

This article was downloaded by: [Tel Aviv University Central Library]

On: 10 February 2009

Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 791596239]

Publisher Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



International Journal of the History of Sport

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title-content=t713672545>

'El primer deportista': the political use and abuse of sport in peronist Argentina

Raanan Rein ^a

^a Tel Aviv University,

Online Publication Date: 01 August 1998

To cite this Article Rein, Raanan(1998)'El primer deportista': the political use and abuse of sport in peronist Argentina',International Journal of the History of Sport,15:2,54 — 76

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/09523369808714028

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523369808714028>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

'El Primer Deportista': **The Political Use and Abuse of Sport in** **Peronist Argentina**

RAANAN REIN

When the 'Liberating Revolution' (*Revolución Libertadora*) removed General Juan Perón from the presidency in September 1955, it sought to eradicate every vestige of Peronism from national life, and one of its first moves was to 'de-Peronize' sports. It did this by boycotting certain prominent Argentine athletes identified with 'the deposed regime' and by appointing *interventores* (federal supervisors) to the Argentine Soccer Association, the Argentine Olympic Committee, and other sports organizations. One of its last moves before national elections mediated the transition to a civilian government at the beginning of 1958 was to abolish the sports and physical education department of the ministry of education and justice. In the decree published by the minister of education, the following reasons were given for this step:

The deposed government turned the organization and teaching of physical education and sports into an instrument of political propaganda, corrupting and subverting their true values and significance...

Physical education, as a subject of instruction, does not merit preferential treatment or treatment different from that extended to other school subjects.

On the contrary, [in Argentina] physical education has never been considered a compulsory subject or been included in the core curriculum, and pupils attending gymnastics practice [outside of school] or whose health might suffer were excused from it.¹

These measures reflected the anti-Peronists' sweeping identification of athletic activity in general, and sports for children and young people in particular, with 'the deposed regime'. The opponents of the Peronist regime saw the regime's encouragement and promotion of sports during the years 1946–55 as additional proof of its 'Nazi-Fascist' character. Again and again they recalled the way the Nazis in Germany and the Fascists in Italy had

tried to exploit sport for political purposes. When the Peronist regime organized the world basketball championship in 1950 and, a year later, the first Pan-American Games, in Buenos Aires, critics lost no time in comparing these events to the world soccer championship organized by Benito Mussolini in 1934 or the Olympics hosted by Adolf Hitler's regime in Berlin in 1936.²

Although the regime's enemies, seeking to demonize Peronism in every way possible, were obviously exaggerating, certainly no Argentine government prior to Perón – and probably none since – invested as much effort and as many resources in both the development and encouragement of sport and in the effort to earn political dividends from this policy.³ This article will examine the way Peronism used sport for the dual purpose of reshaping the Argentine national consciousness in the spirit of *justicialismo* (as the Peronist ideology was called, from the word *justicia*, or 'justice'), and mobilizing support for and loyalty to the regime and the personality cult of the president known as '*el Primer Deportista*' ('the First Sportsman').

The political and historiographical disputes about Peronism are echoed by a debate concerning the regime's sports policy. In the field of sports, as in the education system during those years, elements of democratization and popularization as well as political socialization and indoctrination were discernible. While supporters of Peronism prefer to emphasize the first two elements, its opponents stress the other two. This article will address all these aspects.

The Peronist regime encouraged amateur and competitive sports of various kinds for children and adults, men and women – not only in the federal capital, but also in the provinces and the national territories. This expansion of athletic activity was an expression of the regime's populist character. In 1949 Perón was already explaining why it was important not only to sponsor competitive and exhibition sports, but also to encourage all citizens to participate in them:

A distinction must be made between 'spectator sports' and sports as an activity. The former postulates 10 playing and 300,000 watching, whereas the ideal would be 300,000 playing and 10 watching.

The real benefit of sports lies in practising them, although spectator sports are also necessary, because they educate, create a [sporting] ambience or climate, and encourage participation.

I want my country to be a nation of athletes, with educated minds and strengthened bodies.... We're on our way – getting there will depend on the Argentines and on the public authorities' support and promotion by all possible means.⁴

Indeed, as one of the regime's propagandists claimed with some overstatement, Perón turned the country into an 'immense and clamorous stadium'.⁵ Money was channelled into the various sports associations. Tens of thousands of children from all over the Republic participated in sports championships for children and teenagers. More than once Peronist deputies proposed appeals in the national legislature for support to sports clubs in the various provinces.⁶

Modern, Centralized and Popular

Peronism's encouragement of sport must be seen as part of the drive to rehabilitate popular culture that characterized populist movements in Latin America. Sports, particularly soccer and a few others, were already part of the mass culture, which had a broad common denominator.⁷ Sport also served as a medium for glorifying the concept of social mobility that was so important in Peronist Argentina. Outstanding athletes of humble origins, encouraged and supported by the regime, proved through their achievements that in 'the New Argentina' talent rather than social position determined one's standing.⁸

The vision Peronist Argentina upheld was of a modern, urban, industrialized society. For its leaders, sport represented progress and modernity, since sports activities in the twentieth century involved secularism, equal opportunity (to compete), bureaucratization (in terms of administration and guidance), specialization, rationalization, and measurability (rules are set, ability is measured in terms of targets and achievement, and athletes train in order to make the most of their abilities).⁹

From the turn of the century up to the 1940s, sporting activity in Argentina was largely a private effort by various sports associations, while the state was conspicuous by its absence or apathy. Perón, in contrast, systematized state involvement in this sphere, and sought to establish a centralized supervisory system overseeing all sports. Measures to this end included the foundation of a new organization merging the Argentine Sports Confederation (*Confederación Argentina Deportiva*) with the Argentine Olympic Committee (*Comité Olímpico Argentino*) and known by their combined acronym, CADCOA, as well as the appointment of Peronist activists to head the different sports associations and federations.¹⁰

