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PARALLEL TRANSFORMATIONS: LABOR AND GOVERNMENT IN ARGENTINA, 1915-1922[1]

John Starosta Galante[2]

El presente artículo aborda las primeras etapas de la colaboración trabajadores-gobierno en la Argentina en fines de la década de 1910 e inicios de 1920. Se analiza la experiencia del Movimiento Sindical que en 1915 mantenía el liderazgo en la Federación Regional de Trabajadores de Argentina, anteriormente controlada por las tendencias anarquistas. Se observa centralmente el proceso durante un periodo de muy controvertidos encuentros entre los sindicatos y el Partido Radical, que en 1916 gana la elección presidencial Argentina, dando fin a un periodo de cuatro décadas de dominio del Partido Autonomista Nacional. Una vez en el poder, Sindicalistas y Radicales se involucraron en una (inconsistente y oportunista, si se quiere) colaboración sin predecentes.

Palabras claves: Argentina, Buenos Aires, Sindicalismo, Partido Radical, Hipólito Yrigoyen, Imigración italiana, Inmigrantes italianos.

This paper explores the early stages of labor-government collaboration in Argentina during the late 1910s and early 1920s. It does so through the experiences of the Syndicalist movement, which in 1915 secured the leading position in the formerly Anarchist-led Argentine Regional Workers Federation during a highly contested meeting of labor unions, and the Radical Party, which in 1916 won Argentina's presidential election and ended over four decades of political dominance by the National Autonomist Party. Once in power, Syndicalists and Radicals engaged in an unprecedented, if inconsistent and opportunistic, collaboration that illuminates a crucial part of the extended transition between the Anarchist-PAN period of labor-government confrontation and Peronism's fusion of organized labor and politics. The Syndicalists and Radicals' parallel rise and turbulent relationship, this paper argues, were built upon similarities in their ideological outlooks, organizational and

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mobilization strategies, approaches to class conflict, and membership that included large numbers of children of immigrants.

Keywords: Argentina, Buenos Aires, Syndicalism, Radical Party, Hipolito Yrigoyen, Italian inmmigration, Italian immigrants.

INTRODUCTION[3]

Two topics dominate the historiography of working-class mobilization and labor-government relations in Argentina during the first half of the twentieth century. One centers on the influence of – and opposition to – Anarchism during the early stages of economic modernization beginning in the late-nineteenth century. Many newly arrived immigrants adopted an ideology that was anti-government at its core and extreme in its approach to labor activism in order to confront marginalization from an inhospitable political system and often hostile government authorities.[4] The other centers on Peronism in the 1940s and 1950s, when the power of President Juan Perón and his wife Eva reached its apogee. Their political, economic and social programs and rhetoric represented a comprehensive fusion of government, organized labor and popular mobilization. Peronism also incorporated potent elements of Argentine nationalism into the construction of labor-government relations.[5]

The period of transition between these very different narratives receives less attention. Thusly, this paper uses periodicals, labor pamphlets, government reports, recorded meeting minutes and other sources to shed additional light on an important piece of this transition. First, it examines the parallel rise of Syndicalism as the dominant force in Argentina's labor movement and the emergence of the Radical Party as the leading actor in Argentine politics in the late 1910s and early 1920s. Second, it explores the unprecedented degree of cooperation, however inconsistent and opportunistic, that took place between the Syndicalist-led labor movement and the Radical-led government during the period. Third, it outlines a number of similar attributes possessed by Syndicalists and Radicals that helped facilitate, and help us understand, the movement toward greater labor-government collaboration. In doing so, this study underscores that despite the presence of violence and radical points of view –those alluring themes so often the subject of Argentine historiography–

[3] Research conducted in Buenos Aires for this paper was supported by grants from the Center for Latin American Studies and the Department of History at the University of Pittsburgh. The author is currently working on a doctoral dissertation about the impacts of the First World War on Italian communities in Buenos Aires, Montevideo and São Paulo.

[4] For recent scholarship on Anarchism, see Albornoz (2010) and Suriano (2010).

[5] For recent scholarship on Peronism, see Elena (2011) and Baschetti (2010).

moderation and pragmatism nevertheless have a profound presence in the history of organized labor, politics and labor-government relations in Argentina.

Some scholarship exists on the Syndicalist movement and the Radical Party, and the latter's leadership during the so-called Democratic Experiment from 1916 to 1930 in particular. Yet the work of Ricardo Falcón, Marcela Ferrari, Joel Horowitz, Ronaldo Munck, David Rock and Ruth Thompson (to name a few) most often pursues Syndicalist-Radical interaction from one group's perspective or the other's. An alternative, parallel analytical approach enables a more robust discussion of their similarities in terms of beliefs, strategies and identities that facilitated the formation of this relationship. As this paper will show, these interrelated attributes included (1) an emphasis on action rather than ideological idealism, (2) the construction of organizations seeking to overcome customary divisions within politics and organized labor, (3) the pursuit of a more moderate approach to the class struggle, one built around negotiation rather than conflict, and (4) the early consolidation of hybrid ethnic identities particularly visible through the children of Italian immigrants.

In short, this period of Syndicalist-Radical collaboration represented an important transition in patterns of labor-government relations in Argentina as moderate points of view moved to replace more radical traditions, inclusion arose to replace exclusion as an organizing principle, negotiation began to replace acts of violence, and shared hybrid notions of ethnic identity emerged to replace patterns of disconnect between an immigrant-dominated working class and a xenophobic political sphere. Rather than driven by one side or the other, Syndicalists and Radicals together represented a transformation from the societal fragmentation of the turn-of-the-century and provided a framework for partnership between labor and government.

RADICAL TRADITIONS AND MODERATE ALTERNATIVES

Argentina's experience is often portrayed as the textbook case (literally) of the export-boom period experienced throughout Latin America from the mid-nineteenth century to the Great Depression. In Argentina, the elite-run National Autonomist Party (PAN) – in power from 1880 – oversaw processes of agricultural sector expansion, infrastructure development, early industrialization and other projects to modernize the country along North Atlantic models. The economy benefited greatly from capital inflows, improved transportation and packing technologies, strong global demand for agricultural exports and the manifold labors of working classes. In politics, however, traditions of patronage and electoral fraud remained. For Luis Alberto Romero, this system was "impeccably republican, though designed to distance voters from the most important decisions, removing them somewhat from

the ‘popular will’” (Romero, 2002: 13). Party bosses were a collection of provincial leaders insulated from the middle and working classes in overlapping structures of economic, social, cultural and political exclusivity. In the social sphere, the PAN collaborated with a group of intellectuals influenced by positivism to answer the “social question” that accompanied economic modernization. These “social pathologists,” according to Julia Rodríguez, were empowered as “elites had convinced themselves that a sense of stability and order must be established for progress to occur and that scientific ingenuity and state power must join forces to resist new forms of barbarism” (Rodríguez, 2006: 5). Such “barbarism” centered on expanding immigrant working-class neighborhoods in Buenos Aires.

Some 3.4 million European immigrants arrived in Argentina between 1857 and 1910, the final years of which were the peak but not the end of large immigration waves to the country[6]. Around two million immigrants came from Italy, about half of whom settled permanently. In 1914, Italians represented 39 percent of foreign-born residents in Argentina and 12 percent of the population (the numbers are 10 percent and 1.5 percent, respectively, for the United States) (Klein, 1983: 318). One estimate puts Italian nationals at 25 percent of the population of Buenos Aires in 1910, when together with their children they represented 28 percent of the entire country’s residents.[7] Italians “dominated the manufacturing sector” according to Herbert Klein (1983: 282), aided by their position as one of the first large immigrant groups to arrive (unlike in the US) and relatively high rates of literacy and skills (Klein, 1983: 315). Meanwhile, “Italians became the founders of the first generally ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘international’ labor organizations, and they organized some of the earliest general strikes in the world,” reports Donna Gabaccia (2001: 1). Many immigrants chose not to pursue Argentine citizenship even through the limited channels that existed. Such disenfranchisement – even when self-imposed – added to the profound absence of engagement and dialogue across divides based on ethnic background and class.

