.

Generally, to show how the notion of state terror can be safely integrated into a broader theoretical framework without suffering appreciable loss of definition. More specifically, to demonstrate the viability of a neo-Gramscian perspective as a conceptual framework for understanding the general context and circumstances of the "Proceso." Finally, by doing so correct erroneous assumptions that Marxist thought offers little in the way of



positive analytic constructs for understanding the nature of state terror in the modern world, particularly as it appeared in Argentina from 1976 to 1981.<sup>57</sup>

V. The "Proceso": State Structure, Economic Program, Social Policy, and the use of State Terror.

As a type of military-bureaucratic authoritarian regime, the "Proceso de Reorganización Nacional" differed substantially from previous Argentine exercises in non-competitive rule. Whereas other coups during the postwar era had at most resulted in the partial militarization of the apex of the Argentine state apparatus, with most of the uniformed personnel concentrated in defense-related agencies, as provincial governors, or in very high ranking positions,<sup>58</sup> here the extent of militarization of the upper echelons of the state apparatus was unprecedented in that it was virtually complete. With the exceptions of the Ministry of Economy (entirely controlled by civilians) and the Ministry of Education (in which the military shared management positions with like-minded civilians), every major branch of the state was staffed through the department level with military personnel.<sup>59</sup> Rank had its privileges: Flag officers (Generals and Admirals) were awarded cabinet and sub-cabinet position (Ministers, Secretaries, and Under-secretaries), while upper-rank field grade officers (Colonels, Commodores, Majors, Captains) were assigned positions down to the director of department level.

Control over lead agencies within the state apparatus, as well as provincial governorships, ambassadorships, and all other high ranking posts, were divided among the three branches of the armed forces. The Army assumed most of the internal control agencies (including the Ministries of Labor and Interior, the latter having jurisdiction over the Federal Police, customs, internal revenue, and border control agencies, and a variety of specialized intelligence units). The Navy took control of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Social Welfare. The former was allocated to the Navy on the

objective criteria that it had the most external orientation of the three services. The latter, however, was awarded to the Navy because it had been used by the Peronist regime as a major instrument for cultivating political support, and had consequently become a bastion of patronage, political favoritism, and corruption. As the most consistently anti-Peronist of the armed forces,<sup>60</sup> the Navy asked for and received authority to undertake the mission of drastically transforming the scope and character of the Ministry of Social Welfare, which included the Secretariats of Housing, Public Health, and Social Security. The Air Force, as the most politically neutral and professionally detached of the services, supervised the Ministry of Transportation. In an effort to promote interservice cooperation, many posts within each ministry and the provincial governments were further subdivided among the different military forces.<sup>61</sup>

As for the three branches of the Federal government, the legislature was disbanded and the judiciary placed under military control. Consequently, the role of the executive became paramount. As the branch under which all the centralized administrative agencies, semi-autonomous entities, and public enterprises were grouped, the executive was formally divided among the three services in the form of the military junta of commanders-in-chief. The presidency, however, was reserved for an Army officer, since he was the representative of the largest service. Consequently, General Jorge Rafael Videla was named to the presidency, which was also significant because the main Argentine intelligence agency, SIDE (Servicio de Inteligencia del Estado) was under the direct control of the Office of the President. Though as elsewhere representatives of the other military branches were given positions within SIDE, it was the Army that controlled it during the "Proceso."

Most significant in terms of this essay is the fact that the sole branch of the state controlled entirely by civilians during the "Proceso" was the economic management branch, under the leadership of the Ministry of Economy.

This included all non-military public enterprises, and the Secretariats of Commerce, Finance, Industry, and Agriculture, as well as the Central Bank. As such, the Ministry of Economy was the principal, when not sole articulator of economic policy during this period. Both in that respect and in the broader division of the state apparatus among the three military services, the "Proceso" represented a considerable deepening over previous experiments in bureaucratic-authoritarian rule such as that which had governed Argentina from 1966 to 1973.<sup>62</sup>

This deepening was extended to the point where the Ministry of Economy was placed under the control of a "liberal" economic team headed by former Minister of Economy, Secretary of Agriculture, officer of the large land owner's association (the Sociedad Rural Argentina), Business Council director, and academician, Jose Martinez de Hoz (h). More than a man of extensive credentials, Martinez de Hoz "symbolized through his personal interests the unity of agrarian, industrial, and financial concerns."<sup>63</sup> As an heir to one of Argentina's most well known landed aristocratic names, Martinez de Hoz also demonstrated through his array of activities the tendency of the landed elite to diversify its economic and political interests among a variety of sectors, in order to ensure that their economic and political fortunes were not exclusively tied to any one of them.<sup>64</sup> Once Martinez de Hoz was installed, this also ensured that their interests took precedence over all others within the regime's economic program.

This division of labor within the state apparatus was also felt in the different levels of autonomy achieved. In the militarized branches responsible for administering the exclusionary program, the degree of autonomy vis-a-vis civil society was quite high. In the economic policy making branch, the level of autonomy was quite low, as it became the exclusive domain of representatives

of a narrow range of propertied interests. The "bi-frontal" levels of autonomy exhibited by the state apparatus closely responded to the division of exclusionary and inclusionary responsibilities within the regime.<sup>65</sup>

The convergence of the military hierarchy with the agro-export and transnational sectors responded to the fundamental logic of a shared conceptualization of Argentine society and the evils that afflicted it. For both the military hierarchy and the upper bourgeoisie, the roots of Argentina's demise as a world power harked back to the advent of Peronism as a political and social force in the mid-1940's. Consequently, the underlying premise of their rule was a mutual dedication to the eradication of Peronism as a social and political actor in Argentina, something that had been repeatedly attempted without success since the overthrow of the first Peronist regime in 1955.<sup>66</sup> More importantly, this alliance presaged the return -- although this time in far more drastic and coercive fashion -- to the "orthodox" stabilization policies that had been tried, again without much success, several times before.<sup>67</sup>

As alluded to earlier, there was as well a shared conservative vision of Argentine society on the part of these sectors that offered ideological, if not moral substance to their proposed course of action. Joined on those grounds by the Catholic Church hierarchy and conservative elements within Peronism itself, the various components of the "Proceso" were deeply alarmed by what they considered to be the deleterious effects of liberalism on Argentine society. Drug addiction, vandalism, sexual license and perversion, pornography, feminism, divorce, usury, and oncroaching Marxism -- these and other social pathologies were all attributed to the subversive influence of the liberalized atmosphere that permeated society under the Peronist regime. Comparisons with post-Franco Spain, Allende's Chile, and post-Salazar Portugal

suggested to these groups that the chaos experienced by Argentine society in the early seventies was nothing more than the natural outcome of a descent into "libertinaje" or libertarianism. Hence, it was essential that the "Proceso" firmly restore the traditional social hierarchies and sense of values that had been the mainstay of Argentine life before the advent of Peronism. It was this negative ideological vision that allowed the various components of the "Proceso" to come together as a historical bloc, as they forged a reactive collective identity that waxed nostalgic for an Argentina that once was, but which had not been seen for several decades (since 1946, to be precise).

The Church hierarchy's role as symbolic legitimator of the "Proceso" should not be overlooked. Long an opponent of Peronism (remembering Perón's assaults on, and eventual excommunication by the Church in the early 1950's), the conservative leaders of the Argentine Catholic Church were also decidedly opposed to the progressive political activism espoused by many clerics under the guise of liberation theology. Consequently, they were at the forefront of those who saw moral decay as coterminal with increased democratization and the secularization of the Church's traditional mission. Here again Gramsci's diversification of the superstructure in relation to the base through his notion of historical bloc is especially useful. It allows for the incorporation of this ostensibly non-class based group into the dominant coalition that comprised the "Proceso" on (negative) ideological rather than strictly material grounds (although the propertied status of the Church should be obvious), while at the same time retaining a fundamental understanding of the regime's differentiated class content. It should be noted that non-Marxist analysts have long pointed out the cross-cutting cleavages and heterogeneous coalitions at the heart of political conflict in Argentina. However, few of

them have been able to show how the confluence of such interests at a specific moment can give rise to a particular form of authoritarian-capitalist project.<sup>68</sup> Once more, Gramsci's notions are illuminating for it is the nature of the preceding organic crisis - that is, the profound crisis that extended from the economic base (the level of accumulation) through civil society and political society into the heart of the state apparatus (the superstructural levels at which social and political domination, if not hegemony, are reproduced) -- that in 1976 brought together these class and non-class actors in a historical bloc that was far more than a political -- or coup -- coalition.

Gramsci's emphasis on superstructural conditions help us understand the particulars that brought together the "Proceso" as a historical bloc. Their common fears went beyond economic concerns, and so did their goals. The latter transcended any attempt to restructure Argentine capitalism, and included a project of political and social restoration. Specifically, "if the economic crisis was pointing towards a need to deepen the industrialization process, the political crisis was pointing towards a need to tighten the politico-military controls in order to maintain the existing relations of domination. . . although there is always a strong interconnection between the economic and political aspects of the crisis, the crisis which led to the establishment of dictatorial controls was primarily political."<sup>69</sup> That is to say, what made the level of threat intolerable for the coup coalition was the deepening of the crisis at the superstructural level. In any event, the issue for us to consider here is that the Argentine Church hierarchy offered religious support to the social and economic programs of the "Proceso," and implicitly justified the "cleansing" use of state terror to achieve them.

For their part, the military hierarchy believed that ". . . the grave

manifestations of violence, disorder, and conflict of the 1970's were nothing more than the product of a process of distortion within the national life begun in 1946. These distortions -- ideological, political, economic -- (were believed to be) contrary both to the security and natural potential of the country. This perception led the armed forces to converge in program, and partially in ideology, with the most hardline sectors of the traditional anti-Peronist groups, sectors of the 'liberal' persuasion."<sup>70</sup>

Upon assuming power, the "Proceso" proposed three main objectives: 1) eradicate Marxist subversion in all its forms from Argentine life; 2) restructure and stabilize the national economy in a way that would eliminate and prevent future disruptions of the productive process, and which would make best use of those areas where Argentina enjoyed a competitive advantage in the world capitalist market; and 3) having accomplished the first two objectives, undertake a gradual, yet profound transformation of Argentine society proper, in order to put an end to Peronism and other corrupting influences that detracted from the traditional values of the nation. This included the return to a situation of respect for traditional authority such as the military and the Catholic Church, the elimination of corrupting influences such as feminism, non-traditional religions, and "delinquent" art forms, and the reassertion of the "proper" role of both men and women within the family and society at large.<sup>71</sup> Only in this way, it was believed, could the cancers afflicting Argentine society be entirely cured. Moreover, because of the gravity of the situation, the medicine to be applied would of necessity be harsh.

