

Progressive Jews in Argentina and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Stances on the Six-Day War (1967)

by

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Since the 1947 United Nations resolution on the partition of Palestine and, subsequently, the Israeli Declaration of Independence in 1948, the Israeli-Palestinian issue has played a powerful role in Argentine public space that has not found a concomitant response in academia. The stance with regard to the 1967 Six-Day War taken by an institution that promotes itself as representative of progressive Argentine Jews, the Idisher Cultur Farband (Argentine Federation of Jewish Cultural Institutions—ICUF), undermined certain meanings, ties of solidarity, and modes of representation held by a diversity of actors regarding the existence and legitimacy of the State of Israel.

Desde la resolución de 1947 de las Naciones Unidas sobre la partición de Palestina y, posteriormente, la Declaración de Independencia de Israel en 1948, el problema israelí-palestino ha desempeñado un papel importante en el espacio público argentino que no ha encontrado una respuesta concomitante en el mundo académico. La postura con respecto a la Guerra de los Seis Días de 1967 tomada por una institución que se promueve a sí misma como representante de los judíos progresistas argentinos, el Idisher Cultur Farband (Federación Argentina de Instituciones Culturales Judías—ICUF), socavó ciertos significados, vínculos de solidaridad y modos de representación de una diversidad de actores con respecto a la existencia y legitimidad del Estado de Israel.

Keywords: *Israel, Palestine, Communists, Jews, Argentina*

While the Arab-Israeli conflict has been rather visible in Argentine public space, few studies have addressed the concomitant tug-of-war (Klich, 1994; Méndez, 2008; Saborido, 2009). Documentary sources attest to the fact that many actors took an early stance regarding the historical evolution of the clash between Arabs, Palestinians, and Israelis. This paper problematizes the stance with regard to the 1967 Six-Day War adopted by an institution that promotes itself as representative of progressive Argentine Jews, the Idisher Cultur Farband (Argentine Federation of Jewish Cultural Institutions—ICUF). Although this

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was neither the first nor necessarily the most relevant conflict centered on the Palestine/Israel territory, it undermined certain meanings, ties of solidarity, and modes of representation held by a diversity of actors regarding the existence and legitimacy of the State of Israel (Lederhendler, 2000).

Research by Daniel Lvovich (2003) shows that in the first half of the twentieth century the Jewish question in Argentina centered on charges by right-wing nationalist organizations. This trend changed during the 1960s and particularly during the Six-Day War, when the stances and actions of Jewish institutions focused primarily on Israel, engaging with various factions of the national left. This paper fits into a larger body of work that seeks to assess the ways in which the Arab-Israeli conflict has been addressed in Argentine politics and in which an overseas war helped determine stances with regard to both international politics and the local political agenda. It also addresses the tensions that the Israel-Palestine debate fostered among left-wing national organizations and prominent Argentine Jews.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HISTORICAL SUBJECT: PROGRESSIVE JEWS

The ICUF was close to the Argentine Communist Party but did not depend directly on it. Created in 1947, it was the successor to the *Ievsetzkie* (the Yiddish-language section of the party). From the beginning it proclaimed itself the voice of progressive Argentine Jews and stood in opposition to the Zionist leaderships of the central Jewish institutions in Argentina—especially the *Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas de la República Argentina* (Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations—DAIA) and the *Asociación Mutual Israelita de Argentina* (Jewish Mutual Association of Argentina—AMIA). Given its left-leaning stance, the ICUF issued a series of manifestos and statements that often questioned the actions of the State of Israel. While this led to confrontation with Zionist groups, its relationships with some organizations and representatives of the Argentine left could also be fraught.

The presence of Jews in the ranks of the Communist Party dates to the party's origins. According to Hernán Camarero (2007: 292–296), the party, seeking to incorporate immigrant workers into the working class, assembled working-class ethnic-national associations and arranged them by language. The Fourth Congress of the Comintern in 1922 decided that these “language sections,” rather than depending on the parties in the immigrants' countries of origin, should be integrated under the leadership of the party in the receiving country.

