
Interview: Juan Gabriel Labaké

Former Argentine President victim of legal witchhunt

by Cynthia Rush

With a good deal of fanfare and international publicity, Argentine President Raúl Alfonsín has tried and sentenced some of his country's top military officers, accused of violations of human rights and illicit activity, during the 1976-83 military regime.

But one thing he has not done is to lift the unjust charges brought against former President Isabel Martínez de Perón, by those same military men who overthrew her constitutional government in March of 1976. After the armed forces toppled Mrs. Perón, the widow of Gen. Juan Domingo Perón, they jailed her for five years, stripped her of both her political rights and personal possessions, and ordered her to pay \$3.9 million for "damages" to the State, allegedly committed under her presidency.

Mrs. Perón was freed from jail in 1981, and left the country to reside in Madrid, Spain. In 1983, the military returned her confiscated goods and lifted the ban on her political activity, with certain stipulations. However, the demand that she pay the \$3.9 million indemnity to the State, has been ruled valid by the presiding judge in the case, and upheld by Argentina's court of appeals, despite the fact that the proceedings were brought by those military men who usurped power 10 years ago.

As one of Mrs. Perón's collaborators and friends, Juan Gabriel Labaké, explains to *EIR* in the following interview, this legal witchhunt is politically motivated. It is intended to guarantee that Mrs. Perón plays no role inside Argentina in shaping the Peronist movement as a united political force, capable of providing a programmatic alternative at a time when the Alfonsín government has allowed the International Monetary Fund to further wreck the nation's economy and sow social chaos.

Perhaps for this reason, Raúl Alfonsín has not gone out of his way to act on Mrs. Perón's behalf, even though he is empowered to do so as the constitutionally elected President who has staked his reputation on returning the nation to "democracy," after six years of military rule. Once the courts issued their rulings, he limited his actions to "promising" never to try to collect the \$3.9 million from Isabel Perón, a promise that has no legal weight, should any subsequent

government decide that Mrs. Perón should pay.

Under these circumstances, as Mr. Labaké emphasizes, the sudden "voluntary" surrender to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Miami, of Argentina's former Social Welfare Minister José López Rega, is ominous. López Rega, a fu who directed the infamous "Triple-A" death squad apparatus, as well as drug and weapons trafficking, from his position of power at the Social Welfare ministry, and later as an adviser to Isabel Perón.

As confirmed in subsequent investigation, López Rega's political allies, inside Argentina and internationally, formed part of the drug/gun-trafficking and money-laundering operations run by Licio Gelli's Propaganda 2 Freemasonic lodge. This apparatus placed many of its agents in key positions in the last Peronist government (1974-76), from where they not only carried out illicit activities, but made the decisions that eventually sunk the nation in economic and social chaos, providing the pretext for a military coup.

López Rega's unexpected surrender in Miami, at a time when he might have returned to Switzerland and resided there safely for years, is undoubtedly an effort to implicate Mrs. Perón, as well as several other important Peronists, in the illicit operations run by the López Rega crowd. The Argentine government has initiated extradition proceedings that would bring the gnostic witch back to Buenos Aires, to stand trial for his crimes.

EIR: What is the status of the criminal cases pending against Mrs. Perón?

Labaké: The legal status of Mrs. Perón at this moment is extremely complicated because she is awaiting the outcome of five criminal proceedings initiated against her by the military government, in which she is accused of supposed crimes which, even though they have no serious political basis, caused her to suffer a five-year long judicial process.

Finally, she was sentenced in 1976 to seven and a half years in prison, life-long prohibition from engaging in political activity, and—incredibly—ordered to pay the State the equivalent of a \$3.9 million indemnity for alleged damages



done to the Argentine State. In 1981, the authorities considered that she had fulfilled two-thirds of her sentence, and in accordance with military law, she was given conditional freedom. However, the military government demanded that in exchange for her freedom she exile herself to Spain until 1983.

In 1983, in the last month of the military regime, her confiscated goods were returned to her, at least formally. Her sentence was pronounced served in full, and the ban on political activity lifted. However, it was lifted only *after* the Justicialist (Peronist) Party had chosen their full slate of candidates for the presidency of the Republic and for the new National Council. In other words, the political ban was lifted *only* when it was impossible for her to play any role regarding the October 1983 presidential elections. However, the \$3.9 million indemnity to the State remained pending. When the constitutional process returned, I, in my capacity as a companion and friend of Mrs. Perón, called on the constitutional government to eliminate the absurd and unjust demand that Mrs. Perón pay this amount to the State.