The perception of Argentine society as seriously ill and in desperate need of a drastic cure was elevated to an economic level by the "liberals" who assumed control of the economic branch. They believed that a market freed from

external interference was the most efficient allocator of resources within society. This belief went in hand with an individualistic political philosophy that was opposed to state involvement in social life beyond narrowly defined limits. Throughout the years preceeding the "Proceso," these individuals, generally identified with the agro-export sector on personal and economic grounds, maintained a position of strict opposition to the expansion of the state's role as expressed through activities such as employment programs, redistributive policies, extension of social welfare coverage, sectoral development strategies, etc. They were most strongly opposed to the state-sponsored drive towards industrial self-sufficiency that had begun in response to the Depression and World War Two, and which had received its largest boost, along with the afore-mentioned social programs, during the first Peronist regime of 1946-1955.<sup>72</sup>

Their diagnosis of the economic situation at the time they assumed control of the economic management branch was therefore explained as follows: The major reason the Argentine economy stagnated was the distortion of relative domestic prices caused by the industrialization program and expansion of the state. That is, the introduction of import tariffs created a protective wall that allowed for the rise and subsequent consolidation of inefficient domestic industries. In parallel, the agro-export sector, which was the repository of the natural competitive advantages of the country, was discriminated against (via export taxes and domestic price controls) in order to serve demagogic, although inefficient policies of income redistribution. To this were added the monopolistic practices of a corporative labor movement that conspired with the industrial bourgeoisie to structurally adjust prices to costs behind the tariff barriers. This made it possible for them to agree on wages and prices, which created a structural tendency towards inflation and low productivity.



Successive governments, finally, wasted resources on an inflated public bureaucracy, inefficient public enterprises, and in the maintenance of a huge, costly, and deteriorated social welfare system.<sup>73</sup>

With this diagnosis made, the economic team offered the following prescription: 1) reduce real wages by at least forty percent relative to those of the previous five years; 2) eliminate taxes on agricultural exports; 3) progressively reduce import tariffs; 4) eliminate subsidies to non-traditional (i.e. industrial) exports; 5) eliminate deficient social services such as health and housing, sectoral promotion credits, and raise prices for all public services; 6) liberalize the exchange and finance markets; and 7) reduce public expenditures, employment, and the deficit by reorganizing the state apparatus (along more narrow lines) and by "re-privatizing" state enterprises.<sup>74</sup>

Before continuing discussion of the economic program, mention must be made of the fact that the gap between theory and practice, especially in the economic realm, has seldom been bridged in modern Argentina. Many different political and economic projects were attempted and failed prior to the "Proceso," and to a great degree this was a fate shared by the economic program adopted in 1976. In particular, the highly speculative practices adopted by various economic sectors (which came to be known on the streets as "La Calesita," or "the Merry-Go-Round") in response to the overvaluation of the peso led to massive capital flight, escalating interest rates, and a wave of bankruptcies among domestic financial institutions. By mid-1981 the national economy was approaching the levels of decline witnessed in 1975 and 1976. As shall be explained in more detail further on, this economic crisis and other complementary factors marked the beginning of the regime's unraveling. The basic point to be underscored, though, is that this project was very precise

about what it proposed to do, and who would have to bear the costs involved in its implementation. Its eventual failure stemmed not from the response of these sectors (the domestic bourgeoisie and working classes), but from the practices of those it was designed to benefit (particularly the financial elites). Even so, it held together very well for at least three years, only to react very adversely to the global recession of 1979-1981. Moreover, whatever its eventual outcome, the gap between economic theory and practice did not hinder the use of state terror as a complement to the economic program, especially because the regime's social objectives required its systematic use as well.

Ultimately, what this economic program was proposing to do was more than stabilize the economy. Stabilization implies returning to the normal state of affairs after a period of abnormality. This project sought to reverse the thirty five year logic of industrialization that had preceded it, and "dismantle the productive structure erected as of the 1930's" in order to restore Argentina to its proper place as a "preindustrial country."<sup>75</sup> To this end, "the traditional program of the agrarian bourgeoisie appeared to be the most appropriate for radically changing the Argentina economic structure."<sup>76</sup>

Reaffirmation of this "liberal" economic outlook that championed the notion that Argentina had a competitive advantage in agro-exports was provided by the objective criteria of rising international prices for basic food products and in the incidence of famine (particularly in the Horn of Africa) during the early seventies. These external factors buttressed "liberal" arguments that the agro-export and agro-industrial sectors were the only productive activity that could objectively improve Argentina's position in the international economic market.<sup>77</sup> As Martínez de Hoz explained it, "the problem of the world food shortage will be one of the most important confronting humanity over the next

few years. . . just as the oil exporting nations have become powerful in the international scene, so then will the countries that export food find themselves in the not so distant future in a similar position of predominance within the world concert of nations."<sup>78</sup>

The prescription of Martínez de Hoz and his "liberal" colleagues was awarded further credence by the prestige associated with one of the foremost practitioners of this economic philosophy, Milton Friedman, and by the fact that his policies (as more specifically translated and applied by Arnold Harberger and his cadre of University of Chicago-trained economists) were being followed with apparent success by the military regime in neighboring Chile. Despite its specific differences vis-à-vis the Chilean model, all of this made the "liberal" program seem eminently rational and objectively advisable, which allowed them to justify the use of coercive measures in pursuit of their economic ends.

For the military hierarchy, the "liberal" economic program provided a form of theoretical cement that justified brutal reassertion of its traditional authority over civil society. It offered a technical rationale for using state terror as a means of altering the nation's historic memory by restructuring class relations, since a highly exclusionary approach towards subordinate social groups was required for the re-pastoralization of the economy. The economic turning back of the clock consequently provided a structural foundation for reducing the social arena along historically traditional, pre-Peronist lines. Military enforced societal discipline, hence, was required in order to re-impose the traditional class hierarchy and authority lines that constituted the social parameters which, complementing the "liberal" economic project, were the basis of this nostalgic vision.

Opening the Argentine domestic market was expected to stimulate industrial efficiency via increased international competition. It was believed that agro-industries such as food processing, meat packing, and cereal refineries would experience the most growth, as would related industries such as fishing enterprises, leather and textile manufacturers, etc. On the other hand, heavily subsidized industries such as those involved in consumer durables and heavy manufacturing would be eliminated by foreign competition, which would decrease the financial burden on the public sector. To this would be added the elimination of many social services and the transfer of state enterprises to private hands. Coupled with the freeing of prices (including agricultural products) within the domestic market, these measures were deemed necessary for restoring some sense of order to the Argentine economy.

However, in a country that had a thirty five year history of sustained industrialization, an extensive public sector providing a wide range of goods and services, and very large and well organized urban industrial classes, particularly the domestic bourgeoisie and the organized labor movement, this required that severe coercive measures be applied in order to prevent their interference with the free operation of the market. For that reason, this economic model has also come to be known, somewhat erroneously, as a form of "market Fascism."<sup>79</sup> In order to fully understand the scope of this project, we must briefly describe some of the structural conditions that it was confronted with.

In Argentina, a historically low birth rate has led to a relative scarcity of labor, which has contributed throughout its history to a low rate of unemployment.<sup>80</sup> As a result, labor unions in labor-intensive sectors enjoyed disproportionate strength, since there was no reserve labor pool to draw from in order to avoid meeting their demands. Most of the labor force, and their

institutional representatives, were concentrated in those industries built up during the state-sponsored industrialization drive, and in the public sector, be it the centralized state apparatus, state enterprises, or quasi-public entities. The economic program adopted by the "Proceso" was therefore oriented towards breaking the power of the unions, which was considered a vital step towards eliminating Peronism as an economic and political force (since the vast majority of the organized labor movement was Peronist).

The opening of the domestic market was designed to eliminate those very industries in which the unions had greatest strength. It also punished the "traitorous" domestic entrepreneurs who had allied themselves with the Peronists in previous years. Elimination of these industries would create a large pool of unemployed who could then be used as a reserve labor force with which to break the power of the unions in other economic sectors. Moreover, elimination of industries in which the unions were strong displaced labor to the service and agro-industrial sectors in which they were relatively weak. The more individualized forms of work in the service and agrarian sectors also helped break the sense of collective identity of the working classes, a fact that was reinforced by the elimination of union social service programs and public services expressly oriented towards them. The lowering of import barriers and overvaluation of the peso thus not only fostered competition within the Argentine market, it was also an initial step in the move to diminish the collective strength of the lower industrial classes. Obviously enough, these classes were not about to witness their own destruction without resistance. With this in mind, and given the paralyzing effects of guerrilla activities and high levels of labor mobilization prior to the March, 1976 coup, state terror was consequently deemed to be an essential complement to the regime's economic program.

Regrettably, it is impossible within the context of this essay to delve further into the details of this exclusionary "liberal" economic program, particularly the causes and consequences of its ultimate failure. Since our interest is focused on the various faces of dominio, and particularly the differentiated use of state terror as a complement to economic and social policy, the reader is advised to examine the specific evaluations of the economic measures implemented by the "Proceso" available elsewhere.<sup>81</sup> The major point to be underscored with regard to the economic program is that it contained a number of overlapping objectives that made the recourse to state terror all the more advisable (in the eyes of those responsible for implementing it) in order to ensure full achievement of each of them. At a social level, the economic program sought to re-establish the dominance of the traditional landed and transnational sectors over the domestic bourgeoisie and organized working classes that had enjoyed the favor of the preceding Peronist regime, and which had been challenging that dominance since the advent of Peronism in the mid-1940's. To do so, the "Proceso" proposed to reverse the industry-oriented strategy in vogue since the 1930's, and re-emphasize that area where Argentina was believed to hold its most natural competitive advantage: the agro-export sector and its attendant infrastructural and secondary industries. This was to be done by opening the domestic market to foreign competition, expanding export opportunities for primary goods, reducing the role of the state in both the productive process in general and in the provision of basic goods and services in particular, and by allowing the price of agricultural products destined for export and home consumption to be determined by the international market.

These measures were taken in order to eliminate inefficient domestic industries and state activities where the lower bourgeoisie and organized labor were concentrated, which would displace labor towards less unionized and

more traditional industries related to agriculture. By doing so, not only would the position of the agro-export sector be enhanced; the economic and political strength of the domestic bourgeoisie and organized labor would be permanently broken as well, which was the first step towards reestablishing the "natural" hierarchy among socio-economic classes that had been so seriously disrupted by the generalized disorder that characterized the period of organic crisis preceeding the military coup d'état of March, 1976.

In effect, it was the convergence of a particular social and economic outlook that caused the "Proceso" to reject the structuralist critiques made fashionable by ECLA theoreticians in the 1940's and 1950's (to say nothing of Marxist-based dependency analyses), and which had sustained the industrialization programs adopted by the military-bureaucratic regimes in Brazil and Chile, as well as that of the previous Argentine experiment with military-bureaucratic authoritarianism from 1966 to 1973. Instead, the unique obstacles posed by the Peronist movement -- especially its socio-economic bases, ideological orientation, organizational strength, and mobilizational ability -- required an economic, political, and social strategy that would diminish Peronism as a force at all three levels. It was this conservative project, coupled with the afore-mentioned objective rationales for adopting a strategy that stressed Argentina's area of competitive advantage in the world economy, that caused the "Proceso" to diverge with respect to other military-bureaucratic economic programs in the Southern Cone. More importantly, it was this overarching objective which made the recourse to state terror an integral part of the regime's program, and which gave it a differentiated class content.