The party's influence among the Jewish proletariat was considerable. The Jewish section of the party, led by Máximo Rosen, worked actively with *Azhkenazy* workers and spread communist propaganda among them. There is proof of this intense activity: by 1927, 14 percent of the members in the federal capital were Jewish; the weekly *Roither Shtern* (Red Star) had a circulation of about 3,500 copies, which made it the largest communist publisher after the central communist press and the Spanish edition of the *International* (Dujovne, 2008).

The *Ievsetzkie* left a strong educational and cultural imprint from the start. As noted by Svarch (2005) and Visacovsky (2015), it was the only language-section of the party that managed to establish its own school network, the *Arbeter Shul Organisatzie* (Workers' Schools Organization) or *Arbshulorg*.

Members also created meeting centers: popular libraries and labor, social, and sports clubs. The activities of communist Jews were subject to the typical hurdles inherent in the Argentine institutional and political context. Whenever a new government measure suspended or banned the activities of the Communist Party, Jewish members tended to go underground (Kahan, 2009; Loterzstain, 2014; Svarch, 2005; Visacovsky, 2015; Zadoff, 1995). When the José Félix Uriburu regime escalated repression against the party, the activities of the Ievsetzkie were either shut down or re-created in clandestine ways and spaces. In 1932, the special section of the Federal Police raided the headquarters of the Arbshulorg, shut down all member institutions, and arrested several teachers. A few years later (in 1936), the documents seized were employed to support the anticommunist law of Senator Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo (Svarch, 2005).

In 1941, following the Third Comintern¹ and the Congress in Defense of Jewish Culture, which took place in Paris in 1937, these Argentine Jewish groups banded together under the ICUF. It brought together institutions such as the Idisher Folks Teater (Popular Jewish Theatre), several resident organizations (from Warsaw and Lodz, for example), at least one home for the elderly (Méndele), and the Sholem Aleijem social sports club and created its own school network. As had its predecessor, it issued numerous publications, among them the ICUF cultural magazines (until 1950) and *Aporte* (1953–1956), the IFT's *Nai Teater* (New Theater), the *Folks Shtime* (Voice of the People) and *Tribuna* newspapers, and the bilingual publications *Idische Froi* (Jewish Woman) and *Landsmannschaft* (Land of Origin).

As Svarch (2005) points out, in contrast to the Ievsetzkie the ICUF had no explicit relationship with the Communist Party. Theoretically, it was merely a network of secular Jewish institutions that, unlike the Yiddish-language section of the party, instead of having a communist agenda vied for control of the central Jewish institutions. The relevance of the progressive sector at the heart of the Jewish community was evidenced in the electoral results for the leadership of the AMIA. In 1946, for example, the progressives were elected, dethroning the Zionists (Schenkolewski-Kroll, 1993: 195–197). A milestone in the struggle to gain control of the central institutions was the Zionists' demand during the AMIA elections of 1952 that the ICUF condemn the USSR's trials of Jewish intellectuals and artists (Loterzstain, 2014). As Loterzstain points out, the ICUF celebrated the founding of Israel. Despite its clash with local Zionist organizations, it saw the 1947 partition of Palestine as a way of weakening British imperialism in the Middle East. In fact, it stressed the fact that the Soviet Union strongly backed this initiative, opposing U.S. and British strategies to extend political domination of the territory. The Yiddish paper *Der Veg* even celebrated the Jewish military victories against the Arab League, which they considered linked to regional imperialism (Loterzstain, 2014: 142–145).²

However, the Six-Day War had an impact on the institutions affiliated with progressive Judaism. Some of their leaders (e.g., Rubén Sinay and José Goldberg) signed, along with John William Cooke, Juan Carlos Coral, Héctor Agosti, and Germán Rozenmacher, a letter of solidarity with the Arab peoples condemning Israel's racist policy. As Senkman (2000: 167–187) points out, these public stances created tension within the ICUF and led to a schism that gave birth to the Free Voice Jewish Argentine Progressive Cultural Association,³

which sought to preserve a left-wing stance that maintained solidarity with Israel and denounced the anti-Israeli stance of some sectors of the national left.⁴