Around the turn of the century, excluded sectors of Argentine society grew increasingly organized and pushed for social and political change. For urban workers in Buenos Aires and other Argentine cities, reformist Socialist and revolutionary Anarchist doctrines were prominent in the formation of working-class consciousness, advocacy and militancy. Socialism first gestated in immigrant mutual-aid societies during the 1870s, but by the 1890s it was led mostly by Argentine-born, middle-class intellectuals and professionals, with whom it would be associated through much of the twentieth century[8]. The Socialist newspaper “La Vanguardia”, whose contributors included prominent intellectuals Juan B. Justo, Leopoldo Lugones and

[6]Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos. Immigration data available online at: http://www.cemla.com/documentos/INMIGRACION%20ULTRAMARINA%20EN%20ARGENTINA.pdf
[7] Baily, The Italians and Organized Labor, p. 59.
[8] For additional history of the Socialist Party, see Walter (1977)

Nicolás Repetto, was founded in 1894, the same year José Ingenieros started the University Socialist Center (Munk, Falcón and Galitelli, 1987: 40). Socialist candidate Alfredo Palacios was elected to Congress in 1904, an event challenged by portions of the party as collusion with the reviled PAN and evidence of the Socialists' bourgeois status (Belkin, 2006:28). A Socialist pamphlet published in 1913 illuminates the party's occasionally paternalistic approach to working classes. It used the stereotyped character of Juan Pueblo to describe everyday struggles of workers and detailed the ways Socialist congressmen fought for him. Juan Pueblo was also enjoined not to drink, forget to kiss his children or fail to realize the virtue of education for workers[9].

Anarchism arrived in Argentina alongside crowds of Italian and Spanish immigrants and organizers such as Italians Pietro Gori and Errico Malatesta and Spaniard Antonio Pellicer Paraire ("Pellico") (Thompson, 1990: 169). Anarchist organization based on decentralized units of workers connected in a loose federation fit well with the somewhat diffuse and self-contained characteristics of neighborhoods in turn-of-the-century Buenos Aires. The fledgling industrial sector consisted of small artisan shops with a dozen or so employees[10]. Relationships across immigrant communities were infrequent, even in multi-ethnic tenement buildings (Baily, 1980). Still, anarchists organized local and general strikes, fomented revolutionary sentiment and coordinated worker agitation, while they constructed schools, maintained cultural centers and published dozens of periodicals[11]. The precise ideology of Anarchist factions varied, but all agreed the main enemy was the State[12]. In Argentina, this was a State in which workers had little to no stake.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, efforts by the PAN, Socialists and Anarchists led to moderate advances in social and labor reform. The PAN's "social pathologists" invested in public education and public health to alleviate social ills typified by downtrodden immigrant communities. Parts of the Socialist platform were incorporated into the National Labor Law of 1904. Labor mobilizations, often led by Anarchists, forced the PAN and employer groups to realize that worker demands could not be ignored. In 1907, the government established the National Department of Labor, while the legislature established Sunday as a day off and enacted protections for female and child workers (Munck, 1987: 27). Buenos Aires printers successfully negotiated the country's first collective wage agreement in 1906.

The relationship between labor and government was confrontational and marked by profound distrust, legislative action that would seek to derail working-class

[9] Pueblo, Almanaque socialista, p. 21-23.
[10] See Suriano (2010) for a more detailed explanation.
[11] For detail on Anarchist cultural in Argentina see Suriano (2010).
[12] For a description of the variability within Anarchist thought see Marshall (1992).

organizing (which often encouraged further mobilization), recurring outbreaks of violence and limited dialogue. Across Argentina, the average number of strikes per year jumped from 30 in the 1890s to 150 between 1900 and 1907 (Korzeniewicz, 1989: 75). Roberto Korzeniewicz argues greater proletarianization forced the government to adopt a " new, formalized system of industrial relations" (Korzeniewicz, 1989: 75). Rather than letting disgruntled workers and business owners settle disputes themselves, the government took a more interventionist approach to labor-capital relations, which mostly involved providing assistance to owners. Even after the establishment of the Department of Labor, the police and army remained the front lines of government relations with workers. During the decade of the 1900s, authorities unleashed waves of repression that often ended demonstrations and periods of turmoil with bloodshed and death (Munck, Falcón and Galitelli, 1987: 47).

Following a wave of strikes in 1902, the legislature passed the Residence Law, which facilitated the deportation of foreigners deemed a threat to public order (Suriano, 2010: 1). Anarchist-led collective action occurred regularly despite crackdowns. In 1910, they organized disruptions of centennial celebrations, prompting an unprecedented response that included widespread deportations and the closure of newspapers and union headquarters (Horowitz, 2008: 18). The legislature subsequently passed the Social Defense Law that prohibited known Anarchists from entering the country and those living in Argentina from participating in labor mobilizations. In the face of such repression, "Anarchists increasingly withdrew into a self-enclosed, marginal world of their own," argues Juan Suriano (2010: 230). Socialists denounced the violence and legislation to little effect against the PAN political machine.

The strikes, violence and repression of 1910 were the culmination of a decade of mounting discord between workers on the one hand and employers and the government on the other. The brutality of these events helped to embolden opposition to the Anarchists within the working classes and encourage the PAN's critics in the political sphere. The actions of Anarchists and the PAN attracted increased scrutiny and opened the door for leadership changes in organized labor and politics. During the mid-1910s, the Syndicalists rose to become the main faction within organized labor, while the Radical Party assumed the leading position in politics. Both of them built their support, in part, by promoting themselves as an alternative to existing (failed) leadership, points of view and tactics. It is to their origins and ascent that we now turn.

Syndicalism was, in several ways, a hybrid of Socialism and Anarchism in its origins, ideology and objectives. The Syndicalist movement began as a group of Socialists disgruntled by party participation in mainstream politics. The ideas of Syndicalist

founder Georges Sorel probably arrived in Argentina through Gabriela Laperriere de Coni, a French socialite resident in Argentina (Tarcus, 2007: 354-355), and Julio Árraga, a lawyer who had lived in France (Tarcus, 2007: 26-27). Another theory is that a journalist from Italy's Avanti published a set of articles in "La Vanguardia" that outlined the theories of Italian Syndicalist Arturo Labriola (Del Campo, 2005: 14). Definitively breaking with Socialists in 1906, Syndicalists collaborated with the General Union of Workers (UGT) to form the Argentine Regional Workers' Confederation (CORA) in 1909 (Thompson, 1990: 169-171). According to the lead article in a publication entitled Confederación Obrera Regional Argentina dated March 15, 1910, the CORA "means to take up in the bosom of the proletariat a position of a combatant organization, renovator of revolutionary energies of the workers that long for greater welfare and freedom" (Confederación Obrera Regional Argentina). During the 1910s, Syndicalists made significant advances toward this goal.

Newspapers were an essential tool for organization and propaganda. Publications show that solidarity, organizational growth and a break with the past were primary objectives for Syndicalist leaders. In late 1910, the CORA's "La Acción Obrera" sought to build its following around support for workers expelled under the Residence Law("El momento actual", "La Acción Obrera", November 12, 1910). It championed the potential benefits of collective action, labeling those who remained unaffiliated as "victims," "inferior," and "vanquished ("El aspecto moral del sindicato y la huelga", "La Acción Obrera", November 12, 1910). They impeded the effectiveness of strikes, seen as labor's most potent weapon, and long-term CORA objectives "to destroy all of the conventionalisms of other time periods" ("El alcance de nuestra lucha", "La Acción Obrera", January 14, 1911). Articles encouraged the unification of the CORA with the Anarchist-led FORA to create a "unique and solid worker organization that centralizes the energies of all those affected by bourgeois tyranny" ("La infusión de las organizaciones obreras", "La Acción Obrera", December 24, 1910). Few institutions, reform proposals or people escaped the "bourgeois" label, from the press and the Department of Labor to electoral reform and public education to Socialists and a group of "doctors" who allegedly sought to infiltrate the CORA leadership. Meanwhile, an article entitled "New Orientation", published in 1912 in "La Unión del Marino", the mouthpiece of Syndicalist port workers, called for a more moderate and cooperative approach that could attract larger number ("Nueva orientación", "La Unión del Marino", June 1, 1912). "Ignorance" and "unconsciousness" of the needs and wants of the majority of workers was the reason for low union affiliation numbers. It called for a focus on building systems of cooperation and mutual aid through a reform of the unions' statutes, while underscoring the potential benefits of compromise. It even cast a silver lining around

the crackdown in 1910 because it highlighted the failures of organized labor. The author concluded:

> "Some perhaps will see in our proposition a transgression…we do not believe such a thing, because the only end that we pursue is that the organization escapes the stunted life it has…to form a part of the unions that, through the moral capacity of their components, can in any moment command the respect of the bourgeoisie and the State".

The desire to command respect from government was an important shift from Anarchist abhorrence for the State, as was the Syndicalists' willingness to pursue moderation in exchange for larger membership.

The circulation of pamphlets was another tool used by the Syndicalists to advertise their strategy. Árraga's 1913 "Notions of Syndicalism" is a useful example[13]. He emphasized similarities in the economic position, way of life, interests, problems and needs of workers in an effort to build solidarity against the ruling classes (Árraga, 1913:5). The Socialists' efforts to educate and "moralize" workers were tactics of the bourgeoisie to subordinate workers within the State-capitalist system and to institutionalize that subordination through laws, social reforms and supposedly democratic practices (Árraga, 1913:14-20). "The social problem is economic, not political," Árraga (1913: 10) emphasized. Therefore, the challenge to elites should be economic. Árraga and other Syndicalists felt action should target material improvements – higher wages, more benefits and better working conditions – that could gradually produce the workers' seizure of factors of production. The "new era" in the class struggle represented a transition toward greater solidarity based wholly in the unions and coordinated collective action to engender class autonomy (Árraga, 1913: 23-24). Árraga (1913: 20) presented this position as a response to the "sterile individualist struggles of the Anarchists". Anarchist-style decentralization was insufficient to foment revolutionary change, while their radical tactics and calls for social revolution had been counter-productive[14].