Given the severity of the preceeding social crisis, the scope of the regime's project, and the organizational strength of the groups to be subordinated and excluded, it becomes readily apparent why the systematic use of

terror was deemed vital for the success of the "Proceso." It is to the various forms in which state terror was manifest, especially as they related to the economic and social programs, that we now turn.

## VI. The Varied Faces of State Terror.

Within days of the golpe, all political parties and activities were outlawed. Basic legal rights (habeus corpus, right to be formally charged and receive a fair trial, etc.) were suspended. All labor unions (including the national labor federation, the Confederacion General de Trabajo or CGT) and the small businessman's association (the Confederacion General Economica or CGE) were declared illegal as well, and their headquarters, social and welfare facilities, and financial resources placed under military control. Strikes, slow downs, lock outs, and other actions that impeded productivity were declared to be crimes against national security punishable by long prison sentences.<sup>82</sup> Collective bargaining was abolished, and a strict wage freeze in all sectors, as outlined earlier, was imposed. As a result, by late 1976 real wages had dropped an average of more than fifty percent relative to the last year of the Peronist regime, and worker's share of the national income declined from 48.5 percent to just 29 percent. By 1981, this figure had only risen slightly above 30 percent, and real wages continued at levels half those of six years before.<sup>83</sup> In effect, the "rules of the game" were altered by closing the legal modes of access, redress, and representation normally used by the domestic bourgeoisie and organized labor movement to defend their interests and press their demands. Thus forced into institutional silence, these classes saw their material standard of living drop dramatically as domestic prices rose and their purchasing power diminished under the regime's exclusionary economic policies.



This was compounded by the "rationalization" of the state apparatus undertaken by the regime after it assumed power. Using a principle known as the "subsidiarity of the state," a broad range of agencies were either compressed, eliminated, or transferred to the private sector, and their personnel similarly displaced or dismissed. A major instrument used to this effect by the "rationalization" program was a law that authorized dismissal of employees without indemnization or warning for reasons of "service," "national security," or "redundancy."<sup>84</sup> Most of those fired on these grounds were union activists, such as in the case of 300 state utility workers fired en masse in mid-1976.<sup>85</sup> By 1980, the regime claimed to have eliminated more than 200,000 employees from the public payroll.<sup>86</sup> Paralleling these reductions in the public work force were similar decreases in industrial employment, which was a product of the wave of bankruptcies among local enterprises that resulted from the opening of the domestic market to foreign competition. From 1975 to 1981 industrial employment decreased 26.9 percent.<sup>87</sup> Overall, industrial output declined 24 percent relative to the 1974 level, and a full ten percent of the industrial work force (800,000 people) were without jobs by 1981.<sup>88</sup> Conversely, the agricultural sector maintained the moderate growth levels of previous years.<sup>89</sup> The areas that did see growth, as foreseen, were the financial and agro-industrial sectors.<sup>90</sup>

Elimination of collective bargaining not only facilitated the drop in wage levels. It also prevented workers from having a voice in determining work conditions (which, among other things, resulted in the regime increasing the minimum work week from 36 to 42 hours), allowed for increased salary differences among categories of workers, and prevented the domestic bourgeoisie from reaching wage agreements with the unions that would have undermined the regime's economic program.<sup>91</sup> Along with the outlawing of strikes and other

union activities, direct military control of union facilities and resources, massive firings, and the displacement of labor to more individualized or less extensively unionized activities, this was designed to break the collective identity and sense of spiritual affinity of the social classes that were the lifeblood of the Peronist movement.<sup>92</sup> Specifically, with these measures the "Proceso" hoped to eliminate the strength of these groups on four distinct, yet interrelated levels: i.e. as economic, corporative, social, and political actors.<sup>93</sup>

To accomplish this, a new Law of Professional Associations was passed that attempted to disarticulate the basic union structure that had existed under the previous regime.<sup>94</sup> Among other provisions, it outlawed the existing national labor federation (the CGT), and allowed for multiple unions per industry, level of activity, sector, and region. This was designed to break the vertical structure that was the organizational backbone of the Peronist-dominated labor movement. The new trade union law placed all union activities under strict regulations closely supervised by the Ministry of Labor, which was controlled by the Army. In addition, the Registry of Employer's Associations, which had been the institutional referent for small businesses within the Ministry of Economy, was transferred to the Ministry of Labor as a department-level dependency of the National Directorate of Professional Associations.<sup>95</sup>

The significance of this last move derives from the fact it shifted oversight responsibility for an employer's institutional referent to the jurisdiction of the agency responsible for administering organized labor interests. More importantly, it meant that this referent was being removed from the economic policy-making branch (where it had institutional access to the policy-making process) and placed in a control agency responsible for regulating the activities of groups further down the productive ladder.

Coupled with the disbanding of its organizational representative (the CGE), this measure formally marked the exclusion of the domestic bourgeoisie as an economic and political actor. With regard to the labor movement, this objective was made explicit by then-Secretary of Industry Juan Alemann, who said "with these policies we attempt to weaken the enormous power of the syndicates. . . (because) Argentina used to have a syndical power that was too strong. . . (By). . . weakening it we have created the basis for a future political opening."<sup>96</sup> In effect, at an economic, organizational, political, and ultimately social level, the "Proceso" systematically excluded the domestic bourgeoisie and organized working classes.<sup>97</sup>

To the anti-organizational measures and economic constraints were added other subtle coercive restrictions designed to reduce the power of the excluded classes. Ceilings on public transportation rates and rent controls were lifted, which effectively dislocated large sectors of the working population. Rigid standards of appearance and dress were imposed in the work place, at school, and on the street. Failure to comply with these standards, even if forced to do so for economic reasons, often resulted in dismissal or arrest. Applications for employment were scrutinized by security personnel in order to determine "subversive" backgrounds, including labor activism. A similar procedure was instituted in many schools, particularly those located in or near working class districts. Rationalizing that, in the reputed words of the military governor of Buenos Aires, General Iberico Saint Jean, "subversion begins in culture and in education," a general clampdown on these activities was effected. Censorship of the media was universal, and bans on all literature, arts, and other forms of expression considered to be "subversive" were enacted. This included the works of Althusser, Freud, Marx, Lacan, Foucault, Neruda, Cortazar, Garcia Marquez, and Upton Sinclair, among others. The educational

system was overhauled in order to rid it of "class-oriented," so-called "secular humanist," and other "subversive" subjects, and to reestablish the primacy of traditional Catholic values. Psychoanalysis, sociology, and political science were eliminated from many university curriculums on the grounds that they were Marxist sciences. Students and faculty suspected of harboring subversive tendencies were expelled, and often arrested.<sup>98</sup>

It is possible that the military's attempt to reconstitute the fabric of these ideological apparatuses of reproduction (schools, the media, etc.) was part of a larger hegemonic project designed to reassert over the long term the convergent values, mores, and beliefs of the conservative military hierarchy and its civilian allies. What is significant is that this project, if it indeed existed, ultimately proved unsuccessful because it failed to understand two simple facts about hegemony. First, the objective conditions for achieving hegemony, that is, as an economic and political quid pro quo constituted by a mixture of consent and concessions, should ideally be present before the conquest of political power.<sup>99</sup> Since this was clearly not the case (and in fact was a precipitating factor in the golpe) by definition the "Proceso" could initially be no more than an exercise in dominio, regardless of its pretentions.

Second, in marked contrast to other cases in which the conquest of political power preceded the achievement of hegemony (postwar Italy and West Germany, among others), the "Proceso" was unable or uninterested in making the constructive changes necessary for the achievement of hegemony. Beyond the restrictions placed on various ideological apparatuses, there was no attempt to create legitimate political vehicles or engage the corporate concessions necessary for the establishment of a basic quid pro quo with subordinate groups. Oriented towards its cleansing mission, the "Proceso" made no attempt to win the consent of the subordinate groups, and in fact sought to systematically close all

avenues of societal expression (as potential feedback loops). This reduced what had once been a (admittedly fractious) political and economic dialogue between contending socioeconomic actors to a coercive monologue on the part of those in power. Thus, without the corporative changes necessary for the establishment of a hegemonic project as a follow to the period of domination, the "Proceso" was never capable of instilling in its subjects the legitimacy of its social and political vision, regardless of the measures it took to restructure various ideological apparatuses. In other words, the "Proceso" may have desired to be hegemonic; in fact, it was not.

Whatever the purpose, the militarization of the state apparatus complemented these authoritarian measures. Instead of social workers or professionals in various public service fields, those who sought the assistance of public agencies were confronted by military personnel interested in locating subversives and their sympathizers. This was especially evident in the Ministry of Social Welfare, where Navy officers took a particularly dim view of the "parasitic" tendencies of the lower classes. A similar situation occurred in the previously union-operated welfare agencies (Obras Sociales), which saw their resources and property transferred to the Army-controlled Ministry of Labor.

Two areas that witnessed the promulgation of subtle coercive measures in systematic fashion were public health and social security, both located under the jurisdiction of the Navy-controlled Ministry of Social Welfare. On a general plane, the amount of financial resources to these sectors was cut by more than half in the period 1976-1981.<sup>100</sup> At the same time, the total number of beds provided by public hospitals decreased by more than 25 percent.<sup>101</sup> Military expropriation of the union-operated social welfare network, including the union-affiliated hospitals that provided a major portion of the coverage for the organized working classes, furthered the curtailment of basic social

services. Public hospitals were ordered to charge fees for basic diagnosis and treatment, the first time this had ever occurred. In lieu of the union social security programs, private retirement plans were offered at rates far above those of the unions. This effectively excluded a large portion of the labor movement from both types of coverage.<sup>102</sup>

As if these general restrictive measures were not enough, there were even more sinister applications of this type of coercion. Public hospitals and medical attention facilities in working class neighborhoods were systematically closed, most often on the grounds that there was a scarcity of demand. Simultaneously, people were turned away from those that remained open (often after lengthy trips to reach them) on the grounds that there was an excess of demand, or because they could not afford the basic service charge demanded for what once had been free. Many hospitals were placed under the control of military doctors, who were more concerned with monitoring the patient population for possible subversives rather than for signs of disease. Union affiliation, either directly or as a relative of a union member, was often used as grounds for denial of service.

Not surprisingly, disease and mortality rates among the working class population increased dramatically under the "Proceso."<sup>103</sup> At the same time, price controls on basic medical products were lifted, and regulations governing the fabrication and dispensation of medicine were relaxed, which forced the least-advantaged sectors of the population to use more expensive and inferior (when not ineffectual) medical products in an effort to seek relief.

