

A project to revive the legacy of Gen. Juan Domingo Perón



Dr. Juan Gabriel Labaké, a leader of Argentina's Justicialist Party, granted the following interview to EIR, on Oct. 4, 1987. On Sept. 25, in Buenos Aires, Dr. Labaké held a 1,200-person dinner to announce the founding of the Juan Domingo Perón Museum, of which he is the vice president. He talked to EIR about the purpose of this new institution.

EIR: I understand that you were involved in the recent founding of the Juan Perón Museum and the Juan Perón Foundation in Buenos Aires. Can you give us some background on the founding and the purpose of these institutions?

Labaké: The idea came from Mrs. Isabel Perón, who visited Argentina in December 1981 and formed a liaison committee, on which I served as a member. At that time, she asked us to try to set up a museum which would group all of the general's goods and personal effects—his correspondence, his files—and serve simultaneously as a means of disseminating his political thought. Mrs. Perón's concern was, and is today, that little by little, the general's political doctrine was being forgotten, and that Peronism was losing its doctrinal content.

Peronism emerged as an authentically revolutionary movement, in the political sense of the word, to fight against dependence, in favor of national liberation, and of an international policy known as "the third position"; its three major objectives are: economic independence, political autonomy, and social justice. From here, Perón elaborated a doctrinal conception for Argentina which Mrs. Perón thought was being forgotten due to internal conflicts and electoral problems. She thought it appropriate to lay the basis for a revitalization of Peronism, by founding a museum, which could be, simultaneously, the recipient of Perón's legacy and the disseminator of his political thought.

This couldn't be done in 1983, nor when she returned in 1984, due to a number of political factors. But at the beginning of this year, during a meeting in Madrid, she asked me to please not let this year go by without founding the museum. She perceived that if Peronism continued on its downward slide, Perón's revolutionary doctrine would be forgotten.

EIR: You are the vice president of the museum, aren't you?

Labaké: Yes. In fact, the museum belongs to the Juan Domingo Perón Foundation. Isabel is the president of the founda-

tion, and I am the vice president. Its primary objective is to create the museum, and maintain it, and to sustain all of the institutions which disseminate and practice Perón's political thought.

EIR: What has been the response to this project, among the Peronist movement, and more broadly?

Labaké: Mrs. Perón didn't want the museum to be strictly a party institution, but rather a nationalist one, which would gather around the museum and around Perón's memory, all of those Argentines of a nationalist and popular sentiment. The first thing we did, after purchasing the museum house, was to create a committee of honor made up of 120 personalities from all of Argentina's political sectors who wanted to participate. Of these 120 people, 30 are politicians, of which approximately half are Peronists. The rest come from different sectors—Radicals, socialists, conservatives, etc.

All groups are represented: artists, famous athletes, writers, musicians; there are a good number of atomic scientists, since this is an area in which Argentina has a tradition. In 1951, Perón promoted research in this area. There are jurists, economists, famous doctors. What we have really done is to create a committee of the 120 most prominent nationalists in Argentina. Of course, we haven't included the Marxists, or the monetarists, since they wouldn't have accepted, so why invite them?

It was Perón who, in Argentina, awakened nationalist sentiment, and molded it into concrete policy. We are convinced that this institution, and the committee of honor, has the acceptance of the immense majority of the Argentine people, and for this reason, we dared to organize a dinner of 1,200 people, which was a great effort.

EIR: Here in the United States, the media has given prominent coverage to the emergence of a new grouping within Peronism, called the *reformers* or *renovadores*, defined as a group which is "modernizing" Peronism. What has been this group's response to the founding of the museum?

Labaké: What the international press calls the "modernization" of Peronism is, objectively, those who call themselves the *reformers*. But, some of their sectors—not all—are primarily responsible, not for a modernization of Peronism, but a *distortion* of it. What some of these sectors have done is to

cause Perón's nationalist political thought to be forgotten, adopting positions which are much closer to the social democracy. In fact, they have signed agreements and made alliances with some European groups which are financing them. On the one hand, the social democrats, on the other, the Christian democrats, are financing the reformers' campaigns.

In today's world, however, policy lines are clearly drawn. There are the popular nationalists who defend our economies, our people, and our national sovereignty; and then there are the groups which we call the *synarchists*; that is, the groups backed by an international oligarchy which defend minority interests, and want to eliminate the rest and destroy the power of institutions.

Peronism was founded as the first repository of international aspirations to fight against this synarchy. But, the reformers, with the backing of international synarchy, have gradually diminished Perón's doctrine and political thought. The museum was founded precisely to counter synarchy's campaign against Peronism. It's not surprising, therefore, that these reform groups boycotted the museum's founding and the inaugural dinner. Nonetheless, our proposal represents a reconquest of Perón's thought, under the slogan, "Return to Perón." It has been understood as such, by the Peronist militants and our base, and that is why we have had such great success. In just two months of work, not only have we organized this dinner, and formed the committee of honor, but we have raised funds to pay for the museum site. This is the positive response from the base of Peronism.

EIR: Looking at the various aspects of Perón's work, his economic policy, his scientific program, etc., can the museum have an influence on Argentina's internal situation, in terms of economic and political policy?

Labaké: In the short term, no, because we have just begun this campaign to return to Perón's ideas. But, in the medium and longer term, absolutely, because in Argentina there aren't that many policies. There are two really: Either you support dependence, or you support national liberation. There isn't anything else, and national liberation implies policies of social justice, distribution of wealth, economic independence, and political sovereignty. Policies of dependence imply, necessarily, as Dr. Alfonsín's behavior has demonstrated, a policy of handing over sovereignty and social injustice. So, you can call yourselves Alfonsín's Radicals, or conservatives, or even leftists; the so-called popular leftists clearly serve the synarchic policy of dependence.

Because of its allies, Peronism serves national liberation. This is not Manicheism, but a reality which has been demonstrated over the past 50 years, or at least since 1945. Look at what happened in 1945, when Perón emerged as a leader. He was opposed in an electoral front by the three most conservative groups from Argentina's hard-core oligarchy, together with the Communist Party, officially, and including

the Radical Party. That is, the old enemies, the conservatives and the Radicals, together with the left, the Communist Party, united against Perón. This is no accident, nor is it Manicheism on my part. This is simply the reality of countries like ours, which fight to free ourselves from dependence on the international oligarchy.

This is the battle which is being waged in Argentina today. The museum represents the revitalization of Perón's ideas regarding national liberation. Dr. Alfonsín's policies, and those of some of the reformers, are a type of camouflage,

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to disguise the old dependency with a new face that is more acceptable to people.

EIR: What was Mrs. Perón's message to the founding dinner?

Labaké: It was a brief message, appropriate to the circumstances of the dinner. It was not strictly a party affair, but rather an act of dignity, a gathering of nationalists, such that she thanked all those present, and those who had joined the effort to create the museum; she spoke of the need for national unity, and used a beautiful metaphor, which says that life has many nuances, but that these do not deprive life of its unity. In the same way, the national front, as we call it in Argentina, may have many shadings, but we are all in defense of what is the Argentine nation, and its people. Mrs. Perón also made a very heartfelt defense of the role of women in Argentina's history, and gave homage to Eva Perón as representative of the woman who fights for national liberation. She ended by thanking us all once again, and left with a phrase that has caused a bit of political nervousness in some circles. She bade us good-bye with a "We'll meet soon." Subsequently, the text of the tape was published this past week in all of the country's major newspapers.