Syndicalist ideology proved suitable to members of Argentina's working classes, evidenced by the Syndicalist seizure of the labor movement leadership in 1915. After repeated attempts by the Syndicalist CORA to merge with the Anarchists' Argentine Regional Workers Federation (FORA), in September 1914, the CORA dissolved itself and encouraged member unions to join the FOR A (Munck, Falcón & Galitelli,

[13] Other pamphlets include Bosio Socialismo político y socialismo obrero, Marinelli Por el derecho obrero and Marotta La federación obrera regional argentina.

[14] Some contemporaries, especially enemies, referred to Syndicalists as Anarcho-Syndicalists, a popular term in Europe. Argentina's Syndicalists shunned the label in an effort to disassociate themselves from Anarchism.

1987). There was an electoral contest for FORA leadership at its ninth congress in 1915 and the Syndicalists took control of the executive committee following the vote (Abad de Santillán, 193: 241-250). A minority of Anarchist hardliners dissatisfied with the change broke away to form the FORA V quintistas, who held onto the anarcho-communist principles of the fifth congress of 1905. The majority that stayed became the FORA IX, which adhered to the Syndicalist principles (and leadership) agreed to during the ninth congress. On May Day 1916, the newly established FORA IX periodical "La Organización Obrera" underlined a strategy for an "integral" emancipation of the workers that involved linking the "revolutionary concept" with the "reformist criteria of the majority"[15]. A more moderate line had procured the leading position in the labor movement.

Alongside changes in organized labor, in politics the rise of the Unión Cívica Radical (Radical Civic Union or the Radical Party) represented a shift away from PAN dominance. Radical origins dated back to political opposition that emerged during the 1890s depression[16]. According to historian Paula Alonso, the party's leader, Leandro Alem, sought a "restoration of the republic" through constitutionalism and the moralistic construction of "good citizens," who could participate in politics and mobilize against illegitimate governments and the concentration of power (Alonso, 2000: 95). After a failed insurrection in 1893 and an unsuccessful attempt at electoral competition, the party disbanded in 1897 (Alonso, 2000: 132). Hipólito Yrigoyen, Alem's nephew, resurrected the Radicals in 1903. Alonso finds little continuity between the periods but notes consistency in "the party's moralistic rhetoric, its form of internal organization, and its persistent refusal to coalesce with other political forces" (Alonso, 2000:2). A failed coup attempt in 1905 engendered popular support for the Radicals from sectors, particularly in the middle class, excluded from full political participation (Rock, 1971: 49-50). Subsequent public demonstrations and high-profile election boycotts further attracted the disenfranchised.

Unrest during the first decade of the twentieth century led even portions of the ruling party to question the utility of voter coercion and other mechanisms of political control. Universal male suffrage was part of the constitution from the mid-nineteenth century, but in 1912, the Sáenz Peña Law instituted and enforced the secret ballot and mandatory voting for all male citizens. Some historians describe the reform as an elite attempt to inoculate against social disturbance by allowing broader participation and limited power sharing[17]. Nevertheless, the Radicals and the Socialist Party made gains in subsequent elections and in 1916 Yrigoyen won the first presidential election following the reform.

[15] "Consideraciones de actualidad", "La Organización Obrera", May 1, 1916.
[16] The UCR formed in 1892 after a split with Unión Cívica.
[17] See Karush (2002), for example.

Radical ideology and policy approaches were quite different from that of the PAN. A series of articles in late 1916 in the leading yrigoyenista daily, “La Epoca”, revealed the new government’s view of itself as a bastion of democratic practices, a representation of popular will and a force for moderation. The day before Yrigoyen’s inauguration, the newspaper argued, “For the first time in the history of Argentina’s institutions, the Executive is a direct product of popular sovereignty” (“Unión Cívica Radical”, “La Epoca”, October 11, 1916). The article described the Radical agenda as “a vigorous and compact nucleus of public opinion” with a vision targeting “the passion of men” to fulfill the “destinies of the nation.” Other articles drew stark contrasts with their PAN predecessors, sardonically referred to as el régimen, or the regime, which was accused of corruption and policy failures (“Cosas del regimen; La percepción de rentas; Graves irregularidades”, “La Epoca”, October 10, 1916). The Radicals’ Socialist competitors also drew criticism, portrayed as incapable of reconciling theory and practice, “horrified and angry Anabaptists” and “out of fashion” (“Socialismo teatral”, “La Epoca”, October 27, 1916; “Los agitado”, “La Epoca”, November 15, 1916 y “Agiraciones sociales”, “La Epoca”, November 17, 1916).

The Radicals’ goal was to construct widespread consensus under the party through greater engagement with the people. A “La Epoca”contributor on October 21, 1916 wrote:

> “The first initiatives of the Executive have signaled an unusual act in the life of relations between the people and government…We are not accustomed to the cordial understanding between the country and the public authorities…when it begins to realize in spirit and in truth the perfect democratic ideal, the mass of the nation will abandon its hostile detachment and feel solidarity with the leadership of its governors” (“El gobierno y el país”, “La Epoca”, October 21, 1916).

The newspaper equated a modern government with moderation and composure, which were particularly important due to economic volatility created by the Great War (“El estado y las huelgas”, “La Epoca”, November 28, 1916; “Ante la miseria”, “La Epoca”, December 7, 1916 y “El conflicto portuario”, “La Epoca”, December 14, 1916). “La Epoca” encouraged the diverse sectors of society to express grievances and resolve issues “tranquilly” and through the use of government as a neutral arbiter (“El ejecutivo y la huelga”, “La Epoca”, December 8, 1916). On December 15, 1916, “La Epoca” said the government’s recent behavior “demonstrates [the executive’s] tendency to repress excesses as much from one side as the other” (“El gobierno y la huelga”, “La Epoca”, December 15, 1916). The rhetorical goal of Yrigoyen’s government was to build an inclusive coalition and to act as a moderating force in

Argentine society. In regard to the labor movement, the government would find a (sometimes) willing partner in the Syndicalists.

LABOR-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS IN THE LATE 1910S AND EARLY 1920S

Soon after Syndicalists gained control of the FORA IX they became involved in strikes, many of which they did not start but were asked to participate in by unions affiliated to the federation. On May 21, 1915, according to meeting minutes recorded in its Libro de Actas, the FORA IX Consejo Federal (or Federal Council) discussed a strike against the "Cold Storage Company" meatpacking plant located outside La Plata, the capital of Buenos Aires province (Libro de Actas, May 21, 1915). FORA IX Secretary General Francisco García described requests for "robust" solidarity that he made to affiliate unions with members employed at other Cold Storage facilities. The FORA IX Council also sent representatives to La Plata, but the response was typical of the PAN years, with government officials failing to recognize worker demands and calling on the police to manage the unrest. In December, Council members described "the lack of seriousness of the authorities" relative to the Cold Storage dispute (Libro de Actas, December 8, 1915).

A year later, after the Radical takeover, things had changed precipitously. During a port worker strike in December 1916, "La Epoca" reported on a meeting between García and the Minister of the Interior and published a defense of worker demands written by García, who also headed the Syndicalists' Maritime Workers Federation (FOM)("La huelga de obreros marítimos", "La Epoca", December 5, 1916). Yrigoyen subsequently invited García to discuss worker demands and government arbitration. Radical Party recognition of those demands, Syndicalist acceptance of government arbitration, and the Radicals' eventual siding with the workers were all monumental events in labor-government relations in Argentina occurring just months after Yrigoyen took office and a year after the Syndicalists gained control of the FORA IX. Around this time, the pages of "La Epoca" referred to confrontations between workers and employers as "inevitable" and to be handled through "peaceful channels" and with "reciprocal respect" ("El estado y las huelgas", "La Epoca", November 28, 1916). Prior episodes of "delinquent violence" could have been prevented under the guidance of a more capable government rather than through the use of "primitive discipline" ("El estado y las huelgas", "La Epoca", November 28, 1916).