More generally, the National Integrated Health Plan established by the Peronist regime to ensure comprehensive medical coverage for the entire population was repealed. In its place were offered a number of private health

plans established by profit-oriented medical enterprises and insurance agencies. However, the detrimental effects of the regime's economic program on working class incomes made it impossible to afford private coverage. In turn, the domestic bourgeoisie saw a greater part of their income directed towards medical attention, which had an adverse impact on their material standard of living. In effect, the "Proceso" removed the minimum health and welfare floors previously provided by the state as a form of punishment for those groups it believed to be the causes of the Argentine malaise. Both materially and physiologically, this meant that the domestic bourgeoisie and organized working classes were made to pay a heavy price as a consequence of their economic, political, and social exclusion.

The excluded sectors initially attempted to resist the moves against them. In 1976 and 1977, for example, there were over 500 hundred strikes and numerous other protests called against the regime's economic policies.<sup>104</sup> Likewise, certain parts of the media voiced concern over the scope and direction of the repressive campaign.<sup>105</sup> The answer to these and all other forms of dissent, and which came to identify the "Proceso" as unprecedentedly brutal, was an extremely high level of violence. Though this violence touched all sectors of the population, it was most harshly felt by the groups that were viewed as antagonistic or "culpable" by the regime.

If the economic exclusion, political and organizational restrictions, and denial of basic public services represented the rational, systematic, and more subtle coercive aspects of the "liberal" prescription for transforming Argentine society, then the "dirty war" against subversion represented an emotional, cathartic venting of accumulated rage on the part of the military hierarchy and its civilian allies against those held responsible for the national decline. Hence, no rules of war, much less civility, conditioned the unleashing of the

repressive apparatus. The end -- eradication of subversion -- justified any means taken on its behalf. Yet here too, the campaign of state terror was both rational and systematic.

The armed forces began the active part of the state terror campaign by consolidating their hold on society by militarily defeating the guerrillas in the northern provinces in 1976-1977, and by simultaneously occupying all major cities and towns. Curfews were declared, restrictions on pedestrian and vehicular traffic imposed (particularly near government and military installations), massive identification checks were instituted, and random searches of individuals and raids on public areas and private property were conducted frequently and without warning. Factories and schools were occupied by military personnel looking for subversives, assemblies of more than a dozen people for non-family or non-government sanctioned reasons were prohibited, and soldiers patrolled the streets, where they were allowed to enforce these security measures as they deemed fit. These were, in the words of Nobel Laureate Adolfo Perez-Esquivel, "troops of occupation within their own country."

It was in the activities of para-military death squads, however, where the climate of terror was most energetically sowed, and where it reached its most vicious expression. Some of these squads were odd mixtures of civilian and military personnel -- most notably the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance (the infamous "Triple-A"), which had been organized under the previous regime by right-wing Peronists under the leadership of former Social Welfare Minister José Lopez Rega. Most, however, were more formally connected to the state by virtue of their being specialized branches of existing military or intelligence units. Be they formally or informally attached to the state, these decentralized groups of a half-dozen heavily armed men, always using aliases or noms de guerre,



operated with nearly complete autonomy and in highly amorphous, overlapping jurisdictions. Along with those of the military high command, each service branch, military district, police district, and police station had its own "operative" group. Working day and night out of unmarked cars and trucks (mostly government-issue Ford Falcons), these groups would kidnap from virtually any location -- at home, school, in restaurants, theaters, even churches -- individuals previously targeted by the various intelligence services as suspect. Often, passers-by or family members witness to the abductions would be kidnapped as well, or later, when they went to report them.

The abducted would first be taken to local detention centers, where they were physically tortured via beatings, electric shock, prolonged immersion in rancid water, excrement, or other vile liquids, burning, mutilation, rape, and attacks by trained dogs. They would also be psychologically tortured in the form of forced denial of sleep, exposure to the torture of other prisoners (often their own relatives), and by being subject to prolonged periods of isolation and sensory deprivation, extreme temperature and noise levels, various combinations thereof, and by simulated executions.<sup>106</sup>

While many individuals found innocent or guilty of minor infractions gained their freedom eventually, many others were subsequently transferred to the secret detention centers operated by the different services, SIDE, and the Federal Police. Some of the more notorious sites were located at the Naval Mechanics School (ESMA) in Buenos Aires (headquarters of the Naval Intelligence Service (SIN) and the Intelligence Task Forces), the Army installations located at Campo de Mayo outside of the capital (where Intelligence Battalion 601 was based), and at the Federal Police barracks on the road to the international airport of Ezeiza. Dozens of other centers were located around the country, especially in and around the industrial cities of Cordoba and Rosario. Once in

these centers, the prisoners would again be subjected to various combinations of torture while being interrogated, often under the supervision of military doctors who determined their pain tolerance and threshold levels. There were even specialists in different types of torture such as the infamous "crow" or "white angel of death," Lieutenant Carlos Astiz of the Naval Mechanics School, who gained notoriety for his grim enthusiasm and callousness, and a penchant for "turning" prisoners by sexually assaulting and torturing women and children in front of their families (and who subsequently became better known for being the commander of the Argentine force that invaded the South Georgia Islands, thereby starting the Falkland/ Malvinas conflict).<sup>107</sup>

After an indefinite period of incarceration without any formal charge having been brought against them, most of these prisoners were killed, either by summary execution or by being sedated, loaded onto aircraft, and dumped out over remote areas and the Atlantic Ocean. Recently, soldiers involved in these dumpings have come forth to reveal that hundreds of victims were disposed of in this and other similarly gruesome -- and systematic -- fashions.<sup>108</sup>

To cement the bonds of loyalty (and culpability) tying them together, all members of these squads were required to directly involve themselves in the torture and murder of suspects. In some cases, blood pacts were confirmed by summarily executing prisoners in front of the rest of the squad, as was the case with military officers in the "Sun of May" (Sol de Mayo) lodge then operating in Cordoba.

Although the exact figures have yet to be determined, about 10 thousand people died at the hands of these military and para-military groups, 15 to 30,000 disappeared after being abducted and are presumed dead, and another 25,000 were subjected to torture before being released. In contrast, leftist guerrilla and terrorist groups killed less than 5,000 people before being

defeated. At most, only twenty percent of those victimized by right-wing death squads and military forces were actively involved in Marxist subversion; the rest were not directly involved with terrorist or guerrilla groups. Nor do the ramifications of the "dirty war" end with the acknowledgement of excesses that led to the disappearance of innocents. During the past couple of years a number of children of "disappeared" persons have been found in adoptive homes, in many cases those of military personnel or located abroad. Rather than the excesses of an over-zealous few (as the military leaders maintained it was), the "dirty war" provided the framework in which the regime's social transformation project could begin. In this regard, it was a deliberate, extensive, and systematic process of societal subjugation.

It is Gramsci who once again allows us to gain perspective on these paramilitary activities. "In the present struggles. . ." he wrote . . . "it often happens that a weakened State machine is like a flagging army: commandos, or private armed organizations, enter the field to accomplish two tasks -- to use illegality, while the State appears to remain within legality, and thereby to reorganize the State itself."<sup>109</sup> That is to say, these paramilitary groups (in Gramsci's time incarnate in the squadristi of the Fascist movement) are ". . . not against the State, but aligned with it."<sup>110</sup> By allowing right-wing paramilitary death squads to roam freely and act with impunity, and by disavowing any formal connection with them (claiming instead that they were either opposed factions within leftist terrorist organizations or anonymous groups of patriotic anti-communists avenging earlier losses to the left), the military leaders of the "Proceso" could continue to justify the need for the legal restrictions on political and other forms of social activity as a means of consolidating the superordinate authority of the state in the face of these external threats. This also permitted them to restructure the state apparatus

and implement the more subtle coercive measures deemed essential by the "liberal" theoreticians for the fundamental transformation of Argentine society.

Who then, were the bulk of those victimized by the "active" part of the state terror campaign? Not surprisingly, the majority of the victims of the "dirty war" came from among the excluded social groups. Forty percent of all those "disappeared" were trade union activists and union members. Nineteen percent came from other occupations that were directly connected in one way or another with the excluded groups, particularly journalists, medical doctors, and teachers.<sup>111</sup> The remainder were for the most part students. Again, the vast majority of these people were not directly connected with guerrilla or terrorist groups.

The extent of the terror campaign against organized labor is well summarized by Francisco Delich: "(Union) leaders and activists were killed, disappeared, imprisoned, and exiled. . . they numbered in the thousands. There were executions in the factories, and physical and psychological violence designed to terrorize the workers."<sup>112</sup> Because of these actions, many union members were forced to quit their jobs in order to save themselves.<sup>113</sup> As mentioned earlier, strikes and other forms of protest were physically suppressed, most often by sending troops into the factories, where they beat and arrested leaders and forced the rest of the workers back to the job.<sup>114</sup> Many times, as in the case of Public Utility Worker's Union president Oscar Smith, vocal protest resulted in permanent "disappearance." Most of the union members who disappeared or were imprisoned came from traditionally strong Peronist unions with histories of politization and activism, such as the Metalworkers, Autoworkers, Mechanics, Textile, and Public Transportation unions.<sup>115</sup> The regime's reach even extended to union activities overseas, such

as in the case of the dismissal and intimidation of union members of the national airline (Aérolíneas Argentinas) working in the United States.<sup>116</sup>

While less extensive than the campaign against organized labor (since the domestic bourgeoisie was less organized and ideologically united as a group), state terror was selectively applied against the subordinate fractions of the bourgeoisie in order to preclude their interference with the economic program. Leaders of the outlawed CGE were arrested and held for indefinite periods, others were forced into exile, and many were the targets of death threats, beatings, and other intimidatory acts. One particularly nasty aspect of the state terror applied against the domestic bourgeoisie was the use of anti-semitism. While Jews occupied a significant position within this class, they received a disproportionately high amount of the terror meted out against it. This was particularly true of Jewish merchants living or working in the Province of Buenos Aires, which was under the control of a faction in the Army that had well-known Fascist sympathies, and who viewed the decline of Western civilization as part of an insidious plot on the part of a global Marxist-Zionist conspiracy.<sup>117</sup>

At another level, intellectuals not linked to the regime became the target of an intense ideological examination that was designed to locate and weed out those with Marxist beliefs. Many professions -- journalism, psychoanalysis, and law in particular -- witnessed whole-scale purges. Moral and ideological censorship covered the full spectrum of creative endeavor, which significantly curtailed intellectual growth and diminished the free flow of information in society. Furtive activity, especially reading and writing between the lines, consequently became the primary creative focus within civil society.