Of course, in Peronist Argentina the encouragement of sport was also intended to serve the same purpose it had originally served in European countries since the turn of the century – namely, as a means of both controlling the masses, ensuring that they continued to perform their productive role in the economic system, and eradicating their revolutionary potential.¹¹ Sports competitions generally operated (and still do) as

constructive, non-violent outlets for instincts and urges that could be dangerous in political contexts. Sport became one of the central leisure pastimes of the urban working class. Peronism seems to have promised workers bread (improved wages and working conditions) and circuses (harmless athletic activity). Years later the weekly *Primera Plana* described the situation thus:

It was better [for the regime] that fanatics fought for sports trophies rather than political ones, that people remained divided in clubs and not in parties. The limitations Perón imposed on political activities were thus compensated for by his solid support for sports, in which Peronists and opposition members intermingled.¹²

One of Peronism's main goals was the establishment of 'national unity',¹³ and the 'gospel of Peronist sports', like the mobilization of the entire education system, was perceived as one of the more effective means to achieve that goal and shape 'the New Argentine' in 'the New Argentina'. Efforts were made to weave sport into the fabric of Argentine society. Since various sports clubs were traditionally linked with different groups of immigrants, Perón's sports policy was also designed to encourage their cultural integration in the national melting pot. Thus, Perón promoted sport as a mechanism for transforming original identities in order to create both national unity and political loyalty to the regime. In January 1948 Perón declared, 'As it happens, the sporting environment is where differences disappear, where a camaraderie superior to any other is born, and where a nobility and greatness of spirit are formed that must be human beings' sole objective.'¹⁴

Perón's interest in sport derived, first of all, from his own involvement in sports of one kind or another since childhood, particularly after he entered the military education system. An army fencing champion in the years 1918–28,¹⁵ Perón was to have joined the Argentine delegation to the Olympic Games in Paris in 1924, but war minister Agustín P. Justo would not allow him to go. As a young officer he organized a number of different sports competitions, and in 1914 he founded the boxing club in Paraná, the first of its kind outside Buenos Aires. In the following years, Perón was involved in a variety of sports to one extent or another, both in Argentina and – during his stints as military attaché abroad – in other countries: gymnastics, horseback-riding, sailing, rowing, soccer, basketball, shooting, broad and high jumping, boxing, polo, skiing and even fox-hunting.

Although this longstanding love of athletics was certainly genuine, at an early stage Perón the politician realized sport's political potential. This was particularly obvious from his attitude towards Argentina's most popular sport, soccer. As a sport, soccer did not particularly interest Perón –

certainly not nearly as much as boxing did; he preferred the front row of the Luna Park stadium, the federal capital's customary venue for boxing matches, to the soccer fields. Yet he lavished vast resources and attention on soccer, since every week masses of spectators gathered at the grounds, permitting the regime, in the midst of the game, the excitement and the drama, to disseminate propaganda and mobilize the crowd for political purposes.

Although Perón could not really be described as a fan of any particular soccer club¹⁶ (unlike Justo, for example, who was a known devotee of Boca Juniors), during those years the Peronist regime was identified in particular with two popular clubs: Racing Club in Avellaneda (a town near the federal capital), which won the championship three years in a row (1949, 1950 and 1951); and Boca Juniors, whose fans identify themselves as Peronists in their anthems to this day. Ramón Cereijo, the finance minister in Perón's government, was a sworn supporter of Racing, and the club's nickname was '*Deportivo Cereijo*'.

It was Cereijo who authorized the flow of funds to various soccer clubs for purposes of construction and renovation. The most famous loan was the one Racing received in order to build its present stadium, which was inaugurated in 1950 under the name 'President Perón'. In the first years of Peronism other stadiums were built as well: Huracán, established in 1947; Vélez Sársfield, inaugurated in 1950, and Sarmiento, in the city of Junín.¹⁷ Statistical records indicate a real increase in the number of people attending soccer games in those years.

Another major construction project was the automobile racetrack in Buenos Aires, christened '17 October' after the birthdate of the Peronist movement. This racetrack, built to impressive technical standards, was opened in 1952 – with President Perón in attendance, of course.¹⁸ The custom of naming stadiums, sports facilities, competitions, championships, trophies and so on after Juan or Evita Perón or concepts associated with the Peronist movement gradually expanded during the Peronist decade.

Patriotism, Struggle and Discipline

Although Peronism had much to say about the moral, aesthetic and hygienic value of sports, it focused in particular on the social discipline they implied and their potential for inspiring fraternity, co-operation, social solidarity, national identity, discipline and loyalty – in short, the contribution sports could make to the spiritual and moral formation of the individual and the nation. Athletic activity was presented very clearly as a reflection of Peronism's social achievements, since it was the improvement in living conditions effected by the Peronist regime that had given the general public

the possibility of participating in sports; in the past, athletic pursuits had been largely the province of the middle and upper classes.

Originally sports were a pleasure reserved almost exclusively for the powerful classes; and it can even be said that individuals not of those classes who practised a sport were socially scorned, presumed to be dodging their obligation to work and earn their living. It took government effort and incessant indoctrination such as that conducted by Perón to allow sports, elevated to their rightful status as a branch of culture, to develop towards their superior goals of spreading among the population and elevating the humble.¹⁹

The encouragement of sports other than soccer was also portrayed as an abrogation of the upper classes' monopoly on certain athletic activities. The popularization of forms of recreation such as tennis, basketball and fencing was presented as an invasion of territory that had formerly been the exclusive preserve of the wealthy.²⁰

The nationalist, anti-imperialist dimension of the Peronist doctrine was also a regular feature of speeches by regime spokespersons about the importance of sports. Although most of the sports commonly practised in Argentina had been imported from other countries,²¹ after decades of foreign influence Argentines wanted to be considered mature and independent in athletic endeavour as well as in politics. In 1949 Perón made a speech in Congress calling for the establishment of a separate, national, Argentine system for sports, on the following grounds: 'We have an Argentine cuisine, and we cannot accustom ourselves to other food; we have a music of our own. By the same token, we must have physical training and sports that are adapted to our people.'²²

An additional aspect of the values the regime sought to reinforce through sport is the fact that athletic activity was usually presented in what Argentine society of the time clearly understood as masculine terms (even though women's sports enjoyed a substantial boost in Peronist Argentina): daring, dogged persistence, willingness to confront danger and challenges, power and the ability to overcome obstacles.