Similar collaboration occurred thereafter. During a March 1917 municipal worker strike, FORA IX delegates Juan Cuomo and José Maqueira met with the mayor of Buenos Aires to pursue a resolution (Libro de Actas, March 20, 1917). When they

failed to reach a deal, largely due to the mayor's refusal to rehire striking workers, the police chief, the chief of social order (Jefe de Orden Social), Yrigoyen and a FORA IX commission that included Cuomo, Bautista Mansilla, Francisco Rossanova and Gerónimo Crosta collaborated to resolve the issues (Libro de Actas, March 25 and 26, 1917). After agreeing to terms, FORA IX sent the agreement to striking workers, who accepted the proposal (Libro de Actas, March 31, 1917 and April 1, 1917). In August 1918, "La Organización Obrera" reported the telegraph and postal union had gained the "complete satisfaction of their demands" with the help of FORA IX negotiators ("Telegrafistas y empleados postales", "La Organización Obrera", August 24, 1918). A few months later, "La Epoca" reiterated the government's labor strategy, arguing, "the intervention of the state must orient itself toward harmonizing differences, seeking the establishment of just and humane relations between business and salaried workers" ("El ejecutivo y las huelgas", "La Epoca", October 14, 1918). This strategy extended beyond party rhetoric, at least in some cases.

The relationship between Syndicalists and Radicals was also personal, to some degree. A contemporary of García called him "a man that supported Yrigoyen a lot…He secured advantages for his union in exchange for Yrigoyen's support…the maritime leaders, with García at the top, developed a policy inclined toward yrigoyenismo" (Del Campo, 2005: 22). Sebastían Marotta, who succeeded García as secretary general of the FORA IX, interacted with Yrigoyen beyond issues related to the federation. Silvano Santander, a FORA IX Council member, recalled Yrigoyen and his ministers calling on Marotta to assist in the analysis of social issues, for example university reforms linked to student protests in Córdoba in 1917 and 1918[18]. These forms of collaboration attracted considerable disdain from the Syndicalists' rivals, especially Anarchists opposed to any cooperation with government. Conservative elements of the Radicals' political opposition were unrelenting in their criticism of concessions to organized labor.

Syndicalists and Radicals did not always interact harmoniously. In January 1918, "La Organización Obrera" reported that striking meat packers mobilizing in the capital's industrial suburbs faced a "withdrawal of the cooperation of the State"("La huelga de los frigoríficos", "La Organización Obrera", January 19, 1918). The armed forces were acting on behalf of capitalists despite FORA IX efforts to negotiate a settlement. Police remained targets of Syndicalist propaganda and mobilization. A discussion in the Libro de Actas in April 1918 included allegations that police went to striking workers' houses to persuade them to return to work, using false promises and threats (Libro de Actas, April 23, 1918.). A FORA IX report in late 1920 referred to police action as "brutal, arbitrary and persistent" and linked to the broader "function of all organs of the capitalist state" (Federación Obrera Regional Argentina, Memoria

[18] Santander, eulogy transcript.

y balance, p. 21). The military fared similarly as a target of Syndicalist criticism ("El ejército y los trabajadores", "La Organización Obrera", March 16, 1918).

Radical party support for the labor movement was neither uniform nor assured. The Yrigoyen administration targeted telegraph and postal employees with harsh criticism, particularly after they backed away from an agreement. "La Epoca" called attention to "the harsh and violent language that the telegraph employees employ in their efforts" ("Los telegrafisfas [sic]", "La Epoca", September 4, 1918). The Radicals insisted they would not return to the period when "bayonets drowned strikes" ("Promotores de huelgas", "La Epoca", September 9, 1918). They argued stridently, however, against a Syndicalist-led boycott in solidarity and condemned FORA IX and FOM efforts to support the renegotiation of terms ("Agitación Obrera", "La Epoca", October 8, 1918). According to "La Epoca", these tactics "lack all solid and sensible grounding" and were instead "simply, an abuse of the power that the right to strike concedes to the workers" ("Una huelga original", "La Epoca", October 14, 1918).

In the event of worker violence, Radicals lost all sympathy for participants in labor mobilizations. Yet they also sought to separate small groups of "agitators" from the broader movement. In 1918, the Radicals ramped up opposition to extremism, referring directly to "maximalists" inspired by Bolshevism and Anarchists that "in the end are the same elements that years before produced discordant notes and promoted disorder that ended in pools of blood" ("¿Quién dijo miedo?", "La Epoca", December 1, 1918). The newspaper also blamed conservative groups – linked to opposition political parties, upper-class social clubs and elite-run newspapers – for fanning unrest in order to undermine public opinion that the Radicals could effectively manage conflict.

The non-linear, volatile and opportunistic nature of the relationship between Syndicalists and Radicals was particularly evident during the infamous "Tragic Week" of January 1919. On one hand, Syndicalists and Radicals criticized the actions of one another as they engaged in solidarity with their respective sides: the Syndicalists with striking workers and the Radicals with government forces. On the other hand, neither Syndicalists nor Radicals issued a "call to arms" during the escalation of violence. Both blamed radicalized labor agitators (allegedly Anarchist factions), reckless policemen and firemen, and mercenary groups hired by conservative elements linked to a business-owners association and the elite-run Patriotic League[19]. Meanwhile, they actively pursued a negotiated end to the violence and made appeals for calm.

[19] For details on the Tragic Week, see Seibel (1999).

The FORA IX called an extraordinary meeting on January 8, 1919 to discuss a crackdown on striking workers at the Vasena metalworking plant on the outskirts of Buenos Aires (Libro de Actas, January 8, 1919). After a long debate, the FORA IX Council voted against support for the strike on grounds that it was led by a "dissident" element not affiliated to FORA IX. The Council did concur with a FOM boycott of Vasena and demanded an explanation of the repression from the chief of police. The Radicals denounced the disruptions caused by the strikes and placed blame on "agitators" ("Agitaciones obreras", "La Epoca", January 9, 1919). A few days earlier, "La Epoca"argued that "it is not possible to support the absolutism of anyone" and cautioned port workers that the tyranny of shipping companies could be "replaced by a tyranny equally disagreeable: that of the [federation's] council" ("Tentativas de huelga", "La Epoca", January 6, 1919). In this way, they left the door open to all strategies (including the use of violence) to contain worker unrest.

On January 9, FORA IX assigned delegates to attend funerals of two Vasena workers, while a FORA IX Council member reported that most FORA IX affiliates had independently called for work stoppages in solidarity (Libro de Actas, January 9, 1919). After meeting with member unions, on January 11, the Council drafted a list of conditions meant to end the conflict (Libro de Actas, January 11, 1919). The leadership also launched efforts to meet with Yrigoyen. During a second meeting that day, the Council said that negotiations with the Minster of Justice had led to the release of hundreds of incarcerated workers (Libro de Actas, January 11, 1919; a second meeting). On January 12, FORA IX secretary general Marotta discussed the efforts of a special commission focused on the liberation of remaining prisoners and the reopening of union facilities (Libro de Actas, January 12, 1919).

Radicals and Syndicalists both emphasized their roles in bringing an end to the unrest. "La Epoca"covered the conflict between Anarchists and police, but also focused on public demonstrations in support of the conciliatory efforts of government ("El día de ayer", "La Epoca", January 11, 1919). The newspaper reported on "patriotic" public marches against "agitators" and in favor of "the brilliant action of the police, army and navy" ("Final de las agitaciones", "La Epoca", January 12, 1919). Throughout the week, it repeatedly pronounced the restoration of order and a return to normalcy as a result of the governments' persecution of "bad elements" and the public's support for the fatherland ("Persecución de malas elementos", "La Epoca", January 15, 1919; "La vuelta de normalidad", "La Epoca", January 16, 1919). For the Syndicalists, according to a FORA IX investigation published later, the FORA IX Council's successful negotiations with government officials resulted in a "splendid victory for the forces of solidarity" (Federación Obrera Regional Argentina, Memoria y balance, p. 5). The report said that a meeting between the president and a FORA IX commission had ended the violence, reopened unions, freed prisoners,

disengaged the military and prevented passage in Congress of a declaration of a state of siege like one that inaugurated widespread repression in 1910 (Federación Obrera Regional Argentina, Memoria y balance, p. 6).