The government of Dr. Alfonsín issued Decree No. 1301 in 1984, by which the State desisted in its effort to collect that indemnity, and, on the basis of this, Mrs. Perón's lawyer and the government's lawyer, went before Judge Giletta, the presiding judge in the case, with the request that he declare collection of that \$3.9 million null and void. To everyone's surprise, in June of 1984, Dr. Giletta ruled that Decree 1301 by which the State desisted in its effort to collect the money, was unconstitutional, and that Mrs. Perón was still liable.

At that same time, the national congress passed a law which did justice to Mrs. Perón and to all those who had suffered political trials at the hands of the military. According to that law, No. 23062, any proceedings that a *de facto* government might initiate against deposed constitutional governments—against Isabel and the others as well—were declared null and void. But, since Dr. Giletta had declared Decree 1301 unconstitutional, it was necessary to go to the Appeals Court, to reaffirm the State's decision not to demand payment from Mrs. Perón. But the court, named by the constitutional government of Dr. Alfonsín, refused to do so, and advised the government that it would even declare Decree 23062 unconstitutional.

Both the government lawyer, and Mrs. Perón's lawyer, were forced to withdraw their joint request regarding the indemnity payment, and since then—August, September of 1984—Mrs. Perón's situation has been very precarious. The demand for payment has no juridical basis, with only the promise of the Alfonsín government not to try to collect it. But if it later decides to collect it, or if the next government, whomever it may be, wishes to juridically threaten Mrs. Perón, it will be able to demand the \$3.9 million.

EIR: What about the civil suits against Mrs. Perón?

Labaké: The second wife of General Perón, Evita, died in 1952. Shortly afterwards, Evita's mother, who according to the law at the time was Evita's only heir, signed an agreement with General Perón known in Argentina as the ceding of rights, or sale of rights by which Evita's mother transferred all claim to her daughter's bequest to General Perón. Perón, then, remained the sole inheritor of Evita's goods, which had been the goods of the Perón couple.

However, in yet another act of political persecution, immediately following Perón's overthrow in 1955, Evita's mother—Mrs. Duarte—initiated a suit to declare null the cession of rights to Perón. During the later government of General Lanusse in 1971, the judges ruled that the cession of rights was null, and Mrs. Duarte was able to demand from Perón 50% of all his possessions. But since the military government in 1955 had stripped Perón of all his possessions, Mrs. Duarte was entitled to 50% of exactly nothing.

In 1973, our constitutional government returned Perón's possessions to him, and paid him an indemnity for all the damages he had suffered from 1955 until 1973. When we returned his possessions, no one doubted that 50% would have to be given to Evita's mother.

Perón asked Isabel to deposit part of that money, equalling some \$8.4 million, to the account of Mrs. Duarte, and in 1975, Isabel deposited 37% of that money, assuming that it was a more than generous amount. Eva's mother and sisters demanded more, but without declaring how much they wanted.

The negotiations with them were under way when the March 1976 coup d'état occurred and Isabel was taken prisoner. She was held *incomunicado* for five years and again, as with Perón in 1955, the military government confiscated all her possessions, *including* the deposit she had made for Eva's sisters, which they had not wanted to draw on because they said it was too small, so the deposit remained in a checking account. It had remained in pesos which at that time were known as *pesos ley* in Argentina, and which underwent the devaluation of the brutal inflation our country suffered between 1976 and 1983.

In November of 1983, on the eve of the military government's departure from office, it returned Isabel's goods to her—among them, these 31 million *pesos ley* that she had deposited to Evita's sisters' account.

Now, on April 11, our Civil Appeals Court just issued a monstrous ruling. First, they ordered Isabel to pay all that Evita's sisters had requested in 1975, which is, instead of 31 million pesos, 42 million *pesos ley*, that is, approximately \$4.2 million, but with the very high interest rates plus the costs of the trial, today equals \$10 million. . . .

EIR: What do you think is really behind this legal offensive against Mrs. Perón?