PROGRESSIVE JEWS AND THE SIX-DAY WAR

The impact of the Six-Day War in Argentine political debate led the ICUF to issue a new publication addressing its stance on a variety of conflicts: the situation in the Middle East, Jewish cultural life in the Soviet Union, debates among local community organizations, and the political, economic, and cultural situation in Argentina. The pages of the monthly *Tiempo* would bear testimony to the changes and continuities of political conflicts within the community and the strained relations and nuances of perspective regarding national politics until 1987, when publication stopped. *Tiempo* was first issued on July 30, 1968 (*Tiempo*, 1968a). Julio Schvenderfinger was nominally the owner and editor-in-chief, but, as he told Beatriz Kessler (2008), he saw himself as a “straw man.” The real driving force, he said, was Rubén Sinay, “a magnificent writer, a journalist possessed of all the necessary qualities.”⁵ Its first issue addressed a wide range of issues: interviews with Abelardo Castillo, Emilio Troise, and José Iztigsohn regarding peace in the Middle East, Argentina’s political and economic situation, events in local community life, anti-Semitism, and the situation of the Jewish community in other countries and articles on literature, film, and a variety of cultural perspectives. Its publication guidelines (*Tiempo*, 1968b) encouraged

dialogue and communication between the democratic people of the Jewish-Argentine community. . . . The founders of *Tiempo* have particular views regarding the underlying causes of problems and their solutions. They think that the historical reality of our community and its possibilities for full development in diverse areas of constructive and creative activities are linked to the reign of democracy and the progressive renewal of the country’s socioeconomic structures; that external anti-Semitic threats, which have increased in an unsettling manner, are ultimately caused by extant general conditions that are detrimental to popular interests and favor reactionary acts; that the capacity for collective resistance to an external enemy and the ability to undertake fertile and diverse creative activities to consolidate our defenses both materially and spiritually are undermined by internal ruptures and defenses, intolerance, undemocratic practices in the management of representative institutions, a trend toward sectarianism that seeks to engage in ideological and political monopolization, and, above all, the clash of the decisive and majoritarian progressive and democratic forces.

At least programmatically, the editors of *Tiempo* said that the fate of community life depended on what happened nationally in terms of political practices and that “the reign of democracy and the progressive renewal of the country’s socioeconomic structures” would serve as the framework for the development of the institutional, cultural, and political dynamics of the Jewish experience in Argentina. Faced with these challenges, which implied Jewish participation in the political processes taking place in the country, the institutional dynamics of the community had to be renewed and the spectrum of democratically acknowledged voices expanded.

However, and in line with the ups and downs of Argentine politics, *Tiempo* witnessed a long and contentious process that included military dictatorships, the return of Peronism to the governmental sphere, the democratic transition begun in 1983, and the discussions surrounding the armed forces' responsibility in the perpetration of state terrorism. Its first issue highlighted the link between the community and Israel while noting that the latter could not be exempted from criticism with regard to its governmental policies (*Tiempo*, 1968b):

[We] think that the legitimate national rights of the state and people of Israel cannot be questioned; that the Jewish state was born in line with and not in contradiction to the nationalist and liberating process of the peoples of the Middle East; that its fair claim for its integrity and sovereignty to be respected forces it to reciprocate the rights and national aspirations of the Arab peoples and show solidarity with their emancipatory struggles; that the lack of a solution to extant conflicts fundamentally responds to the disturbing actions of imperialism, which is fueled by chauvinistic attitudes on both sides; that the situation arising from the June 1967 war—marked by continual violent incidents likely to slide toward a new military horror—can be resolved, with fruitful prospects for the peace and welfare of Israel and its people, with the full implementation of the November 22, 1967, resolution of the UN Security Council.