The economic program also took its toll. Thousands of Argentines emigrated into voluntary economic exile in order to escape the adverse effects the "liberal" prescription had on domestic industries and small businesses. Economic self-preservation, in other words, dictated the necessity of moving abroad to a large fraction of the domestic bourgeoisie, particularly those with technical skills. Thus, although relatively selective when compared to the coercion directed against the labor movement, this varied application of state terror had its desired effect. The subordinate fractions of the bourgeoisie were divided, exiled, and/or cowered into acquiescent silence or opportunistic support for the regime.

The application of state terror had a dramatic impact on the whole of Argentine society, but particularly on the excluded social groups. The magnitude and intensity of the coercive campaign, in all of its guises, significantly altered the basic forms of interaction among members of these groups. On the one hand, in Gramsci's words, the "Proceso" "juridically abolished even the modern forms of autonomy of the subordinate classes (such as parties, trade unions, and cultural associations," and sought to "incorporate them into the activity of the State: (this was) the legal centralization of all national life in the hands of the ruling group. . ."118 It is this concerted attempt to eliminate potentially (counter) hegemonic apparatuses that serves as a distinguishing characteristic of exercises in dominio such as the "Proceso."

On the other hand, at an individual level the "active" part of the state terror campaign imposed a degree of fear that affected the basic textures of sociability within the excluded groups. Those who comprised these groups -- that is, individual working class and lower middle class people -- were not only divorced from the sources of power, but also deprived of basic rights and subjected to the continual violence of those who held power. The notion of

social power, at least as it was manifest in identification and participation with collective groups, became an alien concept for each of these individuals. Thus, rather than engage a political and economic dialogue between rulers and ruled, members of the excluded, subordinate groups were subjected to a highly coercive monologue on the part of the "Proceso" that was designed to isolate them as individuals and alienate them from their fellow class members.

There was, in essence, a systematic disruption, de-composition, or subordination to the state of basic collective identities under the "Proceso," in which members of the excluded groups were forcibly alienated by overwhelming fear from their peers. Group identification, as a primary reason for individual victimization, was abandoned in favor of isolation and non-participation. This was most evident in the generalized attitude of "no te metas," or "don't get involved" that characterized Argentine society during this period. Such alienation lay at the core, and yet was a product of the process of de-socialization and identity regression that was produced by the pervasive atmosphere of fear. It was, in effect, an "infantilization" of each individual member of the excluded groups. Isolated, frightened, powerless, and with no recognizable rights, the individual was deprived of the basic attributes of a mature social being.<sup>119</sup>

It was this "infantilization" of individual members of the excluded groups that was the ultimate goal of the "Proceso," because it ensured the fundamental rupture of the collective identities of those who were believed to stand in the way of the transformation of Argentine society, and who were held mainly responsible for the organic crisis that had brought Argentina to the brink of collapse. In a sense, the entire society was reduced to the level of a child's nightmare: better obey, comply, and behave, or "te van a agarrar los nombres del Falcon," that is, the men in the Ford Falcons would get you.<sup>120</sup> In

a very real sense, during the "Proceso" civil society reverted to its most primitive form along with the state apparatus.

## VII. The Phases of Authoritarian Domination

Although it lies beyond the scope of this essay, before concluding we must briefly consider the different phases of the "Proceso." In contrast to the long-term orientation of hegemonic regimes, regimes based exclusively on domination are inherently short-lived. This is because physical force, be it in the form of state terror or more conventional repression, tends to obey a form of Newtonian law, i.e. it tends to dissipate with prolonged use, and therefore wanes over time when it is the primary basis of rule. Above all, it is the absence of a hegemonic project to take up where domination leaves off that is a hallmark of dominio, and is what gives it an inherently short-term character.

As such, it is possible to distinguish three general phases in the tenure of these regimes. First comes the phase when the regime is strongest, is able to consolidate its hold on civil society, impose its programs and policies, and structure social relations through the use (and fear of use) of force, including state terror. This phase, which can be called that of regime consolidation and program implementation, has been the focus of this analysis of the "Proceso."

The second phase, in which internal and external contradictions and pressures cause the regime to waver, can be labeled the period of regime crisis and unraveling. For the "Proceso," this period spanned the months between March, 1981 and April, 1982. As mentioned earlier, by that time the economy had experienced a marked downturn. The era of "plata dulce" (sweet money) and speculation had been replaced with an acute and growing fiscal crisis that threatened to bring the productive process to a standstill. It coincided with the succession crisis that accompanied President Videla's retirement in March 1981. This so-called "Achilles Heel" (as O'Donnell accurately calls it) of



military-bureaucratic authoritarian regimes was especially so in the case of the "Proceso," for the coincidence of economic downturn and executive succession forced the regime to undergo a none-too-flattering self-evaluation. That led to nine months of increasingly bitter factional in-fighting between the moderate and hard-line sectors of the military hierarchy. Initially, the moderates won out, and installed one of their own (General Eduardo Viola) as president. He promptly embarked on an economic program that attempted to reverse some of the de-industrializing trends in the national economy, and, in parallel, explored the possibility of a carefully phrased dialogue with opposition groups (especially the Peronists) that might produce a limited political opening.

However, the hard-line faction grew increasingly restive throughout this period, and were particularly alarmed by the public displays of opposition that accompanied disclosure of the dialogo político. In December 1981, using Viola's heart ailment as a pretext, the hard-liners removed him from office and installed General Leopoldo Galtieri, a well-known duro who had been deeply involved in the "dirty war," and who promptly moved to restore the "liberal" economic program and crack down on dissent.

However unknowingly at the time, Galtieri's installation as president marked the beginning of the third and final phase of the "Proceso,": that of authoritarian collapse. This was due to the fact that overcoming the divisions within the armed forces that emerged in 1981 required a move towards internal reconstitution that went far beyond the return to liberal economic policies. The need for internal reconstitution forced the military hierarchy to look for a common objective upon which both factions could agree, and which simultaneously could divert domestic attention away from the economic crisis while justifying intensified repression against the rising opposition. By April, 1982, an objective had been agreed upon and selected by the military hierarchy. This

common objective lay 400 miles off the Patagonian coast.<sup>121</sup>

One interesting sidelight to the Falkland/Malvinas Islands conflict is that it could very well have been the Beagle Channel Islands that provided such an external diversion. In 1978 Argentina and Chile had almost come to blows over the disputed islands, and tensions remained high thereafter. However, the Argentines were unwilling to take on the Chileans for three reasons. First, they were wary of the Chilean armed forces, whose fighting abilities were considered to be very strong. Second, they were loathe to attack another military regime. Besides providing Pinochet and his minions with an external diversion, the ensuing conflict would inevitably result in the downfall of one or the other regime (or both), which could have negative repercussive effects at home even in the event of victory. Finally, and most importantly, the reoccupation of the Falkland/Malvinas Islands was a poorly staged bluff (evident in the use of conscripts with six weeks training and dressed in summer uniforms as the bulk of a winter occupation force). The military hierarchy believed that Great Britain would not call the bluff, thus making the re-occupation a seemingly easy and inexpensive ploy.

Needless to say, Galtieri and his cohorts seriously underestimated the will and capabilities of Margaret Thatcher (to say nothing of ignore her own domestic problems that welcomed exactly such an external diversion), as well as the attitude of the United States. Misinterpreting the Reagan administration's abandonment of the Carter human rights policy as blanket approval of their rule and methods (augmented by their role as U.S. proxy counter-insurgency advisors in Central America), the military leaders of the "Proceso" decided that Great Britain would not attempt to forcibly re-take the islands, especially with the U.S. supporting the Argentine claim. When neither of these two assumptions proved correct, the fate of the "Proceso" was sealed, and the process of

authoritarian collapse began in earnest. In effect, lacking the capacity to learn lessons from historical experience beyond the utility of state terror as an instrument of domination (particularly the experience of the Greek colonels in Cyprus a few short years before), the "Proceso" responded to the confluence of internal and external pressures by cooking up a classic recipe for authoritarian collapse in the form of the Falklands/Malvinas adventure.<sup>122</sup>

In any case, defeat in the war with Great Britain left the military completely discredited and in internal disarray, and virtually devoid of civilian allies, including its erstwhile supporters. Coupled with the ever-worsening economic crisis, the regime decided to abandon power and scheduled open elections for late 1983. On December 10 of that year, Radical Party candidate Raul Alfonsín was inaugurated president of the Argentine Republic, ushering in a new (and hopefully successful) period of democratic politics to that long-suffering nation. One of his first tasks was to move to overcome the negative social legacy of the "Proceso" by opening his government to various sectoral interests while at the same time ordering the prosecution and trial of the military officers that were its leaders. While the trials have concluded with the conviction and sentencing of several of these officers, it remains to be seen if the full range of wounds opened by the "Proceso" will be overcome in the near future.

#### VIII. Conclusion

During its initial phase the "Proceso de Reorganización Nacional" was an exercise in dominio characterized by the systematic application of state terror to complement an economic program that pursued a particular social vision with an overt, (yet differentiated) class content that emerged as a response to -- and was a product of -- the organic crisis that gripped Argentina in March,

1976. The campaign of state terror spanned a range of manifestations that sought to cover the full spectrum of Argentine social life. This included legal and political restrictions designed to weaken the organizational capacity of the excluded social groups to defend their collective interests, "mere" coercion and repression used to enforce these restrictions against those who attempted to defy them, and wholesale state enforcement terrorism that sought to rupture the very fabric of society, disrupt collective identities, and break the individual capacity and will of excluded group members to resist the regime's moves against them. Underscoring this broad range of state terror was a socioeconomic project with a basic class content, both in regards to beneficiaries and victims, as well as in its systematic method and uniformity of direction. State terror was, in effect, applied systematically, rationally, multivariably, and extensively in pursuit of a specific socio-economic project prescribed by the social groups who comprised the historical bloc dominant at that period in time: the agro-export and transnational elites along with their non-class civilian allies and the military hierarchy.

As an exercise in dominio, the "Proceso" was both a sophisticated, yet most crude form of authoritarian rule. Moreover, it was a salient manifestation, if not ultimate expression, of the zero-sum nature of economic and political competition that has plagued Argentina throughout the postwar years, and which lie at the core of the hegemonic stalemate and organic crisis that had brought the nation to the verge of collapse in 1976. Most tragically, it represented a turn backward, to the most egotistical, arrogant, and darker side of the Argentine psyche. For this reason, it is appropriate that we leave Gramsci with the last word. Whatever its purported intentions, the "Proceso" ultimately revealed itself to be "the government of an economic class that did not know how . . . to exercise a hegemony beyond dictatorship. . . It was a reactionary, repressive movement."<sup>123</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The phrase "dichotomy of agrarian and industrial sectors" is offered by J. Girling, "Thailand in Gramscian Perspective," Pacific Affairs V. 57, N. 3 (Fall, 1984), p. 386.