The combination of nationalism, patriotism and sacrifice also featured strongly in the sports competitions for children organized by the Eva Perón Foundation. Besides soccer championships, children participated in 'patriotic' activities such as ceremonies honouring or commemorating various national heroes, notably the 'Liberator', General José San Martín. Here, too, the use of sport as a means of pursuing the goal of national unity and uniformity was conspicuous. One of the first issues of the Peronist children's weekly *Mundo Infantil* said: 'The Evita Championship will fulfil the dream of teachers and leaders: It will unite Argentine youth with a bond

transcending local, and even provincial, divisions, because the voice of sports is stentorian, powerful, invigorating, and electrifying. Within this framework, everyone will feel equal, everyone will think the same way.²³

The names of many of the teams competing in these championships also reflected the national and/or Peronist character that the organizers sought to emphasize: 'Argentine Malvinas Islands', 'Argentine Antarctica', 'San Martín', 'Perón', 'Evita Morning Star', '17 October', and so on. The games always opened to the strains of the national anthem, while the anthem of the games themselves was a paean of praise to the Peróns.

A great deal can be learned about the values and messages that the regime sought to convey through sports from the pages of the weekly *Mundo Deportivo*, which began to appear in 1949. Some time previously the government had acquired 51 per cent of the shares of the Haynes publishing company, which was a media superpower by the standards of the time and the publisher of the daily *El Mundo* as well as a string of popular periodicals.²⁴ Once controlled by Anglo-American capital, this publishing house became a channel through which the authorities disseminated the judicial ideology to various targets: women, children and teenagers, villagers, scientific and technological circles, sports fans, and others. Under the direction of a man considered to be one of Evita's close collaborators, Carlos Vicente Aloé (administrative sub-secretary to the President's office since 1948 and governor of the province of Buenos Aires in the years 1952–55), the publishing company fought to entice readers away from the weeklies owned by Atlántida, the veteran conservative Catholic publishing house founded by Constancio Vigil in 1918.

The most significant children's weekly in Argentina was *Billiken*, founded in 1919. In the face of the Atlántida publishing house's refusal to bow to the regime, the Peronists sought to topple *Billiken* from its influential position by beginning publication, in October 1949, of the weekly *Mundo Infantil*. *Billiken* did not recover its leading edge among juvenile periodicals until the regime fell in September 1955.

Sports periodicals underwent a similar process. *El Gráfico* was the major sports weekly until the advent of Peronism; it, too, was an Atlántida publication that first appeared in 1918. Here, again, the effort to supplant it took the form of founding a competing weekly, in April 1949: *Mundo Deportivo*, which was more colourful and had more pages.

Anyone reading issues of *El Gráfico* from the years 1949–55 would scarcely realize that at the time Argentina was ruled by Peronism, although the latter dominated many aspects of culture, entertainment and sport. Only rarely did a picture of the president appear in this paper, and articles about sports projects initiated by Perón were usually unsigned, as though they had been planted by the government press service.²⁵

The issues of *Mundo Deportivo*, in contrast, were packed with pictures, articles and features extolling the regime, Perón's leadership, the 'spiritual leader of the nation' (Eva Perón), and the administration's sports policy. In this respect, the editorials, which appeared under the byline of Carlos Aloé (although they may actually have been written by a staff reporter), were especially significant. They often used the metaphor of the nation as a sports team, and preached the values of solidarity and co-operation, as well as organization, discipline and obedience to the leader of the society – a hierarchical, organized society in which everyone knew his or her place and function. The most interesting of these editorials was published at the beginning of 1954 and presented a father's explanations to his son about the essence of sports:

It's a group game, a team effort, a joint effort; meaning you have to combine all your strength with that of your comrades. Within the group, you have a mission: to defend, attack, or advance ... you'll see the beauty of harmony ... you'll see what tremendous force the collective effort has as a result...

You will also learn to listen to a coach who will assess your playing or tell you what you should do, often even against your own wishes, against your own will. In this way you will find the discipline that is so vital when you want to win.²⁶

Of course, such ideas are common in other countries and under other political regimes as well, but in the circumstances of Argentina at the time, a text of this kind could be interpreted as an allegory of society as a whole (the team) and the importance of obeying the instructions of Perón (the coach).

The effort to identify Peronism with Argentine nationalism is also exemplified by the column 'The Peronist Example', which appeared regularly in the biweekly *Mundo Peronista* during the years 1951–55, and focused on internationally successful Argentine athletes. For example, an item about the brothers Juan and Roberto Gálvez, champion racing drivers, read: 'A Creole example, these two good-looking boys! And a Peronist example, by the same token. Because Peronist and Creole are synonymous.' The reporter also interviewed the Argentine rowers who won the gold medal at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, Tranquilo Capozzo and Eduardo Guerrero, quoting them as follows:

All we did was row with all our strength, all our enthusiasm, all the capacity of our bodies and our Creole souls.

– And Peronist souls.

– That goes without saying. Do you think it is possible to be truly

Creole without being Peronist, or vice versa?²⁷

In this conception, the only true Creole, the only true Argentine, was someone who supported the regime and saw the Peronist enterprise as the sole way of ensuring a better future for Argentina. All those who thought differently – about half the population – were at best defective Argentines lacking in national spirit, and at worst traitors.