The institutions affiliated with the ICUF would continue to advocate the UN resolution as the viable framework for the interpretation and resolution of the Middle Eastern conflict. The first condition was for Israel to withdraw its troops from the territories occupied during the last conflict; the second was the recognition of the sovereign legitimacy of all states in the region. Finally, the UN requested a fair solution to the refugee crisis. Ongoing Israeli failure to adopt this strategy would serve to condemn the occupation and Israel's continued bellicose stance, as the resolution of the federation's ninth congress on November 2, 1968, at the headquarters of the Jewish institution in Villa Lynch shows (*Tiempo*, 1968k).⁶ This stance was countered by other representative Jewish institutions such as the DAIA, whose territorial convention and Association of Survivors of Nazi Persecution celebrated, in 1968, the first anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem and the Israeli government's annexationist policies (*Tiempo*, 1968b). The pages of another Jewish community source exemplify the festive character of this meeting (*Nueva Sión*, May 16, 1968):

It is with joy and jubilant enthusiasm that this year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the State of Israel. We celebrate it in extraordinary circumstances for Israel, with the reunification of Jerusalem and expanded borders after the great victory of Israeli troops during the Six-Day War. At the same time, border expansion highlights the need to increase the "aliyah" of free nations and populate the new territories.

This stance was criticized by *Tiempo*: addressing the reunification as consummated and irreversible meant celebrating a unilateral step taken by Israel and ignoring the UN Security Council. The ICUF advocated a comprehensive resolution to the conflict between Israel and its neighbors and, along with other organizations and actors, promoted the creation of the Argentine Committee for Peace in the Middle East, which began its sessions in the halls of the

Argentine Hebraic Society on May 18 and 19 of that year. The attendees called on global progressive forces to intervene in favor of a stable peace and an end to the arms race in the region. In particular, they appealed to “the progressive Arab and Jewish forces and all pacifist sectors of Latin America to support the efforts and hopes of the Movement for Peace in the Near East” (*Tiempo*, 1968c).

Among the initiatives that inaugurated *Tiempo* and focused on the conflict in the Middle East was a survey of renowned personalities from various left-wing groups—Abelardo Castillo, José Itzigsohn, Emilio Troise, León Pérez, Pedro Orgambide, Horacio Verbitsky, and Alfredo Varela (*Tiempo*, 1968d)—asking the following questions (*Tiempo*, 1968e):

1. In your opinion, what are the determining factors in the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries?
2. How do you interpret the Arab refusal to acknowledge the legitimate national rights of the State of Israel?
3. What do you think about the idea of a “Greater Israel,” held by Israeli sectors and based on the territories occupied during the war of June 1967?
4. Do you think that the resolution of the UN Security Council on the Middle East issued on November 22, 1967, establishes a fair and viable basis for conflict resolution between the Israelis and the Arabs?

Generally, responses agreed on one unquestionable fact: that the State of Israel existed and attempts at effacing it were negative and chauvinistic. While for some thinkers (Itzigsohn, Troise, Verbitsky, and Varela) the conflict originated in or was fueled by U.S. or British imperialism, the tensions between the two national groups were considered rooted in the legitimacy of their respective programs of national liberation, which had opposing aspirations (Castile and Itzigsohn). León Pérez, in contrast, blamed the various factions of the Arab leadership because, in their disputes over regional governance, they had turned Israel into a “scapegoat” for class-based infighting in their respective countries.

Regarding the “Greater Israel” issue and the expanded borders following the Six-Day War, opinions were generally damning. While Itzigsohn and Verbitsky thought that Israel’s insistence on those borders was equivalent to the Arab refusal of its right to exist, Troise and Varela characterized it as a corollary of an annexation policy underpinned by the Israeli leadership and active imperialism in the region. Pérez, for his part, argued that one type of chauvinism answered another: “Arabs who dream of annihilating Israel create and nurture Jews who dream of subjecting the Arab peoples and founding Greater Israel.” Abelardo Castillo spoke differently (*Tiempo*, 1968d):