<sup>2</sup>Nor is such an interpretation confined to this particular instance. A number of Latin American analysts have recently used Gramsci's thought to examine political conflict and change in the region, particularly as it applies to national state formation and development. See for example, E. Laclau, "Teorías Marxistas del Estado: Debate y Perspectivas," and F. Rojas H "Estado Capitalista y Aparato Estatal," both in N. Lechner, ed., Estado y Política en America Latina. Mexico, D. F.: Siglo XXI Editores, 1981; M. Kaplan, Aspectos del Estado en America Latina. Mexico, D. F.: UNAM, 1981, Chapter 1; and J.C. Portantiero, "Gramsci para latinoamericanos," in C. Sirvent ed., Gramsci y la Política. Mexico, D. F.: UNAM, 1980.

<sup>3</sup>A. Gramsci, Selections from Political Writings, 1910-1920. Selected and edited by Quintin Hoare, translated by John Mathews. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977, p. 191.

<sup>4</sup>The chaotic situation during the last year of Isabel Peron's government is well summarized by Wayne C. Smith, "The Return of Peronism," in F. Turner and J.E. Miguens, eds., Juan Perón and the Reshaping of Argentina. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1983, pp. 97-146. For a more detailed look at the situation that has a greater sense of immediacy, consult the Argentine daily newspapers Buenos Aires Herald (for an account in English), Clarín, and La Nación for the period July, 1974-March, 1976.

<sup>5</sup>On the general climate of violence and crisis, during the Peronist regime, see Oscar Landi, "Tercera Presidencia de Perón: Gobierno de Emergencia y Crisis Política," Documento CEDES/G.E. CLASCO, N. 10 (January, 1978). For a vivid analysis of the factional in-fighting within the Peronist movement during this period, see R. Gillespie, Soldiers of Perón. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, esp. chs. 3-5.

<sup>6</sup>Clarín, April 1, 1977.

<sup>7</sup>A. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Norwell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971, p. 210.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>"The greater the threat level, the greater the polarization and visibility of the class content of the conflicts that precede implantation of the BA. (Bureaucratic Authoritarian regime). . . a higher threat level lends more weight, within the armed forces, to the 'hard line' groups. . .". The end result is ". . . to provoke a more obvious and drastic defeat of the popular sector and its allies." G. A. O'Donnell, "Reflections on the Patterns of Change in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State," Latin American Research Review, V. 13, N. 1 (Spring, 1978), p. 7. It should be noted that O'Donnell includes the "Proceso" as a type bureaucratic-authoritarian regime.

<sup>10</sup>Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, p. 215.

<sup>11</sup>In fairness to Lopez, it is probable that he would equate "organic crisis" with his category of "major civil war." The fact is, however, that a period of organic crisis can exist that leads to coercive regime change without first transiting through a full-fledged civil war. Notwithstanding the high level of violence and extent of organization of guerrilla groups in Argentina during the period immediately preceding the military's assumption of power, this challenge never reached the proportions of those confronting,

say, Somoza in Nicaragua in 1979, and the outcome in any case was exactly the reverse. See G. A. Lopez, "A Scheme for the Analysis of Government as Terrorist," in The State as Terrorist: The Dynamics of Governmental Violence and Repression. Edited by Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984, pp. 59-62.

<sup>12</sup>One need only to think back on the genocidal practices of a variety of regimes spread throughout history to get an idea of the prevalence of "official" terror in human society. On this general point and its derivations in the late twentieth century, see M. Stohl and G. A. Lopez, "Introduction" in *ibid.*, pp. 3-7.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup>This is the third definition of terrorism given in The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. Boston: Mifflin, 1969, p. 1330, cited *ibid.*, and emphasized by the authors.

<sup>15</sup>A. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, p. 57.

<sup>16</sup>Perry Anderson, "The Antimonies of Antonio Gramsci," New Left Review, N. 100 (1977), p. 32. "Monopoly of legitimate violence over a given territory" of course refers to Weber's basic definition of the State.

<sup>17</sup>A. Gramsci, Letters from Prison. Selected, translated, and introduced by Lynne Lawner. London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1975, p. 204 (letter written to his sister-in-law Tania from the penal colony of Turi dated September 7, 1931).

<sup>18</sup>P. Anderson, "The Antimonies of Antonio Gramsci," p. 26.

<sup>19</sup>Stohl and Lopez, "Introduction," p. 7.

<sup>20</sup>Steven I. Jackson and Duncan Snidal, "Coercion as a Policy Instrument in Dependent States." Paper presented at the International Studies Association annual meeting, March 19-22, 1980, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup>A. Gramsci, L'Ordine Nuovo, 7; Il materialismo storico, pp. 199-200, cited in Gwyn A. Williams, "The Concept of 'Egemonia' in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some Notes on Interpretation," Journal of the History of Ideas, V. 21, N. 4 (December, 1960), p. 594.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 591.

<sup>23</sup>For a good summary of the evolution of the concept of hegemony in Marxist thought, see P. Anderson, "The Antimonies of Antonio Gramsci," pp. 15-27. For an highly lucid addition to the literature, see E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. London: Verso, 1985.

<sup>24</sup>Gwyn A. Williams, "The Concept of 'Egemonia' in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some Notes on Interpretation," p. 587.

<sup>25</sup>A. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, p. 161.

<sup>26</sup>Lenin's views of hegemony as being a class dictatorship imposed by force are well known, and expounded upon at length in a variety of essays. For a representative sample, see his Selected Works (1 Vol.). N.Y.: International Publications, 1971, pp. 117, 126, 281, 404-429, 485-488, 503-505, 643, 711.

<sup>27</sup>T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," American Historical Review, V. 90, N. 3 (June 1985), p. 570.

<sup>28</sup>Jungwoon Choi, "The English Ten-Hours Act: Official Knowledge and the Collective Interest of the Ruling Class," Politics and Society, V. 13, N. 4 (1984), p. 456.

<sup>29</sup>For a good appraisal of political culture with reference to the Argentine context, see Scott Mainwaring and Eduardo Viola, "New Social Movements, Political Culture, and Democracy: Brazil and Argentina," Telos, N. 61 (Fall, 1984), p. 18.

<sup>30</sup>Lenin, Selected Works, op. cit.

<sup>31</sup>T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," pp. 568-569.



<sup>32</sup>On the notion of Historic Memory as a critical part of human social organization and how trauma affects it, see G. Holton, "Reflections on Modern Terrorism," Terrorism V. 1 No. 3/4 (1978), pp. 267-273.

<sup>33</sup>Sergio Zemeño, "Las Fracturas del Estado en America Latina," in N. Lechner, Estado y Política en America Latina, p. 69.

<sup>34</sup>See Fernando Rojas H., "Estado Capitalista y Aparato Estatal," *ibid.*, p. 158-171.

<sup>35</sup>Jackson and Snidal, "Coercion as a Policy Instrument in Dependent States," p. 26.

<sup>36</sup>John Sloan, "State Repression and Enforcement Terrorism in Latin America," in Stohl and Lopez, The State as Terrorist, p. 83.

<sup>37</sup>W. L. Adamson, Hegemony and Revolution. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, p. 86.

<sup>38</sup>Fernando Rojas H., "Estado Capitalista y Aparato Estatal," p. 171. On Gramsci's notion of "relation of forces," see Selections from the Prison Notebooks, pp. 180-185.

<sup>39</sup>Fernando Rojas H., "Estado Capitalista y Aparato Estatal," p. 157.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>41</sup>Gwyn A. Williams, "The Concept of 'Egemonia' in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some Notes on Interpretation," p. 591.

<sup>42</sup>John Sloan, "State Repression and Enforcement Terrorism in Latin America," p. 83.

<sup>43</sup>Alain Rouquié, "El Poder Militar en la Argentina de Hoy: Cambio y Continuidad," in P. Waldmann and E. Garzon Valdez, eds., El Poder Militar en la Argentina, 1976-1981. Buenos Aires: Editorial Galerna, 1983, p. 73.

<sup>44</sup>Christine Buci-Glucksmann, Gramsci and the State. London: Lawrence and Wishart, Ltd., 1980, p. 91.

<sup>45</sup>G. A. O'Donnell, "Tensions in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State," in D. Collier, ed., The New Authoritarianism in Latin America. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

<sup>46</sup>According to O'Donnell, "bureaucratic-authoritarianism" is a form of rule which has as its principal social base the upper bourgeoisie, is directed by specialists in technology and coercion, involves the political and economic exclusion of the popular sectors, suppression of basic rights of citizenship for much of the population, increased transnationalization of the productive structure, and the depolitization of social issues. See *ibid.*, pp. 291-294 for a more precise definition.

<sup>47</sup>Nicos Poulantzas, "The Problem of the Capitalist State," in R. Blackburn, ed., Ideology in the Social Sciences. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972, p. 246.

<sup>48</sup>Dante Caputo, "Balance Provisorio," in El Poder Militar en la Argentina, 1976-1981, p. 129.

<sup>49</sup>Selections from the Prison Notebooks, p. 367.

<sup>50</sup>T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," pp. 571-572.

<sup>51</sup>Antonio Gramsci, Quaderni del carcere, 4 Vols. Edited by V. Gerratana. Turin: Einaudi, 1975, Notebook 7, fragment 80. Cited in Buci-Glucksmann, Gramsci and the State, p. 99.

<sup>52</sup>Alain Rouquié, Interview published in Resumen de la Actualidad, N. 88, March 23, 1983, p. 23. For a deeper look at the antecedents and characteristics of this military "colonization" of the Argentina state during the "Proceso," see his Pouvoir Militaire et Société Politique en République Argentine. Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1978 (published in Spanish under the title Poder Militar y Sociedad Política en la República Argentina. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1982).

<sup>53</sup>N. Poulantzas, "The Problem of the Capitalist State," p. 246.

<sup>54</sup>The size of the domestic bourgeoisie was first expanded by the import-substitution industrialization program begun before and accelerated by the Peronist regime of 1946-1955. The primary instrument of expansion was exponential growth in the national state bureaucracy and public enterprises. See Julio Mafud, Sociología del Peronismo. Buenos Aires: Editora Americalee, 1972, especially pp. 131-132. On the growth of the public sector in Argentina, see Juan Lazarte, La Burocracia. . . Sentido y Significado. Buenos Aires: Catedra Lisandro de la Torre, 1960. For an orthodox view of the role played by the ISI program in Argentine economic history, see Carlos Diaz Alejandro, Essays on the Economic History of the Argentine Republic. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, pp. 67-passim.

<sup>55</sup>N. Poulantzas, "The Problem of the Capitalist State," p. 247.

<sup>56</sup>For a detailed look at the regime's "organic" view of Argentine society as suffering from the "cancers" of subversion, economic instability, and social disorder, see Republica Argentina, Documentos Básicos y Bases Políticas de las Fuerzas Armadas para el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional. Buenos Aires: Junta Militar de la Nación, 1980. Also see "Acta fijando el Propósito y los Objetivos Básicos para el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional," Boletín Oficial, March 29, 1976.