The Eva Perón Foundation and the Promotion of Sports

The promotion of state-supervised children's sports activities was one more manifestation of the effort to occupy young people's leisure time in addition to the hours they spent in school, exposed to an increasingly blatant process of indoctrination.²⁸

Prominent athletes were presented to children as models for emulation. The personalities featured in a weekly *Mundo Infantil* column signed by Stela Maris and entitled 'Why I Like...' were never authors, painters, or physicists, for example, but usually athletes. On one occasion the column featured the race-car driver Froilan González, who pulled over in a race when his engine began to burn, in order to prevent danger to others. To *Mundo Infantil*, González represented the virtues of sacrifice, courage, skill and solidarity, a combination found only in first-rate athletes, and the child reader was expected to learn from it. Soccer players, too, such as Mario Raúl Papa and Roca S. Marrapodi, or basketball players like Oscar Furlong also featured in this column as objects of adulation.²⁹ Almost an entire issue was devoted to 'Fangio – A Friend to Children', a race-car driver who 'travelled all over the world, flying our colours [the flag] high in his victories'. The plethora of colourful pictures and the copious text attempted to make political capital out of Fangio's sporting success: 'Not in vain does Fangio represent the contemporary Argentine spirit: simple, humble and prudent.'³⁰ This, too, was a value system with which children were expected to identify.

In 1948 Eva Perón took up an initiative proposed by Dr Emilio Rubio, the sports editor of the evening paper *Noticias Gráficas*, to organize soccer championships for children. One of the aims was to keep children off the street, away from harmful influences and various kinds of delinquency, and to ensure their moral and physical health, particularly working-class children. While inaugurating the Huracán Stadium, Perón explained this idea: 'by this means we will have removed our young people from vice and the places where people gain neither health nor virtue, and make them into athletes preparing their minds and bodies to be virtuous, honourable citizens'.³¹ This was the approach to other Foundation activities as well, such as the establishment of homes for children and unmarried mothers,

summer camps, and so on.

As the years passed, the children's championships became one of the Eva Perón Foundation's most notable and successful enterprises – another means of moulding the next generation of Peronists. We have no exact statistics concerning the number of children who participated in these tournaments or the amount of money invested in them. The sources available indicate that in the first Doña María Eva Duarte de Perón children's soccer championship, held in 1948, 11,483 children took part in the federal capital, and another 3,722 in the greater Buenos Aires area. Gradually, competitions were instituted throughout the country. In 1950 the total number of participants already exceeded 100,000. Beginning in 1951 the competitions were expanded beyond soccer to include such sports as track and field, gymnastics, basketball, swimming and water polo; and in the following year girls' competitions were added. In 1953, the year that the Juan Perón sports championships for young people began, the total number of participants in these sports events had exceeded 200,000.³²

According to Alberto Luchetti, the chairman of the Argentine Olympic Committee in those years and Perón's former fencing coach, the financial investment in these sports tournaments rose steadily, from 478,000 pesos in 1948 to three times that amount in 1950 and five times that in 1951. In 1952, 4 million pesos were invested in this project, rising to more than 8 million in 1953.³³ To these sums must be added, of course, subsidiary government aid channelled into the organization of these sports events by various means. The fact that the finance minister, Ramón Cereijo, was one of the originators of the Foundation's sports policy facilitated the transfer of government funds for various purposes connected with these sports competitions, and indicated the great importance Peronism attributed to sport. Deputies of the majority faction in Congress voted appropriations every year to support the Foundation's sports activities, to the open disapproval of the opposition. In 1955 deputies Alfredo Alonso, Angel Miel Asquía and others proposed the allocation of no less than three million pesos for this purpose.³⁴

The weeklies *Mundo Deportivo*, *Mundo Peronista* and *Mundo Infantil* were all enlisted in the cause of the mass propagandism of the Evita championships, to encourage the participation of children and teenagers.³⁵ These sports rallies were an additional example of popular festivals heavily imbued with Peronist and national symbolism, like the events of 17 October or 1 May. In the last two years of the regime, up to the military coup of September 1955, the Foundation sports championships reached their apex in the form of the 'Children's and Young People's Olympics', in which representatives from neighbouring countries participated.³⁶

The Foundation's sports activities provided an excellent opportunity to monitor the health of tens of thousands of children across the country. Those

wishing to participate were given a general medical examination, a lung X-ray, and a dental examination by health ministry staff. Children diagnosed with medical problems were referred for free treatment – treatment that in other circumstances would have been beyond the reach of many provincial families. The idea that sport made an important contribution to the health and physical fitness of the nation was expressed in ‘Sports Medicine’, a weekly column in *Mundo Deportivo* which was written by a doctor, Eduardo Saunders.

The Evita Championships brought children from different towns and provinces together. The best teams went to Buenos Aires to compete in the finals, permitting many children to visit the federal capital for the first time. This contact between children from different parts of the country contributed to the creation of a common national consciousness. In addition, the legal status of children whose births had not been duly registered for one reason or another was rectified when they signed up for the competitions, yet another contribution to the integration of marginal sectors into Argentine society.

Competitors received sports outfits and soccer shoes from the Foundation, as well as various prizes. The team that won the championship also received a soccer field of its own or money to renovate its clubhouse and equipment. Such prizes added to the Peróns’ reputation as kind benefactors, and contributed to the improvement of the physical conditions of sports centres across the country.

The politicization of the sports competitions organized by the Foundation was obvious at every stage of the championships. The most conspicuous example of this, however, was the official anthem sung by the children competing, an anthem that interwove different concepts from the Peronist lexicon of the time:

We owe Evita our club
That is why we are grateful to her
We fulfil the ideals, we fulfil the mission
of the New Argentina of Evita and Perón
We’ll go out on the pitch
eager to win
We will be athletes
wholeheartedly
to form the great new generation. Whether we win or lose
we will not offend our opponents
Whether we win or lose
we will keep up our morale
We will loyally defend

the soul of our Argentine nature.³⁷

Perón and Evita attended major games in the children's championships, and Evita even opened games by kicking the ball into play herself. The young competitors wore shirts printed with portraits of Evita. The outstanding teams were invited to the presidential palace to meet with the President and his wife. On these occasions, Evita made gushing speeches praising Perón and the regime's achievements:

Napoleon used to say that geniuses are like meteors that burn up to illuminate a century; and indeed Perón is burning his life away to illuminate the Peronian century, bringing happiness and understanding to all Argentines, the humble as well as the mighty. Nothing should separate us, because in this rich and prosperous country the justice to which we all aspire must prevail.³⁸

In one of her speeches to the children on these occasions, Evita had something to say about the congressional opposition's objections to the use of state funds to organize her soccer tournaments:

Is their egotism so great that children's happiness bothers them? By voting against holding the children's championship, they were voting against Argentine children; but, more than anything else, they were voting against the happiness of poor children, since the rich have many places to amuse themselves and every opportunity to practice sports.³⁹

The Evita sports competitions thus became an additional channel for the political socialization of children and youth, an additional opportunity to praise the regime and enlist young people's support for its principles, since a daily activity such as children's soccer games had taken on a political significance.