I wanted to talk about this because I find it disturbing. And it also makes me ashamed. In this conflict, supporting the need for peace in the Middle East did not entail being against the Jews, it meant *supporting* the Jews. I don’t know what trick of speech made it otherwise. That was my position, as well as that of any lucid leftist unencumbered by the abstractions created by the Committee. But if the idea you mentioned does exist, then we should all be ashamed, Jews included. That idea, if it exists, is absurd and awful. It is a historical brutality

surely born of the mind of some military man caught in a Napoleonic delirium. . . . The theory of Greater Israel, to me, is no different from Hitler's expansionist doctrines or devious U.S. imperialism. Or it differs by just a matter of meters. . . . Israel's victory was a moral victory; that was its strength, there lay its depth of justice. A victorious country calling for peace, an army that will withdraw from the occupied territory once its people have been assured of their security. If you change that image, the Arabs, paradoxically, start being right: Israel wants an empire. . . . I want to believe that those maps do not exist, and that the theory of a Greater Israel can't fit into the heads of more than two or three imbeciles. If I were an Israeli and had power, I would order that the inventor of said doctrine be shot as a traitor to his people.

Finally, most interviewees agreed that the UN resolution indeed served as the framework within which to steer the peace process in the region. Two of those surveyed, however, broke with the ICUF party line. Verbitsky said, from a viewpoint close to realpolitik, that the resolution was pointless "from the moment at which neither party accepted it." He maintained that the UN had never established "fair and viable" bases for resolving any conflict (*Tiempo*, 1968e).⁷ León Pérez called attention to the effectiveness of international organizations:

I've said several times since the Six-Day War that peace is possible but not likely. Those who think the resolutions of international bodies suffice as peace-keeping instruments should be warned. The Security Council resolution of November 22 is the result of agreements between powers; it posits something that is desirable but not possible. It updates and configures a given program and nothing more, but nothing less than that. Peace in a situation such as that in the Near East is a long educational process. Peace is, of course, different from a cease-fire agreement or even a cessation of the bellicose state.

Tiempo's appeal to these intellectuals acknowledged their outstanding careers and evidenced, despite their disagreements with the ICUF platform, how close their stances were to that of the monthly's editors. Appeals to intellectuals would serve as a recurring tool through which to legitimize *Tiempo's* condemnation of Israeli annexationist policy and bond with Jewish intellectual stances in other latitudes as far as Israeli policy was concerned. For example, the 1970 February/March issue reported a meeting in Haifa between "Arab and Jewish men of culture" as opposing the "policy of chauvinism, annexation, and suppression they are witnessing with increasing frequency in the country [Israel]" (*Tiempo*, 1970a).⁸ The monthly's pages also carried denunciations by personalities in Israel, the United States, and the Soviet Union of the Eshkol government's annexationist policy. For example, on December 1968 a document highlighted the condemnation, on the part of the U.S. Union of Jewish Clubs and Societies, of Israeli violence pointing to the UN resolution as the basis for peace in the region (*Tiempo*, 1968m). Another contribution signed by various Israelis decried Israeli persecution of Arabs in the country,⁹ and yet another described in detail the result of a meeting of prominent figures in Israel under the title "The Occupation: Bad for Israel" (*Tiempo*, 1969e). Along the same lines, Aaron Cohen, Raúl Barg, and Tawfik Toubi condemned the Israeli occupation and called for a peace agreement with neighboring countries (*Tiempo*, 1969f).

Clashes along the border and the hijacking of an Israeli aircraft¹⁰ served the ICUF to illustrate that the June 1967 war had not ensured peace as its

proponents had predicted (*Tiempo*, 1968i). The information provided by *Tiempo* remarked on the fact that Israel's security had in fact become more precarious than before the Six-Day War. This context serves to explain the ICUF's appeal during the Jewish New Year in 1968 (*Tiempo*, 1968h):