<sup>57</sup>I do not, however, claim exclusive market on point of view. I do believe that better understanding of a given situation is achieved by presenting alternative, and hopefully complementary conceptualizations of the problem. For a view that holds that the Marxist tradition deals inadequately with the notion of political repression, see John F. McCamant, "Governance without Blood: Social Science's Antispetic View of Rule; or, the Neglect of Political Repression," in The State as Terrorist, pp. 25-29.

<sup>56</sup>See for example, the personnel characteristics of the Onganía regime (1966-1970) offered in Mariano C. Grondona, "La Estructura Cívico-Militar del Nuevo Estado Argentino," Aportes, N. 6 (October 1967), pp. 66-76; and the personnel descriptions of the regimes that governed from 1955 to 1969 offered in Jorge Niosi, Los Empresarios y el Estado Argentino (1955-1969). Buenos Aires: SIGLO XXI, 1974.

<sup>58</sup>Data on the extent to which the state apparatus was militarized during the "Proceso" is found in Paul G. Buchanan, Regime Change and State Development in Postwar Argentina, unpublished dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, 1985. Also see Oscar Oszlak, "Políticas Públicas y Régimenes Políticos: Reflexiones a Partir de Algunas Experiencias Latino-americanas," Estudios CEDES, V. 3, N. 2 (1980), pp. 28-33; and Rouquié, Poder Militar y Sociedad Política en la República Argentina.

<sup>60</sup>The anti-Peronism of the Argentine armed forces, and the Navy in particular, initiated in the social origins and mores of the military hierarchy (in the case of the Navy traditionally divided between the landed aristocracy and Buenos Aires-based bourgeoisie), and was compounded by their fundamental disagreement with Perón over the composition and course of Argentine society as well as the character of his rule. Despite divisions within the military hierarchy over the Peronist "problem" (especially within the Army), this stance has remained unchanged under non-Peronist regimes throughout the postwar period. On the social origins of the Argentine military hierarchy, see José Luis de Imaz, Los Que Mandan. Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1964, pp. 45-84.

<sup>61</sup>Oszlak, p. 29; Rouquié, Poder Militar y Sociedad Política en la República Argentina. For a more specific look at national health and labor administration under the "Proceso," see Buchanan, Regime Change and State Development in Postwar Argentina, chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>62</sup>For an initial description of the role of civilian "technocrats" within a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime, specifically the regime that ruled Argentina from 1966-1973, see Guillermo A. O'Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974, and his El Estado Burocrático-Autoritario. Buenos Aires: Editorial Belgrano, 1982.

<sup>63</sup>Ronaldo Munck, Politics and Dependency in the Third World: The Case of Latin America. London: Zed Books, Ltd., 1984, p. 298.

<sup>64</sup>For a good description of this diversification and the reasons for it, see A. Rouquié, "Héegemonia Militar, Estado, y Dominación Social," and R. Sidicaro, "Poder y Crisis de la Gran Burguesia Agraria Argentina," both in Rouquié, ed., Argentina Hoy. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1982.

<sup>65</sup>The notion of a segmental, bifrontal "capture" of certain branches of the state is elaborated in G.A. O'Donnell, "Corporatism and the Question of the State," in J. Malloy, Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977. The notion of relative state autonomy of the Argentine state under the "Proceso" is discussed comparatively by A. Stepan, "State Power and the Strength of Civil Society in the Southern Cone of Latin America," in P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, and T. Skocpol, eds, Bringing the State Back In. Cambridge University Press, 1985. A more detailed discussion of the relative autonomy of health and labor administration under the "Proceso" (and several of the preceding regimes) is found in P.G. Buchanan, Regime Change and State Development in Postwar Argentina.

<sup>66</sup>The bibliography documenting these attempts is too extensive to mention in its totality, but a good idea of their general thrust can be obtained from O'Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism; Gary Wynia, Argentina in the Postwar Era. Albuquerque, N. M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1978; and Joseph Page, Perón: A Biography. New York: Random House, 1983.

<sup>67</sup>On both the orientation of the "liberal" economic team and the role of "orthodox" stabilization policies under bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes, see O'Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism, and R. Frenkel and G. A. O'Donnell, "The 'Stabilization Programs' of the International Monetary Fund and Their Internal Impacts," in R. Fagen, ed., Capitalism and the State in U.S.-Latin American Relations. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979, pp. 171-216. For a good examination of previous economic stabilization programs in Argentina as they related to the use of repression, see David Pion-Berlin, "The Political Economy of State Repression in Argentina," in The State as Terrorist, pp. 99-122.

<sup>68</sup>One earlier study that does make a significant step in this direction -- to the point of using the notion of "hegemonic crisis" to explain the underlying motives for military coups -- is José Nun, "The Middle Class Coup Revisited," in A. Lowenthal, ed., Armies and Politics in Latin America. New York: Holmes and Meier, Publishers Inc., 1976, pp. 49-86.

<sup>69</sup>N. Mouzelis, "On the Rise of Postwar Military Dictatorships: Argentina, Chile, Greece," Comparative Studies in Society and History, V.28 (1986), p. 80

<sup>70</sup>Adolfo Canitrot, "La Disciplina como Objetivo de la Política Económica. Un Ensayo sobre el Programa Económico del Gobierno Argentino desde 1976," Desarrollo Económico, V. 19, N. 76 (January-March 1980), p. 454.

<sup>71</sup>On the objectives of the "Proceso", as well as the perceived need to return to the "traditional" values of Argentine society, see "Acta fijando el Propósito y los Objetivos Básicos para el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional" and Documentos Básicos y Bases Políticas de las Fuerzas Armada para el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional. (both cited in ff. 56). For a view of what this meant in terms of society itself, with specific reference to the educational system, see A. Spitta, "El 'Proceso de Reorganización Nacional' de 1976 a

1981: los objetivos básicos y su realización práctica," in El Poder Militar en la Argentina, 1976-1981, especially pp. 90-100.

<sup>72</sup>For a general look at the move towards industrialization and its ramifications, see Diaz Alejandro, Essays on the Economic History of the Argentine Republic, pp. 67-140, 208-276, 309-350. Also see Wynia, Argentina in the Postwar Era for a good general examination of the relationship between economic policy and political behavior during the postwar period.

<sup>73</sup>This discussion of the diagnosis and prescriptions offered by the "liberal" economic team during the "Proceso" is based on Canitrot, "La Disciplina como Objetivo de la Política Económica," pp. 458-461.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 459-460.

<sup>75</sup>Aldo Ferrer, "La Economía Argentina Bajo Una Estrategia 'Preindustrial,' 1976-1981," in Argentina Hoy, p. 105.

<sup>76</sup>R. Sidicaro, "Poder y Crisis de la Gran Burguesía Agraria Argentina," ibid., p. 89.

<sup>77</sup>On this point, see ibid., pp. 90-91 and Rouquié, "Hegemonía Militar, Estado, y Dominación Social," pp. 48-49.

<sup>78</sup>José A. Martínez de Hoz (h), speech given on April 2, 1976, cited in La Prensa, April 3, 1976.

<sup>79</sup>The term comes from P. Samuelson, in a speech given to open the 60th World Economic Congress in Mexico City, August 4, 1980, and cited in F. Delich, "Desmovilización social, reestructuración obrera, y cambio sindical," in El Poder Militar en la Argentina, 1976-1981, p. 104.

<sup>80</sup>On the composition and distribution of the labor force in Argentina, see Juan José Llach, "Estructura ocupacional y dinámica del empleo en la Argentina: Sus peculiaridades, 1947-1970," Desarrollo Económico, V. 18 (October-December, 1978), 539-592; and his "Estructura y dinámica del empleo en la Argentina desde 1947," CEIL, Documento de Trabajo, N. 2 (1978).

<sup>81</sup>Besides the collection of essays in the edited volumes Argentina Hoy and El Poder Militar en la Argentina, 1976-1981, see the two essays by Adolfo Canitrot, "La Disciplina como Objetivo de la Política Económica" (cited previously), and "Teoría y Práctica del Liberalismo. Política Antiinflacionaria y apertura económica en la Argentina, 1976-1981," Desarrollo Económico, V. 21, N. 82 (July-September 1981), pp. 131-190.

<sup>82</sup>The primary measures enacted to this effect were Decrees 9, 10, and 11 of March 24, 1976 (which suspended union activities and outlawed all unions and the CGE), Law 21, 261 of March 24, 1976 (which declared illegal all strikes, work stoppages, etc.), Law 21, 270 of March 1976 (which placed over 100 unions under military control), Law 21, 271 of March 24, 1976 (which placed CGT resources under military control) and Law 21, 356 of July 22, 1976 (which declared illegal all unions congresses and elections, etc.) For these and other related measures, see the Boletín de Legislación, Vols. 18 and 19 (1976 and 1977).

<sup>83</sup>Data on real wages comes from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo (INDEC), published in Clarín Internacional, October 31, 1982, Section 2, p. 4; data on worker's percentage of the national income comes from INDEC, cited in Clarín Internacional, December 5, 1982, p. 6. It should be noted that Argentine government figures on these economic indicators and others such as unemployment rates during this period are widely believed to be seriously underestimated.

<sup>84</sup>Law 21, 274/March 29, 1976. Boletín de Legislación, V. 18, N. 4 (April, 1976), pp. 119-120. On the effects of this measure and others on public employee unions, see L. E. Dimase, "La Política económico-social inaugurada en 1976 y sus efectos en los sindicatos que nuclean trabajadores de empresas estatales," Revista CIAS, V. 30, N. 301 (April 1981), pp. 33-61.



<sup>85</sup>Argentina Outreach, V. 1 (November-December 1976), pp. 1-3 has a good description of the events surrounding the firing of these workers.

<sup>86</sup>José A. Martínez de Hoz, speech given on January 2, 1980, cited in F. Delich, "Después del Diluvio, La Clase Obrera," in Argentina Hoy, p. 137. Also see Martínez de Hoz, Bases para una Argentina Moderna, 1976-1980. Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Economía, 1981, pp. 39-58 for a more detailed discussion of the "rationalization" program.

<sup>87</sup>Figures derived from INDEC, cited in Clarín Internacional, September 20 1982, section 2, p. 7.

<sup>88</sup>Aldo Ferrer, "La Economía Argentina bajo una Estrategia Preindustrial, 1976-1981," pp. 115-116, 117.

<sup>89</sup>The growth rate was 2.1 percent annually. See *ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>90</sup>Jorge Schwarzer, "Estrategia industrial y grandes empresas: el caso argentino," Desarrollo Económico, V. 18 (October-December 1978), p. 341; A. Rouquié, "Hegemonía Militar, Estado, y Dominación Social," pp. 48-49.

<sup>91</sup>On this point, see F. Delich, "Después del Diluvio, La Clase Obrera," pp. 138-139; and A. Canitrot, "La Disciplina como Objetivo Económico," pp. 465-466.