The Secondary Students' Union (UES)

Youth movements such as those in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, in which membership was compulsory, were never established in Perón's Argentina. However, in 1953 the regime set up an organization of high-school students (*Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios* – UES) whose activities focused on sports and ball games. The initiative came from the education minister, Dr Armando Méndez San Martín, who suggested to the president an organization with two divisions, one for each sex (as in the Peronist party), in which young people could participate in sports activities.⁴⁰ Perón seized on the idea enthusiastically, since it accorded well with his ambition to establish an

'organized community' in which different social or occupational sectors would be organized in a single framework under the regime's supervision.

On 6 July 1953 a clubhouse for the girls of the organization was inaugurated in the specially renovated former presidential residence at 1034 Suipacha Street in the middle of Buenos Aires. The building contained exercise halls, a library, a cafeteria, and dormitories for young girls from the provinces who had won scholarships to study in Buenos Aires or prizes for educational achievement. At the ceremony to inaugurate the building, Perón gave a speech to the young people assembled there, who would assure Argentina's future as a strong, proud, independent country.

A few months later, another clubhouse was opened for the UES girls, this time at the presidential residence in Olivos, a suburb of Buenos Aires. Perón expressed his approval that 'finally the 46 hectares of the [presidential] residence will fulfil a social function'. March 1955 saw the opening of 'new, monumental sports facilities' for the UES boys' division in the Nuñez neighbourhood, presented by the regime as 'the most advanced in the world'.⁴¹ Tens of thousands of young people eventually joined the organization, which had branches all over the country. Perón himself often visited the UES clubs on weekends, and sometimes joined in the boys' sports. Occasionally he gathered a motorcycle convoy of youths from the organization, and led them through the gardens of Palermo and the main streets of the capital. In mid-May 1955 the organization arranged a tribute to Perón in the Luna Park Stadium, mobilizing masses of young people who, packing the stadium to capacity, gave '*el Líder*' a royal welcome.

Sports activities for teenagers were accompanied by incessant political indoctrination. Among the goals expressed in the UES charter was: 'Instil [in the hearts of the young] the concept of responsibility and mutual respect in the framework of the national judicial doctrine'. Perón's name and portrait, slogans he favoured, and the like appeared in all the UES sports clubs. The seven issues of the UES periodical, which ceased publication before the overthrow of the regime, all extolled the omnipotent leader's greatness, wisdom and other virtues. Similarly, the organization's anthem included the following lines: 'The young/decisively/follow the path marked out by Perón ... With firm and confident step/they set out on the road to the future and feel their hearts/burn/ with Perón's luminous flame.'⁴²

Rumours began to circulate among the opposition that the president was exploiting UES activities in order to indulge in immoral dalliance with the teenaged girls who played on the lawns of the presidential residence. These girls were occasionally invited to have coffee with the president, who was then in his late fifties. After Perón's overthrow, one of the girls, Nelli Rivas, published a booklet about the relationship she claimed to have had with him. By her account, she had lived with him in his house as his mistress for

the last two years of his presidency, beginning when she was only 14. Although her story was probably a distortion of the truth, it indicated the kinds of rumour that were circulating at the time about Perón and the UES.⁴³ During Perón's last months in government, the Catholic Church expanded its activities among young people, fearing that the regime was gaining control over Argentina's future generations. From their pulpits, priests called on mothers not to send their daughters to UES activities, given Perón's dubious relations with the high-school girls in the organization.⁴⁴

Less than a month after the coup that toppled Perón, General Eduardo Lonardi's government announced it would intervene in all the youth and student organizations established under Perón because they were 'fictions, designed to serve the plan for political mobilization of children and young people'. This effectively terminated organizations such as the UES.⁴⁵

In April 1956 the state investigating commission set up by the self-styled Liberating Revolution (*Revolución Libertadora*) published its report on the UES. Its conclusions were severe and unequivocal: The UES

was not an organization at the service of the young, designed to round out their education and promote their well-being, but rather an institution that corrupted and deceived the pupils in order to serve the personal and political aims of the deposed president ... This is borne out not only by the facts, but by the statement of ex-Minister Méndez San Martín to his close colleagues saying that he 'desired to create a student organization to provide an interest for the president, who had just lost his wife'.

The commission made serious accusations concerning the pressure on teenagers to join the organization, the long hours the president spent enjoying himself in the UES clubs instead of devoting time to affairs of state, and the large amounts of money (some 270 million pesos over three years) that were spent on the organization rather than on the population's more basic needs. It also said that the boys and girls in the UES were incited to rebel against the accepted norms and traditional values of Argentine society, and that this had repercussions in the schools, where teachers found themselves helpless against aggressive, undisciplined pupils who sought to turn the hierarchical teacher-pupil relationship upside down.

The sharpest indictment of Perón, however, was the moral one concerning his sexual exploitation of underage girls:

The investigators also note the ex-leader's efforts to establish an intimate, libertine relationship with the girls, constantly encouraging them to approach him and using the elemental resources of all corrupters, that is, mingling with them, inviting them to his home,

giving them generous presents, taking an active interest in their problems to create situations of personal gratitude ...