Labaké: We think that all of this is connected to the sugges-

tive and suspicious appearance of José López Rega [former minister of Social Welfare] and his "voluntary" surrender to the U.S. FBI. The political objective is to prevent Mrs. Perón from returning to political activity, knowing that her return to Argentina and to a full political life, will in large part, determine the reorganization and unification of Peronism.

Therefore, López Rega suddenly reappears to complicate Mrs. Perón's political life, and with all these fictitious debts, she is blocked economically from acting. In Argentina, a person who owes more money than the worth of his or her possessions, can be condemned by what we call here, a "general inhibition of property," a kind of economic sentence. This person cannot conduct trade; any money earned is immediately embargoed in favor of the creditor; similarly, anything purchased immediately becomes the property of the creditor. But, in addition, it is a public dishonor. The person considered a delinquent debtor is morally prevented from political activity. If Mrs. Perón is faced with a moral, even if not juridical, impediment to her return to Argentine politics, this, in my opinion, is an attempt to block her politically.

EIR: What is the current status of Peronism in its efforts to achieve greater unity?

Labaké: Many efforts are being made to achieve unity. I am, however, not optimistic, or at least not very optimistic because Peronism has been, and still remains, very disoriented since the death of the General in 1974, and the overthrow of Isabel in 1976. The internal debate continues over whether Peronism must continue to be a national movement or whether it can simply turn itself into some sort of liberal party. This would call for a fundamental reorganization. On the other hand, there are certain Peronist tendencies which are trying to move us toward a European-style [social-democratic] political party, which would in effect, take away Peronism's popular revolutionary character.

Efforts now under way are purely formal, for a formal unity that would present a single slate of candidates with party authorization, but which still lacks that in-depth unity stemming from ideological and programmatic unity. . . .

EIR: If Mrs. Perón could act freely, without all these problems you've described, what would her role be?

Labaké: Were she totally free at this time, I imagine she would leave the party to reorganize itself from a purely formal viewpoint, without any interference from her, encouraging those groups which are pushing a nationalist and popular approach to establish their leadership. Her approach is to encourage those who are trying to help Peronism recover its national and popular revolutionary role. The purpose of the legal cases against her is to juridically condemn her, and leave her penniless. This is a problem the Alfonsín government has not solved. It would appear that they want to leave her with these unsolvable economic problems.

Trilateral-KGB lobby exposed in Spain

by Mark Burdman and Leonardo Servadio

During the first days of April, the Spanish government let it be known that Prime Minister Felipe González has set definite dates for his long-awaited state visit to Moscow. According to information reported in the Spanish dailies, González will be in Moscow from May 19 to 23.

The prime minister's office failed to draw attention to one curious fact about these dates. From May 17 to 19, immediately before González is scheduled to go, the Trilateral Commission will be holding its international plenary meeting in Madrid, Spain's capital. The "coincidence" may not have been noted officially, but the coincidence between Soviet and Trilateral Commission operations in Spain, has suddenly drawn headline attention in the Spanish press.

In its edition for the week of April 7, the Spanish weekly *Cambio 16*, ran a seven-page feature entitled, "The Spanish Entrepreneurs Sell Gold to Moscow," exposing the most-entrenched links of the Soviet intelligence services to the Spanish business community. On page 21, there is a giant red-background hammer-and-sickle, with a photo underneath of José Carlos March Delgado, the scion of Spain's very influential March banking family and among the most active Spanish members of the Trilateral Commission, who have helped plan for the May 17-19 plenary that precedes González's send-off.

Before reporting some of the details of the *Cambio 16* revelations, and some other details of the Spanish situation known to *EIR*, we should first underline that the "coincidence" of plans of the Commission founded by banker David Rockefeller and the Russian dictatorship, is not entirely a surprise. In mid-March of this year, the Italian weekly *Panorama*, basing itself on Italian Trilateral Commission sources, reported that among the discussions on the agenda of the Madrid meeting, will be the idea of holding the next Trilateral plenary in a site where the Trilateral has never met before, most probably Moscow. Since the summer of 1985, when the Soviet Foreign Ministry's *International Affairs* journal hailed the Trilateral Commission's opposition to the Strategic Defense Initiative, the Trilateral-Soviet global love affair has been no secret to the public.

On the Madrid meeting itself, *EIR* has learned that one of the featured speakers will be Jimmy Carter-era U.S. National