<sup>92</sup>I am indebted to Carlos Hugo Acuña for clarifying this point.

<sup>93</sup>The notion of social groups operating at four different levels, particularly the organized working class, is derived from Delich, "Después del Diluvio, La Clase Obrera," p. 137.

<sup>94</sup>Law 22, 105/November 7, 1979. Boletín de Legislación, V. 21, N. 2 (July-December, 1979), pp. 181-190.

<sup>95</sup>Decree 2, 562/October 17, 1979. Boletín de Legislación, V. 21, N. 2 (July-December 1979), p. 197. It was not entirely coincidental that this measure was passed on the day traditionally celebrated by Peronists as "their"

national holiday (October 17, 1945 being the date Perón was freed from prison after a day-long demonstration on his behalf in front of the government house by a huge crowd of working class supporters).

<sup>96</sup>Statement published in La Prensa, October 23, 1979.

<sup>97</sup>For a good examination of the full scope of these measures, particularly as they were applied to the labor movement, see B. Gallitelli and A. Thompson, eds., Sindicalismo y Régimenes Militares en Argentina y Chile. Amsterdam: Centro de Estudios y Documentación Latinoamericanos (CEDLA), 1982, Part 2: "Argentina, Sindicalismo y Régimen Militar," pp. 91-225 (essays by Falcón, Gallitelli and Thompson, and Munck).

<sup>98</sup>On the impact of these more "subtle" forms of coercion on society, and within the educational system in particular, see A. Spitta, "El 'Proceso de Reorganización Nacional' de 1976 a 1981: los objetivos básicos y su realización practica," pp. 80-83, 90-97.

<sup>99</sup>On the notion of hegemony preceeding the conquest of political power, see Nicos Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes. London: New Left Books, 1974, pp. 190-210. On the role of "ideological apparatuses" (or what Gramsci called hegemonic apparatuses) in the achievement of hegemony see Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971, pp. 143-148.

<sup>100</sup>The portion of the national budget allocated to these sectors fell from 6 percent in 1975 to less than 3 percent in 1981. See S. Belmartino, C. Bloch, and Z. T. de Quinteros, "El Programa de Estabilización Económica y las Políticas de Salud y Bienestar Social: 1976-1980," Cuadernos Medico Sociales, N. 18 (October 1981), pp. 25-26; J. Bello, "Política de Salud 1976/81. Aporte para la evaluación de un proceso," Cuadernos Medico Sociales, N. 23 (March 1983), pp. 25-28; M. B. Gonzales, "Health Care: Another Victim

of the Junta," Latinamerica Press, V. 15, N. 30 (August 25, 1983), p. 6; and Buchanan, Regime Change and State Development in Postwar Argentina, chapter 4.

<sup>101</sup>Belmartino, Bloch, and de Quinteros, "El Programa de Estabilización Económica y las Políticas de Salud y Bienestar Social: 1976-1980," pp. 26-30; Bello, "Política de Salud 1976/81. Aporte para la evaluación de un proceso," pp. 28-30.

<sup>102</sup>For an excellent study of the effects of these measures on individual strategies for securing health and welfare services, see Juan J. Llovet, Servicios de Salud y Sectores Populares. Los Años del Proceso. Buenos Aires: CEDES, 1984. For a general view of the regime's health program and its effects, see S. Bermann and J. C. Escudero, "Health in Argentina under the Military Junta," International Journal of Health Services, V. 8, N. 3 (1978), pp. 531-540.

<sup>103</sup>Belmarinto, Bloch, and de Quinteros, "El Programa de Estabilización Económica y las Políticas de Salud y Bienestar Social: 1976-1980," pp. 31-32; Bello, "Política de Salud 1976/81. Aporte para la evaluación de un proceso," pp. 21-26; Gonzales, "Health Care: Another Victim of the Junta," pp. 6-7; and Bermann and Escudero, "Health in Argentina under the Military Junta," p. 534.

<sup>104</sup>On these strikes and the regime's response to them, see Ricardo Falcón, "Conflicto Social y Régimen Militar. La Resistencia Obrera en Argentina (Marzo 1976-Marzo 1981)," in Sindicalismo y Régimenes Militares en Argentina y Chile, pp. 91-139; and Leon E. Bieber, "El movimiento laboral argentino a partir de 1976," in El Poder Militar en la Argentina, 1976-1981, pp. 116-122.

<sup>105</sup>The most prominent case was that of Jacobo Timerman, publisher of the newspaper La Opinión, who complained in a number of editorials in 1976 that the scope of the repressive campaign was unwarranted. For his troubles, in 1977 this erstwhile supporter of the military regime (and long-term anti-

Peronist and golpista) was arrested and jailed without charge, where he was subjected to physical and psychological torture. Amid intense international pressure, he was released and deported to Israel in 1979. For his version of events, see Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number. New York: Random House, 1981. Unlike Timerman, there were dozens of other journalists who never re-appeared after their arrests.

<sup>106</sup>The atrocities committed by the military regime have received considerable international attention, and have been well documented by various organizations. Among others, see the human rights reports issued periodically by the Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos, Centro de Estudios Legales (CELS) and Servicio Paz y Justicia, all of Buenos Aires, as well as those of Amnesty International, Americas Watch, the O.A.S., and the U.S. government during the period 1976-1980. The description of the activities and methods of the paramilitary squads offered here is derived from these sources and others, as well as from personal interviews conducted in Buenos Aires in 1983.

<sup>107</sup>Astiz is currently on trial in Buenos Aires on charges of torture and murder. His capture by British forces in 1982 sparked an international uproar, as victims living in exile in Europe, Canada and the United States tried to have him extradited to stand trial in their respective jurisdictions. As a prisoner of war, he was returned to Argentina in the prisoner exchange that followed the cessation of hostilities. Vivid testimony of his actions at the Naval Mechanics School has been reported extensively in the Argentine press, particularly during the Fall of 1984, when his trial began. See Clarín, October-December 1984, for an almost daily recompilation of these events.

<sup>108</sup>Revelations of these and other methodical applications of terror (existence of concentration camps, use of crematoria, mass executions, secret gravesites, etc.) have been extensively documented by the investigative commission (the Sabato Commission) charged by President Alfonsín with determi-

ning the extent of human rights violations and fate of these who "disappeared" during the "Proceso." See the Informe de la Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas. Buenos Aires: Presidencia de la Nación, Secretaria de Información, September 1984. Additional information on the "dirty war" surfaced during the trial of nine former junta members (all military officers) recently concluded in Buenos Aires.

<sup>109</sup>Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, p. 232.

<sup>110</sup>Gramsci, Quaderni del carcere, Vol. 2, pp. 808-809, cited in P. Anderson, "The Antimonies of Antonio Gramsci," p. 31.

<sup>111</sup>Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos, Lista de los Detenidos-Desaparecidos. Buenos Aires: n.d., 1981, p. 4. Also see B. Gallitelli and A. Thompson, "La Situación Laboral en la Argentina del 'Proceso,' 1976-1981," in Sindicalismo y Régimenes Militares en Argentina y Chile, pp. 152-157.

<sup>112</sup>"Después del Diluvio, La Clase Obrera," p. 140.

<sup>113</sup>Falcón, "Conflicto Social y Régimen Militar. La Resistencia Obrera en Argentina (Marzo 1976-Marzo 1981)," p. 98.

<sup>114</sup>Gallitelli and Thompson, "La Situación Laboral en la Argentina del 'Proceso,' 1976-1981," pp. 150-151.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., pp. 155-156.

<sup>116</sup>See the petition filed by the Transportation Workers of America (AFL-CIO) before the Civil Aeronautics Board on July 31, 1979, charging Aérolíneas Argentinas (which was managed by the Air Force) with unfair labor practices. Also see "Exporting Repression -- Argentina Style," Soho News, V. 6, N. 44 (August 2-8, 1979).

<sup>117</sup>See Timerman, Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number, for the role anti-semitism played in his abduction and subsequent incarceration, as well as within the "dirty war" in general. There is a fairly extensive literature on the subject of anti-semitism under the "Proceso." Among others,

see R. Weisbrot, "The Seige of the Argentine Jews," New Republic, V. 184 (June 27, 1981), pp. 16-21; and G. W. Wynia, "The Argentine Revolution Falters," Current History, V. 81, N. 2 (February 1982), pp. 74-77, 87-88.

<sup>118</sup>Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, p. 54 (note 4).

<sup>119</sup>This notion of individual regression under conditions of state terror leading to a wide-spread condition of alienation within excluded social groups paraphrases the argument developed by Guillermo A. O'Donnell at the "Seminar on Issues on Democracy and Democratization, North and South," held at the Kellogg Institute, University of Notre Dame, on November 14-16, 1983. Any errors of interpretation or misidentification are my own. For a more precise analysis of O'Donnell's views, see Carlos H. Acuna and Robert Barros, "Issues on Democracy and Democratization: North and South -- A Rapporteur's Report." Kellogg Institute Working Paper N. 30 (October 1984), pp. 9-10.

<sup>120</sup>I first heard this phrase in 1983 while in Buenos Aires, used by the children of a friend who as a Peronist Youth leader had been forced underground for five years in order to avoid the security apparatus (since he was marked for "disappearance"). I later discovered that it was a phrase commonly used by Argentine children to scare each other, much in the way my five year old talks about ghosts and monsters. In their case, however, the monsters were very real.

<sup>121</sup>This account of the final two phases of the "Proceso" is drawn from the analyses offered in Andrés Fontana, "Fuerzas Armadas, Partidos Políticos y Transición a la Democracia en Argentina 1981-1982," Kellogg Institute Working Paper N. 28 (July, 1984); and David Pion-Berlin, "The Fall of Military Rule in Argentina: 1976-1983," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, V. 27, N. 4 (Summer, 1985), pp. 55-76.

<sup>122</sup>For a sampling of views on the Falklands/Malvinas campaign from an Argentine perspective, see Carlos Altamirano, "Lecciones de una guerra," Punto de Vista, V. 1 (August-October, 1982); and Guillermo Makin, "Argentine

Approaches to the Falklands/Malvinas: Was the Resort to Violence Foreseeable?" International Affairs, V. 59 (Summer, 1983), pp. 391-403.

<sup>123</sup>Gramsci, Letters from Prison, p. 205 (letter written to this sister-in-law Tania from the prison colony of Turi, September 7, 1931). I must note that in writing about the medieval communes (from which this quote is taken), Gramsci stated that they "did not know how to create (their) own category of intellectuals" and thus could not exercise hegemony. In the case of the "Proceso," Martínez de Hoz and his "liberal" cadre were the regime's intellectuals, but they had no interest in exercising hegemony, just class domination.





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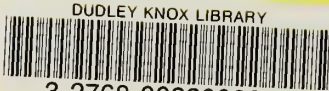
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