In addition, the favourites had a room in the Presidential Residence for their private use, they lived together with the ex-leader in Olivos ... All this culminated in the selection of one of these girls, 14 years old, who lived with the ex-president from the end of 1953.⁴⁶

However wild the allegations made by Perón's critics may have been, one thing was clear to everyone: sport brought many young people into the Peronist youth movement (membership in which, as mentioned, was not compulsory), thereby bonding them to the regime. The Peronists saw their investment in these young people as part of the effort to guarantee Peronism's future even after Perón's second presidential term ended.

Achievements in the International Arena

Sport in Argentina, originally based on European models – primarily English (it was not until 1906 that the language spoken at the meetings of the Argentine Soccer Association changed from English to Spanish) – became a source of national pride. The state's encouragement and financial support bore fruit internationally in the form of more impressive achievements in different sports than at any time in the past; and Perón, of course, tried to make political capital out of them.⁴⁷ The successes of individual athletes, or of the national team for a particular sport, were presented as a collective victory for all of Argentine society, transcending the divisions of social class, origin, place of residence and political affiliation.⁴⁸ The blue and white flag fluttering in stadiums all over the world was a spur to patriotism and national unity, as well as proof that Argentina was 'on the map' and receiving well-earned international attention. Achievements in international competitions always help create a positive national image and give peripheral states a sense that they play a creditable part in international affairs.⁴⁹

The main milestones of those years were Argentina's participation in the London Olympics in 1948, the world basketball championship held in Buenos Aires in 1950, and the first Pan-American Games, which took place in the Argentine capital in 1951. The Argentine delegation that left for London in 1948 was the largest that had ever crossed the borders of the Republic. It numbered 365 members, 274 of them athletes. Their achievements at the Games were impressive, too: three gold medals, three silver and one bronze. When the delegation returned to Buenos Aires in mid-December, a tribute to Perón and his wife was held at the home stadium

of the River Plate soccer team. In his speech on that occasion, Perón drew a parallel between the athletes' achievements and the Peronist enterprise: 'Let this be our tribute to the glories of sports, to the champions, to all the athletes who are constructing the New Argentina we yearned for, an Argentina of healthy men, sturdy men, and strong men; because only healthy, tough peoples make great nations.'⁵⁰

At the world basketball championship held in Buenos Aires towards the end of 1950 – the hundredth anniversary of the death of the 'Liberator', General José de San Martín – the Argentine team won, defeating France, Brazil, Chile and Egypt; but its greatest triumph was against the United States on 3 November, when it won 64–50. Argentina's happiness was complete; it had won both an international cup and a prestigious victory over the great imperialist power of the North. Many Argentines celebrated the occasion until three in the morning with a torchlight parade down Corrientes Boulevard in the centre of the capital. A radio broadcaster who attempted to argue that the US team was not the best that could have represented North America paid for his opinion with his job.

On 25 February 1951 the first Pan-American Games opened in the Racing stadium (officially named the President Perón Stadium) with an official ceremony that was the climax of a prolonged organizing effort. In his speech, the president of CADCOA, Dr Rodolfo Guillermo Valenzuela (who was also president of the Argentine supreme court), credited Perón with the initiative for this new sports project. In fact, however, the idea had originally been conceived in September 1940 during a conference of the continent's sports organizations. It was decided then that Buenos Aires would host the games. They were originally scheduled for 1942, but later had to be postponed twice, first to 1948 because of the Second World War, and then to the beginning of 1951 because of the London Olympic Games. Perón's government wanted these games to serve as international proof of the regime's success. To that end, the president urged the games' organizers *to spare no effort*, promising them any financial assistance they might require: 'On this we will not begrudge a cent ... These things have to be done properly or not at all ... In short, I want to leave the impression that we are not counting costs.' He pressed the athletes to train for long hours before the games: 'We all know that sports depend on preparation. Fifty per cent is the person, and the other 50% is preparation and training.'⁵¹

Accordingly, about a year and a half before the games began, the organizational effort moved into high gear. Two months before the opening ceremony, the Argentine delegation set up its training camp in Ezeiza, near the capital. Paying a 'surprise visit', Perón met the athletes in training there, and just before the games opened he sent a telegram to each member of the delegation, encouraging them and wishing them the success that, he said,

would be guaranteed by exertion, faith and determination. Argentina was indeed the big winner at this international event, its athletes capturing a total of 153 medals (66 gold, 50 silver and 37 bronze).⁵²

In the course of these games, the Peróns, together with the mayor of Buenos Aires, Juan Debenedetti, opened an urban track for bicycle races. The president was presented with a bicycle himself and rode it the length of the course, to the delighted cheers of the spectators. A large sign was hung next to the track announcing, 'Perón and Evita have won the love etched in the hearts of Argentine cyclists'.

The Peronist decade witnessed a growing authoritarian trend, as the regime gradually restricted various political and civil liberties. At the same time, pressure increased on the athletes representing Argentina to come home with medals. Prior to the Pan-American Games held in Mexico in 1955, athletes were called upon to show 'loyalty' (a concept with a strong Peronist significance at the time) and patriotism through effort and sacrifice, since they were performing a national mission. Anything else would be considered a betrayal of the nation. In an editorial in *Mundo Deportivo*, Carlos Aloé wrote:

In the new Argentina we obey the invincible spirit of all the action for the good of the community that our cause demands of us. We are all part of one big team, to which we owe not only solidarity and discipline, but also the greatest adherence to the idea of conquering for ourselves a place of privilege among the civilized peoples of the earth. Whoever does not, commits an act of *disloyalty* towards his comrades and the fatherland. Fulfilling the duty of the hour is a sacred obligation, for which no effort or sacrifice should be spared.⁵³

Perón was the president who began the tradition of sending congratulatory telegrams to Argentine athletes who won competitions abroad; and he even presented them with gifts from time to time. This last habit was criticized by opponents of the regime, who claimed that Peronism distorted the spirit of sports, violated the sporting ethic, encouraged the routine use of bribery, corruption and special favours, and sometimes even sanctioned the employment of dubious means to guarantee Argentine victory in international competitions held in Buenos Aires.