The Federation of Jewish Cultural Entities of Argentina, . . . most concerned about the growing tensions along the Arab-Israeli borders, which threaten to escalate into a new clash of considerable proportions, calls on the opposing sides to reflect on the colossal consequences such an event would have and to abide by the November 22, 1967, UN Security Council resolution, which sets the foundations for fair and safe peace. . . . We strongly condemn the El Fatah attacks, which do not lead to any positive resolution, and we similarly condemn the regrettable anti-Arab excesses that have taken place of late in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Two subsequent events marked a milestone with regard to *Tiempo's* criticisms and condemnations of Israel's belligerent policy. The actions carried out by the Israel Defense Forces at the Beirut international airport in December 1968 radicalized critiques of Israeli military strategy in the Middle East. *Tiempo* published the first chronicles of the Palestinian experience in the occupied territories (Ben-Ami, 1969), and the ICUF leadership sent a letter to the Israeli diplomatic delegation in Argentina requesting that the opinion of democratic and progressive Jews in the country be taken into account and expressing its view that Israel should accept the UN resolution (*Tiempo*, 1969b). Both the letter and the journal editorial condemn the use of military strength as a way of attaining peace and security in the Middle East (1969a; see also 1969d):

The consequences of this act, which Israeli leaders deemed necessary to "stop terrorism," increases the international isolation of the Jewish state, the growing suspicion with which the democratic world listens to the pacifist claims of Israeli spokesmen, the strengthening of Arab sectors closed to any possibility of peacefully resolving the conflict with Israel. . . . A year and a half after the "six-day war" there is no longer any doubt among the Jewish people that the war did not solve any vital problems for the State of Israel. The employment of the same motives to justify the actions in Beirut shows that the Eshkol government still thinks that the security and tranquility of the Israeli people depend exclusively on military power and capacity. . . . The Israeli people cannot rest their future upon such tremendously dangerous foundations.

Addressing the Israeli diplomatic delegation became a recurrent strategy. On July 8, 1970, representatives of 23 Jewish institutions linked to the ICUF presented a petition signed by 2,000 community members "seriously concerned by the turn of events in the Middle East." The document condemned Israeli military incursions into Arab territories and denounced the human rights violations visited upon civilians. This petition was described as anticipating an ICUF initiative to collect 20,000 signatures to address "the Government of Jerusalem and express the opinion of a sizable sector of the Jewish community in our country" (*Tiempo*, 1970c). The second trigger was the way Israel engaged with Egypt and the occupied territories after the Six-Day War. A war of attrition characterized by a series of raids and artillery exchanges in these territories violated the cease-fire. This dynamic, which increased Egyptian pressure on Israeli stances, was lauded by Israeli authorities because it legitimized military control over the territories

annexed during the war. However, this spiral of episodic violence was condemned by the ICUF (Comité Argentino por la Paz en Medio Oriente, 1968):

A large part of the Israeli population went to war in June convinced this was the only way to avoid the extermination and destruction advocated by irresponsible extremists in the Arab world. It is pointless to reopen the debate on whether the danger was real or not and whether there were other goals behind such military action. What matters is that now there is a real threat to the existence of the Israeli people, and this springs from the unfair consequences of the June war. This threat cannot be countered by another war. This threat can only be stopped by peace. And peace is possible. It is up to the Israeli people to opt for a peaceful offensive and demand that their leaders comply with the resolution of the Security Council, fueled by the same sense of self-preservation that inspired them when these same leaders launched a war. In this peaceful offensive, the Israeli people will have the total support and solidarity of Jewish communities around the world.

The ICUF's condemnation of the bellicose and annexationist Israeli policy that followed the Six-Day War was, however, not an obstacle when it came to vigorously criticizing anti-Israeli left-wing stances. During the meeting of the Argentine Committee for Peace in the Near East held at the Argentine Hebrew Society in the middle of May 1968, it stated (*Tiempo*, 1968d):

Many left-wing sectors engage in an ideological distortion when they identify Israel with imperialism and the Arab countries with progress and anti-imperialism; both sides have progressive and reactionary sectors, and the latter are the direct beneficiaries of war and imperialist interference. . . . On several occasions, the global left has failed to criticize the warmongering chauvinism of progressive Arab sectors; they have discriminated against the Israeli left in global socialist meetings as well as those involving developing countries, as happened at the Tricontinental Congress in Havana; they have failed to support the Arab and Jewish left wings so as to foster understanding; in short, they have failed to truly adopt a peacemaking spirit in view of the global risks the Near East situation entails.