The Tragic Week was certainly a watershed event in the Syndicalist-Radical relationship, but did not end their collaboration as some historians have argued. To the contrary, Joel Horowitz finds that after 1919 and a bout of unrest in Patagonia in 1921, “Even in the face of massive disapproval by elites and constant turmoil, the Radical government clung to its policy…Radicals did not totally abandon labor” (Horowitz, 2008: 79). Indeed, Horowitz believes that during the more conservative Radical administration of Torcuato de Alvear (1922-1928), the party maintained connections to organized labor built from 1916 (Horowitz, 2008: 149). For Syndicalists, the relationship remained collaborative and contradictory. In 1920, so-called officialization of personnel, which meant that government officials rather than shipping companies selected on-board shipping workers, was seen as a major achievement for Syndicalism after hard-fought strikes, lockouts, boycotts and negotiations (Federación Obrera Regional Argentina, Memoria y balance). In 1921, the FORA IX claimed an active role in negotiations with government to end violence in Patagonia (“Sangre nuestra” and “Violenta reacción de la burguesía en toda la republica”, “La Organización Obrera”, February 26, 1921 y “El proletariado del Sud”, “La Organización Obrera”, March 5, 1921). Yet in 1922, the FOM newspaper printed a cartoon on its front page showing a snake labeled “government” attacking a worker (“La Unión del Marino”, December 1922). By then, Syndicalist leadership of the labor movement was under threat, but the movement maintained an influential place in organized labor as the FORA IX was folded into the Union Sindical Argentina (Argentine Syndicalist Union) in 1922.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO SYNDICALIST-RADICAL COLLABORATION

Syndicalists and Radicals shared a number of important attributes that facilitated their collaboration during the late 1910s and beyond. For one, both groups disparaged ideological idealism and emphasized practical action instead. To leading Syndicalists, the worship of “ideas” was ruinous, and idealism – of Socialist, Anarchist or any variety – was self-destructive[20]. Worse still were the (often “bourgeois”) intellectuals who perpetuated those ideas and could co-opt the leadership of the labor movement. Karl Marx’s adage, “the emancipation of the workers has to be the project of the workers themselves,” was often used by Syndicalists situated on the front lines of labor mobilization. Ideological debates were

[20] For an attack on Socialists see Bosio (1919: 10); for an anti-Anarchist view see “La Organización Obrera” October 26 and November 2, 1918, for example.

mostly absent from the minutes recorded at meetings of the FORA IX Council. Syndicalist theorist and lawyer Julio Árraga was never allowed to serve as a union delegate or take part in important meetings (Rock, 1971: 85). Soon after Marotta was picked to lead the FORA IX in 1918, he insisted that the Syndicalist movement was Argentine, and not European, in an effort to dispel the movement's foreign intellectual origins (Del Campo, 2005: 14).

Alongside this non-ideological approach (which was, indeed, an ideology of its own) the Syndicalists placed significant weight on "action." One of the most prolific contributors to Syndicalist publications, Fortunato Marinelli once wrote:

> "There always exists a difference between practice and theory. The first one is life, which adapts itself wherever it makes contact, according to vital conditions, be they national or local, collective or of the most varied individual kind; theory, on the other hand, is death" (Marinelli, 1921).

According to a 1919 pamphlet written by Syndicalist Bartolomé Bosio:

> "Action is the best teacher. It clarifies concepts, defines respective positions, forges class consciousness, from the birth of the notion of revolt and makes workers into strong fighters, providing them with their own psychology as producers. Action is the fertile creator and the most powerful antidote against all of the intellectualist toxins" (Bosio, 1919).

"Action" meant, most often, the use of strikes to secure material benefits for workers. Another important tool were boycotts, which targeted consumer products companies such as beer makers or exporters heavily reliant on rail and port worker labor.[21] Such acts of solidarity were far from revolutionary, but could increase worker leverage in negotiations with employers and (increasingly) government officials.

For their part, Radicals – and Yrigoyen especially – were accused of lacking any ideological backbone. Just before the 1916 presidential election, Socialist newspaper "La Vanguardia" said Radicals "do nothing more than adapt themselves to the circumstances"("Presagios de triunfo", "La Vanguardia", March 16, 1916) and "reorganize themselves according to the weather, the circumstances and the conventions" ("La organización radical en Santa Fe", "La Vanguardia", March 12,

[21] The FORA IX Council discussed boycotts of Quilmes and Bieckart beer companies in 1915 and 1917. See Libro de Actas, October 17, 1915 and "La Organización Obrera", December 15, 1917, respectively. The FOM workers at times refused to handle products from a specific company in an act of solidarity with those companies' workers. See, for example, Libro de Actas, July 15, 1918.

1916). Radicals also received criticisms from La Nación, a conservative daily newspaper, over the former's allegedly wishy-washy response to labor mobilization[22]. The Radicals were quick to respond to such criticisms. An article in "La Epoca"on October 4, 1916 – after Yrigoyen's victory – read, "There is nothing more clear, more visible, better known than the future orientation of the Radical government" (La incógnita", "La Epoca", October 4, 1916). Yet it admitted the party did not have an firm electoral platform and provided only vague indicators that a policy agenda existed. For Radicals, morality was emphasized rather than ideology, for example when it wrote, "The large Argentine dailies admire abstract morals and fear applied morals" ("Teoría y práctica de la moral", "La Epoca", December 20, 1918). Much like the Syndicalists' emphasis on action over ideology, the Radicals favored action ahead of adherence to a strict party doctrine or agenda. "La Epoca"deflected criticisms from the Socialists regarding so-called pan Radical handouts of bread, milk and meat to unemployed and poor residents in Córdoba. The Radicals said it was merely the provision of social welfare to a group previously ignored by elected leaders("Los obreros y el radicalismo", "La Epoca", November 14, 1916). Such actions represented Radicalism in practice.

Related to their failure to define their actions or opinions based on a strict ideology or platform, both Syndicalists and Radicals sought to build their organizations around notions of inclusiveness that would transcend traditional divisions within organized labor and politics. For the Syndicalists, building solidarity as a means toward greater influence was a near-obsession. Typical of other labor factions, the FORA IX organized soapbox gatherings held simultaneously on major thoroughfares and squares in Buenos Aires (Libro de Actas, November 11, 1915). But they also sought to expand their presence to interior regions to unite workers around the country. On April 28, 1915, just weeks after the first Syndicalist-led FORA IX meeting, the FORA IX Council discussed a visit by Bautista Mansilla to Argentina's north as an opportunity for a propaganda tour (Libro de Actas, April 28, 1915). By early 1917, FORA IX delegations were scattered throughout central and northern Argentina. Marotta reported successful affiliations from small towns throughout Buenos Aires province (Libro de Actas, January 22, 1917). The next year, Marotta, García and Rossanova led recruitment efforts into the interior, while Syndicalist leaders fanned out to Tandil, Rivera and other areas to lead May Day celebrations (Libro de Actas, April 19, 1918). Recruitment activities declined as the Tragic Week and its aftermath consumed FORA IX leaders' attention. Yet by early 1920, "La Organización Obrera" reported delegate visits to far-off Tucumán, Chaco and Santiago del Estero ("Las giras de propaganda sindical por el interior de la Republica; Partida de los delegados Villacampa y Lotito", "La Organización Obrera", January 10, 1920; "En Santiago del

[22] For example, "Quien siembra vientos", "La Epoca", November 24, 1918.

Estero”, “La Organización Obrera”, January 17, 1920 y “Las giras por el norte, centro y litoral”, “La Organización Obrera”, February 7, 1920).

Membership numbers and the geographic footprint of FORA IX expanded rapidly. Around 60 unions participated in the ninth congress in 1915[23]. Of these, 29 were from the city or province of Buenos Aires, eight from Santa Fé province and 15 from other areas. By December 1918, ahead of the tenth congress, there were 136 member unions, 34 in the capital and 102 from the provinces (“Informe del consejo federal al décimo congreso de la F.O.R.A.; A celebrarse en los 29, 30 y 31 de diciembre de 1918, en la ciudad de Buenos Aires”, “La Organización Obrera”, December 7, 1918). In July 1919, delegates from 155 unions attended a FORA IX meeting (“El congreso extraordinario de la F.O.R.A”, “La Organización Obrera”, July 5, 1919). The following year, a report for the eleventh congress listed 746 affiliates[24]. Of these, 246 were from Buenos Aires province, 142 from Santa Fé, 95 from Córdoba, 92 from Entre Ríos, 68 from the Federal Capital, 47 from Mendoza and 56 from other provinces.

The number of individual workers affiliated to FORA IX swelled from 20,000 to 70,000 between 1915 and 1917, and reached up to 100,000 before decade’s end, according to some estimates (Muck, 1987: 34). In the 1914 census, there were 2.4 million workers in Argentina, 935,603 of them industrial workers, artisans, tradesmen and transport workers (Revista de Economia Argentina XI). As employment figures were little changed by 1918, it is possible as many as 10% of workers in the secondary and tertiary sectors were affiliated to FORA IX in the late 1910s. Strike numbers suggest organized labor’s influence extended past official rolls (Thompson, 1984: 83). In 1917, some 136,000 workers participated in 138 strikes that took place just in the city of Buenos Aires (Panettieri, 1969). The number of strikers was similar the following year, with 133,000 workers participating in 196 work stoppages. Strike numbers spiked to 367 in 1919, when more than 300,000 workers struck in the capital, before falling back to 134,000 workers and 206 strikes in 1920.

The Syndicalists growing ranks boosted their influence in and beyond the labor movement, which in turn aided their ability to recruit members. But they also understood the need to preach inclusiveness and compromise with other worker groups in order to permit growth. A 1918 FORA IX pamphlet described affiliated unions as “free from all political and ideological dogmatism” and Syndicalists as willing to “open doors wide to workers of all persuasions” (Federación Obrera

[23] Sebastián Marotta has 55 organizations total and 44 siding with the Syndicalists. Ruben Siscaro has it at 46 organizations in favor of the Syndicalists and 14 against, while Ricardo Falcón reports 57 organizations in attendance at the meeting – regional data is from Falcón, which is in Munck, Falcón & Galitelli (1987: 66) –.