The most notorious example of presidential gifts was the largesse bestowed on the three Argentine gold-medallists of the London Olympics – particularly Delfo Cabrera, who won both the Olympic marathon and a house presented to him by the president of the Republic. Years later, Cabrera explained how indebted he had been to Perón for his success: 'Perón was very nice to the athletes; he used to help us. I am a typical product of his aid to sport.' Similarly, in the 1960s the boxer Pascual Pérez

said bluntly: 'I don't mince words, and I can tell you that everything was due to Perón's aid to sport. He was marvellous to us.'⁵⁴

Perón saw Argentina's top athletes as the country's best ambassadors to the rest of the world, better equipped to improve the country's image than any career diplomat in the foreign ministry. Sports victories always prompted a major propaganda campaign, while the official media generally preferred to preserve a discreet silence over the failures. The Argentine writer David Viñas has described the official rhetoric (albeit in another connection and under another government) as 'triumphant and grandiloquent in success; moderate and crestfallen in defeat'.⁵⁵

Perón appeared frequently in the company of famous athletes, both Argentine and foreign, in the hope that some of their glory and prestige would rub off on him, that their success would be considered his success as well. These athletes were popular heroes who were unlikely to detract from his own leadership but, on the contrary, could be expected to strengthen it. Particularly prominent on the long list of these athletes were motor-racing stars (symbols of modernity, technological progress, energy and flashing speed) and boxers (symbols of determination, willpower, strength and fighting spirit). In their travels abroad, which were intended to win prestige for Argentina in general and Peronism in particular, the top Argentine athletes enjoyed diplomatic status, and their trips were financed by the state.

The boxing star most closely identified with Peronism was José María Gatica, known by the sobriquet '*El Mono*' ('The Monkey'). Born in the province of San Luis to a family of little means, he was a shoe-shiner who could barely read and write, but possessed a charisma that won him fame and fortune. He was adored by the masses and detested by many members of the middle and upper classes, who saw him as a symbol of the lack of education and culture, vulgarity and profligacy that characterized Peronism. His boxer's robe, a gift from Evita, bore the legend 'Perón-Evita'. Yet Perón began to avoid him after Gatica's defeat, in January 1951, at a fight in Madison Square Garden in New York against the world champion, Ike Williams – a bout that had been intended to 'show the North Americans that we don't need anything from them'.⁵⁶ As long as Gatica had been a winner, Perón wished to be seen with him; but once he became a loser, Perón no longer wanted to be identified with him.

Pascual Pérez won a gold medal at the 1948 London Olympics, and subsequently became the first Argentine to win the world boxing championship (in the flyweight division). Years later he would say, 'Much of the credit for my successes and honours must go to the Peronist government. Thanks to its support I became the first Argentine fighter to win a world title.' Pérez also expressed his gratitude in a way that helped Perón politically. On 26 November 1954, after defeating the Japanese

Yoshio Shirai in Tokyo, Pérez shouted: 'I won for Perón, for my country, for Argentina!' Later he said, 'The first thing I did was to contact Perón and present him with the victory.' Returning to Buenos Aires, he was welcomed by the masses and by Perón himself, who was waiting at the airport to embrace him – seizing this opportunity to distract the crowds, for a few moments, from his continuing conflict with the Catholic Church. He showed his appreciation for Pérez's co-operation, too: 'Perón gave me a 1951 De Soto that had belonged to Evita.'⁵⁷

A few months later Pérez went to Tokyo again to defend his title. Perón's government slightly delayed the boxer's return to Buenos Aires so that he would arrive on Sunday, 11 June, the day the Catholic Church planned to hold the Corpus Christi procession – a parade the opposition hoped would constitute a great show of strength against the regime. Perón's supporters were concentrated in the Plaza de Mayo below the presidential palace and along the central Avenida Florida, ready to extend a mass welcome to Pascual Pérez – and, incidentally, to prevent the participants in the Catholic procession from reaching the Plaza. For once the Peronist diversionary tactics did not succeed, however, and the procession cum demonstration became an important milestone in the process leading to the overthrow of the regime.⁵⁸

Notable among the favoured racing-car drivers was Juan Manuel Fangio, whom Perón sent to the races in Europe in 1948, with a diplomatic passport and a monthly allowance. Fangio began to rack up experience and achievements, until in November 1951, in Barcelona, where he won the world championship for the first time. Returning from Spain to Buenos Aires, he, too, received a national hero's welcome from the masses. The political 'return' Fangio gave on the investment made in him demonstrated once again the extent to which Perón's relationship with Argentine athletes was reciprocal. The president showered them with praise, rewards and gifts, and they expressed their gratitude by dedicating their victories to him and contributing to the regime's popularity in other ways. In the last days of Perón's campaign for a second presidential term, Fangio praised Perón to the masses ('For me, there is nothing greater than Perón'), and rushed to Evita's bedside to wish her a speedy recovery. Three days later Perón was re-elected, defeating the Radical candidates Ricardo Balbín and Arturo Frondizi. Fangio won the world championship another four times, in the years 1954–57.⁵⁹

In every story, the 'heroes' are always opposed by 'villains' who lose out. In Argentina in those years, however, there were not many of the latter. During the Peronist decade, only a few athletes who refused to demonstrate loyalty to the regime were forced to terminate their careers; examples are the racing driver Eusebio Marcilla and the track and field star Alberto

Triulzi. In this connection, it should be mentioned that a few journalists and broadcasters who did not show proper respect for the achievements of Argentina's national teams also lost their jobs.