While the ICUF condemned Israeli expansionism, it was equally critical of the violence employed by organizations representing Palestine and/or the Arab world. The translation of an article issued by *Sovetskaia Rossiya*, the organ of the Soviet Union's Communist Party, describing leader Georgi Dadiants's stay in Damascus criticized the violent stance taken by the Palestinian resistance directed by Al Fatah (*Tiempo*, 1969g). However, the watershed moment in this left-wing struggle took place on the eve of the celebration of the Ninth World Festival of Youth and Students in Sofia, Bulgaria. The Algerian delegation decried Israeli participation, arguing that no one representing that country could be progressive. The Syrian delegation withdrew during the opening ceremonies to protest the display of the Israeli flag. The ICUF condemned these acts, pointing out that the Israeli delegation was made up of both Jewish and Arab youths, representing Israel's broad cultural diversity (*Tiempo*, 1968f). A subsequent issue of *Tiempo* interviewed a young Argentine Jew who had participated in the festival and addressed the ICUF's condemnation, explaining the vicissitudes surrounding the Algerian delegation and the progressive position of Israel's youth delegation (*Tiempo*, 1968j):

[The Algerian] delegation seemingly attended with the goal of preventing the participation of the Israeli delegation. To do so, they tried to influence other Arab

delegations with heightened nationalism and elements that are very dear to Arab youth. . . . However, they who posited that either the Israelis or they should go were the ones who had to leave the festival in the end, given the International Facilitating Committee's refusal to exclude the Israelis. This was the correct approach. The Israeli delegation, which included combatants from the Six-Day War, was a hardworking, tenacious committee that underscored the negative and dangerous role of the warmongering Dayan-Eshkol group and the terrible consequences this policy will have for the people of Israel. . . . At the same time, they expressed clear solidarity with the people of Vietnam, distinguishing the attackers from the attacked. It was a valuable delegation that made important contributions to the festival. They lived on the same block as the Arab delegation.

The ICUF's tensions with some sectors of the left were not exclusively focused on the Arab-Israeli issue. Frictions with other Jewish Argentine organizations took a central place. Some of these, particularly the DAIA and the socialist-Zionist youth movements (Kahan, 2005), thought the ICUF's criticism of Israel was a corollary of its identification with the Soviet regime, which they accused of being anti-Semitic. As noted above, these accusations relied on reports of persecution and murder of Jews during the Stalinist period. The ICUF, however, denied charges of fundamental anti-Judaism. The pages of *Tiempo* were filled with information regarding the active life of the Jews in socialist countries and efforts to refute accusations of persecution of Jews under these regimes. However, as violence escalated in the Middle East and the ICUF's criticism of Israel deepened, the DAIA's anti-Soviet preaching increased. In October 1969, for example, the Foundation for Human Rights organized a Conference on Discrimination and Anti-Semitism that included several local Jewish personalities. The filmmaker and member of the editorial committee of the journal *Temps Modernes* Claude Lanzmann attended as both guest and speaker and warned the audience of left-wing "neo-anti-Semitism," especially on the part of the Soviets, said to "conceal their anti-Jewish hatred with anti-Zionism" (*Tiempo*, 1969i)

This anti-Soviet campaign, as the ICUF termed it, was intended "to conceal the racist, annexationist, and pro-imperialist policy taken by Zionism" and was a way of "seeding disappointment and mistrust among the Jewish masses regarding national liberation movements" that, ultimately, sought to "create an atmosphere of despair and confusion" that stimulated the Israeli exodus and the creation of "new population contingents for Dayan's armies" (Barg, 1969). Finally, and in response to a DAIA communiqué issued during March 1970 regarding the "situation of the Jews in the USSR," the ICUF board of directors decried its charges as reactionary and as calling into question the DAIA's ability to act as a spokesperson for the Jewish community (*Tiempo*, 1970b): "This statement may apply to some sectors of the community that are attached to the DAIA and respond to its designs; but the DAIA is in no way authorized to assume responsibility for the whole of the Jewish-Argentine community, which is made up of sectors with differing opinions that are not connected to its overt or covert goals."