[24] Federación Obrera Regional Argentina, Memoria y balance, statistical pages at the back of the report. These exact figures are questionable, especially due to FORA IX’s interest in inflating them, but there is agreement from Marotta, Siscaro and Falcón on the rising trajectory of membership.

Regional Argentina, Por la unidad obrera). For Marotta, this was a personal philosophy, according to Bernardo Zugasti, a railroader who described Marotta as apolitical and focused on eliminating worker discord along political, ideological, religious and philosophical lines[25]. Marotta himself wrote that the capacity of workers was dependent on broad organization at the national level (Marotta, 1961: 123-124). Such an anti-ideological approach singled him out from more doctrinaire Anarchists and Socialists. After the Tragic Week, the FORA IX seemed to be defending – perhaps doubling down – on its strategy of non-ideological solidarity. "La Organización Obrera" cited disorganization and division during the events as confirmation of the merits and necessity of the Syndicalist-led path[26]. Order became a central aspect of the discourse, particularly as an alternative to chaotic impulses they associated with the quintistas[27].

Similarly, rather than divisiveness based on ideological imperatives, class or geographic and urban-rural divides, the Radicals emphasized unity and harmony across traditional social cleavages. The Yrigoyen administration represented "an unusual act in the lifespan of relations between the people and government" and would build a "cordial understanding between the country and political power," according to "La Epoca" ("El gobierno y el país", "La Epoca", October 21, 1916). "We repeat that which many times we have said," read an article about unrest in Tucumán province in December 1918. "Under the Radical government the life of the citizen will be sacred, whichever political or social ideas it is moved by" ("El incidente de Tucumán", "La Epoca", December 13, 1918). In the aftermath of one bloody episode, the newspaper published an article that discussed how "old hates [that] fester in one's soul" can quickly evolve from an error to a crime. It added, "To suffocate [the soul] in violent force is inhuman in these times of our fatherland, when its government pursues an aspiration of social perfection that is realized in stages of order and liberty" ("El suceso de anoche", "La Epoca", November 30, 1918). Argentine society was to unite, a revolutionary idea in and of itself, even if such unity appeared possible to Radicals only under their leadership.

If the Syndicalists sought to expand their footprint and influence through the affiliation of more workers into the labor movement, the Radicals sought loyalty and greater influence through demonstrations of voter support. Some historians of the party suggest that Yrigoyen was driven toward an alliance with labor (and other sectors) mostly to consolidate the party's grip on political power rather than any true belief in social change (Horowotz, 1995: 60). Consolidation of support was one way to deflect

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[25] Zugasti, eulogy transcript.

[26] For example, "La unidad obrera y la acción sindical", "La Organización Obrera", March 22, 1919; "El triunfo reside en la unidad obrera", "La Organización Obrera", January 10, 1920; "Mantengamos la unidad sindical", "La Organización Obrera", October 2, 1920.

[27] See, for example, Federación Obrera Marítima, Memoria del año 1918-1919, p. 2.

potentially undemocratic forces, which might hesitate because of the president's popularity. Voting results show Radical support rooted in lower-middle-class constituencies, while working-class voters were less committed to the Radical cause, often swinging their votes based on the state of labor-government relations (Walter, 1978). For example, the correlation between blue-collar workers and their support for Radical candidates in the city of Buenos Aires moved from a neutral .03 correlation in October 1918 to a negative 0.41 correlation the following March. The Tragic Week occurred between these two votes. The Socialists, especially in the capital and other littoral cities, offered an alternative to many working-class voters, who collectively could be a critical swing vote in Radical Party victories or losses. Therefore, Radical collaboration with Syndicalists could shore up votes for the party just as Syndicalist effectiveness linked to collaboration with Radicals encouraged greater affiliation to the FORA IX.

For this collaboration to occur, however, both Syndicalists and Radicals needed to seek a more moderate approach to the class conflict, a course both groups took from early on. In a September 1917 essay, Marotta argued that the FORA IX "should overcome its past by implementing intelligent actions" [emphasis added] (Marotta, 1917: 133). Having experienced the disorder, violence and setbacks of 1910, he wrote, "The memory of the long and painful fight – truly fratricidal pain – is still fresh in everyone's memory such that we continue to place [that memory] at the forefront of our efforts" (Marotta, 1917: 123-124). The future of the labor movement instead lay in moral and material progress. According to FORA IX collaborator José Montesano, Marotta was "disposed to find a solution to differences, to the advantage of the union… [He] always worked in line with the probabilities offered by circumstances and the capacities of the workers' organization"[28]. His pragmatism was a defining feature.

It was, in fact, common for the FORA IX Council to refuse to support strikes if it deemed worker demands unfounded or their tactics too radical. Such refusals included action by the printers union against the periodical Caras y Caretas in September 1916 and a denial of further support for the telegraph and postal workers after they reneged on a deal the FORA IX helped negotiate (Libro de Actas, September 25, 1916 y September 13, 1918). The FORA IX Council published a one-page flyer in July 1918 voicing opposition to a railroader request that the federation call a general strike in solidarity with railroader grievances. Part of this flyer read:

> "The general strike – supreme weapon of the proletariat – should not be brandished when the enemy wants…but instead when, based on the needs of the workers' efforts,

[28] Montesano, eulogy transcript.

> the collective abandonment of work affects intensely the exploiters. In addition, in the present circumstances, the declaration of a general strike, far from contributing to bring down capitalism, could, on the other hand, facilitate its purposes, which are nothing less than to destroy the Syndicalist organization" (Federación Obrera Regional Argentina, Por la unidad obrera).

Sometimes, the best option for Syndicalists was not to strike and even to diffuse labor unrest.

Radicals took a similar moderating path. In 1916, "La Epoca"railed against "police dysfunction" under the direction of authorities in Buenos Aires province that were remnants of the PAN régimen. These authorities failed to understand the relationship between worker unrest in the province and high unemployment ("Los desocupados", "La Epoca", November 8, 1916). The solution to that unrest lay in improving conditions for workers rather than standard acts of repression. Alternatively, the chief of police in the city of Buenos Aires, serving under the Radicals, met directly with striking textile workers to "deliberate and converse" with the union, the paper explained ("Los obreros y el jefe de policía", "La Epoca", November 27, 1916). Under the direction of the Radical Party, the police "tried to eliminate repressive action" and instead provide "services of vigilance and social defense" ("El conflicto portuario", "La Epoca", December 14, 1916). This was, at least, the rhetoric of Yrigoyen's administration. Radicals also defended worker grievances during a 1918 municipal employees strike in Rosario. "La Epoca"did not support the strike, but chastised local officials for failing to pay employees:

> "He who works should be paid, and paid with punctuality. If not, one runs the risk of seeing conflicts explode like the one in Rosario, the type of which has not failed to take a bloody tone" ("La huelga de Rosario", "La Epoca", December 12, 1918).

Around the same time, "La Epoca"blamed an outbreak of violence on el régimen and Anarchists, and even conflated the two by arguing it was not acceptable "not even in theory, the exoticism of a doctrine to take root in our land, which only results in an environment of tyranny and slavery" ("El suceso de anoche", "La Epoca", November 30, 1918). The party often labeled radicalism in these forms as the product of foreign infiltration and stirred up nationalistic sentiment against it.

A final element contributing to labor-government collaboration was an unwinding of notions of ethnic difference between the two sides. This transformation grew out of the increased role played by children of immigrants within both groups. Hugo del Campo (2005), Ruth Thompson (1984) and others have emphasized the relationship between the Syndicalists and a shift toward greater participation of children of immigrants in organized labor. Meanwhile, according to David Rock, the Radicals had "acquired a locally based intermediate leadership composed mainly of the sons-of-immigrants group," while after the 1912 electoral reforms, Yrigoyen "tailored his appeal to the native-born sons-of-immigrants groups employed in the tertiary sector" (Rock, 1971: 49-50). This generational shift at the very least helped to dilute xenophobic impulses that characterized labor-government relations during earlier periods of Anarchist and PAN dominance.

The largest group among these "children" was those of Italian origin. Accordingly, greater integration (and at times conflation) of Argentine and Italian identities occurred among Syndicalists and Radicals. Indeed, their participation in larger societal trends toward hybrid ethnic identity formation during the 1910s and 1920s likely contributed to their success. Hybridity helped to produce, on the one hand, an "Argentinization" of the labor movement by way of the leadership, actions and rhetoric of the Syndicalists. It also led to an "Italianization" of government driven by the Radicals through the greater participation of residents of Italian origin in politics (at increasingly higher levels), increased government outreach to the Italian community, and the incorporation of Italian influences into a new variety of Argentine identity.

Such an assertion requires management of delicate definitions and determinations of ethnicity, a concept that can be linked to linguistic, cultural, racial, national, regional tribal, religious, and other identifications. This project admittedly simplifies such complexity through the use of Italian and Argentine as ethnic identifications based on national background and related linguistic and cultural signifiers. This is not to say that it dismisses the problematic nature of Italian identity – or italianità – present during the early-twentieth century. For the importance of regional languages, cultures and identifications in Italy did not disappear after national unification in the 1860s. The famous quote of Risorgimento leader Massimo d'Azeglio, "we have made Italy; now we must make Italians," extended to those Italian citizens residing in immigrant communities overseas[29]. Nevertheless, an understanding of "Italy" as the geographic area south of the Alps – and notions of common history and culture among groups living there – existed prior to political unification. In Argentina, even before unification, immigrants from different regions of what would become Italy

[29] For a review of Italian government efforts to construct an Italian national identity among emigrants see Choate (2008).

cooperated to form mutual aid societies based on perceptions of common origins (Sábato, 2001: 35). By the 1910s, ethnic ties related to a shared Italian origin were common, but hardly universal or clearly defined.

Notions of an Argentine identity – or argentinidad – are no less problematic. Consolidation of political control and administration under a central government based in Buenos Aires did not develop until the 1860s (De la Fuente, 2000: 181-185). The "conquest" of regions to the west and south of the capital city untouched by European colonial settlement occurred through the 1870s. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century's groups of elites competed to advance differing understandings of argentinidad they held[30]. By the 1910s and 1920s, the debate – complicated further by mass immigration – remained unresolved. Yet many conceptions of Argentine identity linked to linguistic and cultural forms as well as national symbols had become more firmly established (Bertoni, 2001: 316).

Immigrant interaction with Argentine society further complicated ethnic identities. According to Samuel Baily, "family members had different and constantly evolving attitudes toward one another, their fellow paesani, and the members of the host societies. The terms assimilated and unassimilated inadequately describe the complexity of this experience" (Baily & Ramella, 1988: 11). The degree of integration could depend on age, gender, education, occupation, class, marital status and other factors. Connections with Italy could be maintained (or not) through politics, business, culture and the labor movement. Anthropologist Arnd Schneider has highlighted the variety and varying degree of these connections through ethnographic case studies.[31] For children of immigrants, connections to an immigrant heritage might be even more complex and ambiguous, dependent on familial assimilation and factors such as class, neighborhood, education, work, marriage and cultural interests, to name a few[32].

Despite the complexities outlined above, several publications produced by the Italian community shed light on the formation of hybrid Italo-Argentine identities in the 1910s and 1920s. A yearly almanac published in 1921 by the middle-class Italian-language newspaper "La Patria degli Italiani" discussed Argentina and Italy as "two sister nations" ("La Patria degli Italiani", Annuario Italo-Sudamerican). It (somewhat mysteriously) connected anniversaries of the death of Dante Alighieri and the birth of Argentine politician Bartolomé Mitre as "the centennials of 1921," and referred to Argentina as "a true adopted fatherland". The almanac – in 1921 and other years – devoted special attention to children of immigrants, for example their inability to acquire Italian citizenship. It comforted readers by stating, "Experience and the

[30] For more detail on this debate, see Bertoni (2001).
[31] See Schneider, Futures Lost.
[32] For more on assimilation, see Baily (1978: 332-340), and Baily (1980).

philosophy of history demonstrate in an indisputable way, that after the native country, among all others, the most loved is that of the parents" ("La Patria degli Italiani", Annuario Italo-Sudamericano, p. 523). Whether their children believed this was not clear.

"L'Italia del Popolo", an Italian-language newspaper aligned with Socialism, revealed similar elements of hybridity within Argentina's Italian community, or "colony" in the newspaper's view ("Gl'italiani dell'Argentina", "L'Italia del Popolo", October 8, 1919). While appreciative of the opportunities offered by Argentina, writers voiced concerns about lax labor protections and the Residence and Social Defense laws in what was a "second fatherland" ("Nuova coscienza sociale", "L'Italia del Popolo", February 29, 1920). Contributors also worried about children of immigrants disassociating themselves from Italian origins("Ma non ci sono i figli?", "L'Italia del Popolo", March 5, 1920), but celebrated the participation of Argentine-born children in the Italian army during the Great War ("Quattro argentini in guerra", "L'Italia del Popolo", February 28, 1919). The newspaper printed some articles, including pronouncements from the FORA IX, in Spanish, presumably because many readers were comfortable reading both languages.

On January 7, 1919, as Buenos Aires was fixated on the violence occurring at the Vasena plant that would spark the Tragic Week, "L'Italia del Popolo" published an open letter to the Vasena brothers who owned the plant ("Lettera aperta ai signori Fratelli Vasena, industriali", "L'Italia del Popolo", January 7, 1919). The events then unfolding benefited no one, the newspaper argued, and "had already carried tragic consequences." While it pointed blame at the bourgeoisie in general for the "miserable conditions of the proletariat," it placed full moral responsibility on the Vasena brothers. It then emphasized that many of the workers were Italian and ended with the directive:

> "Signori Fratelli Vasena, listen to a serene and disinterested voice. And do not ever forget that your father was a humble Italian worker, who knew how to win his battles with honest work".

While ultimately unsuccessful, the newspaper's plea was nevertheless a sincere attempt to use common ethnic origins to temper the dispute between striking workers, plant owners and government authorities in Argentina.

The Radicals took a similar approach. References to (and occasional adoration for) the Italian community, and news coverage of acts by high-level Radical officials of Italian origin, filled the pages of "La Epoca"during the late 1910s. The Radical Party and Yrigoyen are often associated with pan-Hispanism, a sentiment linked to the

country's colonial past and contemporary solidarity with Spain and Spanish America (particularly in the face of British and United States influence). Such beliefs were well represented in "La Epoca"[33]. Yet Spain was not the only country with which the Radicals claimed a common heritage. On its front page on November 11, 1916, "La Epoca"celebrated the 48th birthday of Victor Emmanuel III, king of Italy, "uniting ourselves with the joy of Italians during this time" and exalting his triumphs in war ("El soberano de Italia", "La Epoca", November 11, 1916). Two years later, it used the same occasion to share with Italy and the Italian people the "young nation's" military success, joining in a burst of post-war nationalistic sentiment in Italy and celebrating the shared "Latin" character of the two nations ("Natalicio del rey de Italia", "La Epoca", November 11, 1918). To no other participant in the war was such attention given. Contributors to "La Epoca"subsequently celebrated Italy's annexation of Trento and Trieste during peace agreements ("Colectividad italiana", "La Epoca", November 10, 1918). "The war has produced a miracle in Italy," wrote a correspondent from Naples, highlighting the country's "elevated morals" and advances in industrial organization. Francisco Rossini's "Letters from Italia" column appeared regularly[34]. News about emigration, labor protests, trade and economic growth in Italy was surrounded by advertisements for Italian goods and services available to consumers in Buenos Aires (and presumably the Italian readers of "La Epoca").

The importance to Radicals of attracting readers and support – and votes – from the Italian community was also present in domestic coverage in "La Epoca". The newspaper reported on events related to "Italian-descended Argentine youth" ("Homenaje a Italia: Asociación 'Mater Italica'", "La Epoca", November 5, 1918). It deflected rumors floated by La Nación of police violence at an Italian rally, while it defended a controversial decision to move the date of another public event held by the Italian community ("La manifestación de anoche", "La Epoca", November 4, 1918). On September 18, 1918, the newspaper celebrated in its lead article an Italian holiday tied to the anniversary of the taking of Rome during the Risorgimento, noting:

> "Our regards go out today to the large Italian colony that contributes to our prosperity with its efforts. We share its joy. Its blood mixes with our blood and its surnames are the patrimony of many Argentine households. Its tradition forms part of our tradition. Our hospitable land gives them asylum and welfare, and they know to repay that hospitality with the good things they do, contributing to the greatness of their

[33] For example, "La fiesta de la raza", "La Epoca", October 9, 1916; "La fiesta de la raza", "La Epoca", October 4, 1918; "Relaciones con España", "La Epoca", November 13, 1916; "Sociedad cultural española", "La Epoca", December 1, 1916.

[34] For example, "Cartas de Italia", "La Epoca", December 14, 1918 and December 24, 1918.

> second fatherland" ("El día de Italia", "La Epoca", September 20, 1918).

At least in some circles of the Radical party, there was an emphasis on the influence of Italians within the construction of the Argentine patrimony.