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Arab-Israeli conflict and, particularly, the Six-Day War led to a gamut of stances and polemics within the Argentine Jewish community, for which the

ICUF was an outstanding spokesperson. These experiences were not, however, exclusive to Argentina. As shown by Mendelsohn (1993; 1997) and Traverso (2004), among others, the Jewish experience since the start of the modern period has been steeped in debates and tensions regarding the political stances taken by a variety of players in a variety of contexts: emancipation, the cycle of social and political revolutions, World War II and the Holocaust, the Cold War, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The ICUF's rejection of Israel's annexationist policy and bellicose strategy must be understood in terms of the debates within the Jewish community and its international political alignments in the context of the Cold War. The link between the USSR and the ICUF served to discredit the stance of progressive Jews among Argentine Jews who identified with Israel. At the same time, the allegations of lack of security and the threat of ongoing conflict that followed the Six-Day War were used by *Tiempo* editors to promote and expand their world disarmament campaign as a way of encouraging perpetual peace (see, e.g., *Tiempo*, 1968g). The journal's criticism of Israeli policy and, consequently, of local Jewish institutions with Zionist affiliations involved disseminating the words of local intellectuals and authorized collectives (e.g., Israeli or U.S. professors, artists, intellectuals). Thus its stance led to a series of actions meant to challenge the sense of legitimacy of the Jewish community, adopting an antiviolent and pacifist approach akin to that of Argentine leftists at the end of the 1960s.

NOTES

1. "After 10 years of all-out struggle without allies, the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany led to the adoption of a new strategy: that of the Popular Front. Moscow recommended that communist parties around the world should join with all liberal democratic factions, from conservatives to social democrats, to fight the common fascist enemy" (Svarch, 2005).

2. This stance was consistent with that of the Argentine Communist Party (see Saborido, 2009).

3. The disagreement within the ICUF regarding the Arab-Israeli issue was later compounded by that regarding the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

4. The Six-Day War had a profound effect among non-Jewish actors linked to the Argentine Communist Party who had had to leave after the Soviet Union was criticized for its anti-Semitic policies. The result of this split was the National Liberation Movement, made up of Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals including José Bleger, Bernardo Kordon, Delia Etcheverry, Abelardo Castillo, and Sergio Bagú, which came into conflict with other left-wing groups that were critical of Israel.

5. Sinay was one of the ICUF's notable intellectuals and one of the staunchest critics of Zionist associations in Argentina (see Kahan, 2005; Visacovsky, 2015).

6. On the back cover of the same issue is the UN resolution that, on November 29, 1947, gave birth to the State of Israel. The counterpoint between this resolution and that of November 22, 1967, was used by the ICUF editors to highlight the UN's mission and discredit the Israeli policy that failed to comply with the more recent resolution (see *Tiempo*, 1968l).

7. Verbitsky also commented sarcastically on the UN: "Optimistically, this is a body as useless as academia, issuing long dicta that no one heeds, given its lack of moral and material authority. Which of the signatory states applies, within its territory or outside of it, the Declaration of Human Rights?"

8. A similar document in No. 6 reports a statement by the U.S. Union of Jewish Clubs and Societies condemning the violence in Israel and stating that the November 22, 1967, resolution laid the foundations for peace in the region (*Tiempo*, 1968m). *Tiempo* would in turn publish a letter signed by various prominent Israelis decrying the persecution of Arabs in the country (*Tiempo*, 1969c).

9. A similar chronicle speaks of an “overflowing” meeting at the Haod Theater in Tel Aviv involving prominent cultural and scientific Israeli personalities discussing “a fair peace between Israel and its neighbors” (*Tiempo*, 1969h).

10. On July 23, 1968, an El Al plane was hijacked in Rome by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and taken to Algiers, where, with the complicity of the Algerian government, the hostages were kept for 40 days until an international pilot boycott forced their release.

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