Beyond this more abstract evidence of greater hybridity in government circles were the many Radical officials who had Italian origins. Lists of Radical politicians in office during this period, including those engaged with labor, are filled with Italian surnames[35]. During the 1916 maritime strike, Deputy Zaccagnini accompanied a port worker delegation to meet the Minister of the Interior, while Deputy Bonifacio collaborated with FOM leaders during another meeting[36]. Many high-level bureaucrats also had Italian heritage. In a series of articles in October 1918, "La Epoca"reported inspector Cecilio Tribodi investigating the aftermath of a violent storm, head of customs for Buenos Aires Mr. Scoppatti conducting a sanitary inspection, the visit of Minister of Agriculture Demarchi to Córdoba, and the illness of Diego Luis Molinari, sub-secretary of foreign relations, to name a few.

For Syndicalists, meanwhile, the hybridization of ethnicities and the greater participation of children of immigrants in the labor movement meant the integration of notions of Argentine identity and nationalism within traditions that were of decidedly immigrant origins. The language and coverage of newspapers were manifestations of this hybridity. From 1910, "La Acción Obrera" included articles in Spanish that used Italian in headlines or blended Italian phrases into the body of an article[37]. "La Unión del Marino" closely monitored Italian labor news. Front-page stories, not unexpectedly, focused on events in Genoa and voiced support for fellow maritime laborers ("Conferencia internacional de Genova", "La Unión del Marino", August 1920; "La conferencia económica de Genova", "La Unión del Marino", May 1922). Other contributions expressed solidarity between the FOM and less-obvious Italian comrades, covering labor relations in Turin factories and reporting on an Italian delegation's visit to the Soviet Union ("Huelga en los buques italianos", "La Unión del Marino", June 1920; "Los consejos de fábrica en Italia", "La Unión del Marino", June 1920 y "De la delegación socialista italiana en Rusia", "La Unión del Marino", November 1920). Labor news from other European countries was reduced to short briefs on the back pages. In 1912, "La Unión del Marino" published a section in Italian that included reference to solidarity "without distinction of races or

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[35] I obtained spreadsheets of election officials and congressional representatives through correspondence with Marcela Ferrari, a leading historian of Radical politicians.

[36] "La huelga de los marítimos", "La Epoca", December 5, 1916; "Entre armadores y obreros", "La Epoca", December 6, 1916.

[37] For example, "Entre compinches", "La Acción Obrera", December 24, 1910, which includes the phrase "i colpi non si danno á patti"; "Venne, s'arresto e sparve", January 14, 1911, which was written in Spanish, but had an Italian title.

nationalities" ("Solidarità", "La Unión del Marino", June 1, 1912). Like the Radicals, they sought support across ethnic lines.

The language and coverage in Syndicalist newspapers matched the hybridization among Syndicalist leaders and main periodical contributors. Juan Cuomo, Luis Tortorelli and Cristóbal Montale were just a few examples of members of the FORA IX Council with Italian surnames and Spanish given names, suggesting they were Argentines of Italian origin. The strong Spanish-language writing skills of newspaper contributors like Fortunato Marinelli indicated they were either Italo-Argentine or migrated to Argentina at a young age. Coverage into the 1920s suggested the maintenance of links to these origins. In early 1922, for example, contributors to "La Organización Obrera" focused particular attention on the growth of fascism in Italy and expressed solidarity with Italians Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti on trial in Massachusetts ("La crisis del fascism", "La Organización Obrera", April 20, 1921; "El processo Sacco-Vanzetti", "La Organización Obrera", December 24, 192).

In spite of their associations with immigrant origins, the Syndicalists increasingly emphasized the domestic credentials of organized labor and the working classes. In 1917, Marotta wrote that the Syndicalist takeover of the FORA IX represented a move by the labor movement:

> "To liberate itself from all exterior influences; and from then began a period whose characteristic has been the advancement of moral and material progress of the national institution of the country's workers" (Marotta, 1917). [Emphasis added]

"La Organización Obrera" promoted nationalism in the labor movement in articles such as "The idea of fatherland" and "Worker anti-patriotism" ("La idea de patria", "La Organización Obrera", March 30, 1918 y "Antipatriotismo obrero", "La Organización Obrera", July 27, 1918). Evidence of efforts to construct solidarity around an "Argentine" labor movement is also present in the Libro de Actas (September 25, 1916). During a 1919 strike, a note to the FOM from an employers association complained of "professional foreign agitators" participating in labor mobilizations (Federación Obrera Marítima, Memoria del año 1918-1919, p. 61.). The FOM responded to this by referring to managers as "the representatives of foreign shipping companies" and the workers' collective as the domestic actor in the dispute (Federación Obrera Marítima, Memoria del año 1918-1919, p. 63).

The focus on the labor movements' Argentine character fit well the aforementioned FORA IX strategy to build solidarity throughout the country. After the Tragic Week, when Syndicalists faced a challenge linked in part to anti-immigrant sentiment within

elite and employer circles, they placed added emphasis on the domestic nature of the labor movement and imbued their rhetoric with references to Argentine nationalism. “La Organización Obrera” described the FOM as “the true vanguard of the Argentine proletariat” (“La gran huelga de los obreros marítimos”, “La Organización Obrera”, February 8, 1919). It spoke of unification of workers throughout the “republic,” the construction of a “national organization” and consideration of demands from the “working class of the country.” One headline referred to “our blood” in reference to solidarity with workers in rural provinces (“Sangre nuestra”, “La Organización Obrera”, February 26, 1921).

The best defense of their Argentine identity by Syndicalists came from a 1919 article entitled “Foreigners against Argentines,” which described accusations of “foreign” influence among workers as a tool used by the bourgeoisie from Spain to Russia to the United States (“Extranjeros contra argentinos”, “La Organización Obrera”, May 24, 1919). The author noted how the Argentine bourgeoisie received education, consumer goods and servants from abroad and asked, “Is it that only they have the right to follow the styles from Paris or in London, and we cannot follow those from Petrograd or wherever it seems better?” He said the list of members of the elite Patriotic League was (ironically) teeming with foreign names and that its true purpose was to defend foreigners and foreign interests against domestic resistance occurring through labor mobilization. The aggressiveness of elites represented foreign attacks against Argentines, and, “While the working class has a large foreign element, for the most part it is composed of the children of this country.” The article ended with, “Oh, workers! We do not even have the right to fight for the country where we were born.” However alive connections to immigrant origins remained among Syndicalists, the construction of a more nationalistic Argentine labor movement was underway.

CONCLUSION

Working-class nationalism that incorporated a diversity of Argentina’s ethnic communities, efforts to unify the labor movement outside the bounds of standard ideological constructs, greater inclusion of popular sectors in Argentine politics, and increasing collaboration between labor and government are processes often associated with the Peronist government of 1946-1955, for good reason. Yet a parallel examination of the relationship between Syndicalists and Radicals in the late 1910s and early 1920s reveals the formation of these processes decades earlier. It followed the dissolution of Anarchist leadership of the labor movement and PAN hegemony within the political system – and the political exclusion, xenophobia, radicalism and violence that marked the decades around the turn of the century.

The period of Syndicalist leadership of the labor movement represented important changes for organized labor in Argentina. The FORA IX and its affiliates sought to dampen revolutionary ideologies as a central element of labor mobilization. This effort was part of a larger project to extend the federation's footprint to the far reaches of Argentina and to build solidarity across ideological divides. Effective incorporation of larger numbers of workers into a single organization also called for moderation in the tactics and demands deployed in the class struggle, leading Syndicalists believed. For its part, the Radical victory in 1916 represented a significant transformation within Argentine politics. The party sought to dilute the influence of extreme views and outbursts of violence perpetrated by those on the left and right of the ideological spectrum. It did so based on notions of inclusion, social harmony and the role of government as a neutral arbiter between social groups. The relationship between Syndicalists and Radicals – however fraught – grew out of these common concerns and strategies and led to unprecedented collaboration between labor and government.

More than this, the Syndicalists and Radicals embodied important changes occurring in Argentina related to the integration of immigrant communities into mainstream society. Due to the greater role played by children of immigrants on both sides of the relationship, perceived ethnic divisions between labor and government began to dissolve. This transformation is visible through processes of Argentinization within organized labor represented by the Syndicalists, and Italianization in the political sphere represented by the Radicals. It is also apparent in the absence of xenophobic language in the rhetoric used by Syndicalists and Radicals relative to the prior leaders of organized labor and the political system. These hybrid ethnicities led to transformations in language, customs and other cultural forms outside the scope of this project, but no less significant. They would eventually coalesce (with contributions from other immigrant communities as well) into a newfound national identity that blended elements of traditional Argentine society and influences from the millions of immigrants who settled in the country.

Finally, while violent labor-government confrontation existed throughout the 1910s and 1920s, moderation and negotiation became realistic strategies for actors on both sides of this relationship. Indeed, it required substantial effort by both Syndicalists and Radicals to deflect more militant and ideologically fanatical factions within labor, politics and broader society. Argentina's modern social history, more than a just series of violent confrontations built around extremist views on the left and the right, also contains powerful elements of pragmatism that extend back to the early-twentieth century.

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