In conclusion, in Peronist Argentina sport benefited from a level of support and encouragement unprecedented in the history of the Republic. Perón considered such support as a tool for promoting national integration, extolling the values and concepts of the justicialist movement, mobilizing various sectors of society to support the regime, and, in particular, attracting children and young people, the future generation of both Argentina and Peronism, into the Peronist fold. On balance, the regime's policies in both amateur and competitive sports were relatively successful. Although a sportswriter hostile to the regime exaggerated somewhat when he wrote, 'Perón gave everything to sports and sports gave everything to Perón',⁶⁰ there is no doubt that the Peronist policies did expand participation in sports activities and guarantee achievements in the international sphere, while at the same time enhancing the popularity of Perón and his regime among the general public.⁶¹

Tel Aviv University

NOTES

1. See Ministerio de Educación y Justicia, *Boletín de Comunicaciones* IX, 508 (10 Jan. 1958). In March, 1953, the Peronist government instituted physical education as a compulsory subject in all the elementary and secondary schools. On the importance attributed to physical education, see 2° *Plan Quinquenal* (Buenos Aires, 1953), IVE.7, pp.64–5; and *Manual práctico del 2° Plan Quinquenal* (Buenos Aires, 1953), p. 76. On the history of physical education in Argentina before the rise of Peronism, see Angela Aisenstein, *El modelo didáctico en la Educación Física: Entre la escuela y la formación docente* (Buenos Aires, 1995).
2. On the Berlin Olympics, see, for example, Duff Hart-Davis, *Hitler's Games – The 1936 Olympics* (London, 1986); Richard D. Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics*, 2nd ed. (Urbana and Chicago, 1987); and Judith Holmes, *Olympiad 1936: Blaze of Glory for Hitler's Reich* (New York, 1971). On sports and politics in Mussolini's Italy, see Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, 1981), esp. pp.169–80; and F. Fabrizio, *Sport e fascismo: La politica sportiva del regime, 1928–1936* (Rimini-Florence, 1976).
3. Perón, of course, was not the first Argentine president, or the last, to seek popularity by emphasizing sport. On Argentine politicians and their interest in sports, from General Julio A. Roca at the turn of the century up to Carlos Saúl Menem (who in this respect, at least, is Perón's faithful follower), see Ariel Scher, *La patria deportiva – cien años de política y deporte* (Buenos Aires, 1996); and Pablo A. Ramírez, 'Los gobernantes y el fútbol', *Todo es Historia* 324 (July 1994), 90–3.
4. Juan Perón, *La Gimnasia y los Deportes* (Buenos Aires, 1949).
5. Santiago Ganduglia, *El nuevo espíritu del deporte argentino* (Buenos Aires, 1954), p.6.
6. See, for example, *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados* (1948), Vol. III, pp.2150, 2294–5, 2306–7; (1951) Vol.III, p.2045; (1955) Vol.I, p.188. For petitions by citizens and various provincial organizations to President Perón for financial assistance in founding and developing sports clubs, see Archivo General de la Nación (Buenos Aires), Fondo Asuntos

- Técnicos, Presidencia de la Nación, Legajos 513 and 681.
7. On the drive to rehabilitate popular culture as one of the characteristics of populism, see Michael L. Conniff, 'Introduction: Toward a Comparative Definition of Populism', in M.L. Conniff (ed.), *Latin American Populism in Comparative Perspective* (Albuquerque, 1982).
 8. Carlos Aloé, 'Cada hombre forja su destino', *Mundo Deportivo* (Buenos Aires), 227 (20 Aug. 1953), 26.
 9. See A. Guttman, *Games and Empires: Modern Sport and Cultural Imperialism* (New York, 1994), p. 3; idem., *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* (New York, 1978); Joseph L. Arben, 'Sport and the Study of Latin American Society: An Overview', in J.L. Arben (ed.), *Sport and Society in Latin America* (New York, 1988), p.2; Perón, *La gimnasia y los deportes*.
 10. During the years 1947–55 the Argentine Soccer Association (Asociación de Fútbol Argentina – AFA) had five different presidents, all of them – from Oscar L. Nicolini, the minister of communication, to the syndicalist Cecilio Conditti – committed to the Peronization of Argentine soccer.
 11. James Walvin, *The People's Game: A Social History of British Football* (London, 1975); and Paul Hoch, *Rip off the Big Game: The Exploitation of Sports by the Power Elite* (New York, 1972).
 12. 'Los dividendos del deporte', *Primera Plana*, 6 Sept. 1966, 40.
 13. Mariano Ben Plotkin, 'La "ideología" de Perón: Continuidades y rupturas', in Samuel Amaral and M.B. Plotkin, *Perón del exilio al poder* (Buenos Aires, 1993), pp.45–67.
 14. Juan Perón, *Doctrina Peronista* (Buenos Aires, 1971), p.20.
 15. In December, 1920, Perón's picture appeared in the sporting weekly *El Gráfico* as the sword and sabre champion of the Círculo Militar (Military Club).
 16. 'Fútbol y boxeo', *Primera Plana* 13 Sept. 1966), 38.
 17. See *Democracia* (Buenos Aires), 24 Nov. 1947, p.10; and Pablo A. Ramírez, 'Política y fútbol', *Todo es Historia* 248 (Feb. 1988), 34–43. Opposition members of Congress more than once presented interpellations concerning the transfer of government monies to the sports clubs, the size of these transfers, the criteria that determined them, and the conditions they entailed. See Scher, *La patria deportiva*, p.251.
 18. See Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, *Autódromo '17 de Octubre' – Inauguración oficial* (Buenos Aires, 1952).
 19. Ganduglia, *El nuevo espíritu*, p.11. On Perón's conception of the importance of sports, see also 2° *Plan Quinquenal*, pp.71–2; 'El deporte en el pensamiento vivo de Perón', *Mundo Peronista* (15 Oct. 1954); Presidencia de la Nación, Secretaría de Prensa y Difusión, *Perón clausura la 2ª Conferencia Nacional de Delegados Deportivos* (Buenos Aires, 1955).
 20. María E. Cartasegna, 'Alumnos convertidos en maestros', *Mundo Deportivo* 304 (10 Feb. 1955), 34.
 21. Only a unique form of equestrian polo known as *el pato* could be considered a national sport, and Perón in fact instituted it as such by a decree dated 16 Sept. 1953. Ganduglia, *El nuevo espíritu*, p.11.
 22. Quoted in Ganduglia, *El nuevo espíritu*, pp.8–9.
 23. *Mundo Infantil*, 17 (1949), quoted in Mariano Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón* (Buenos Aires, 1993), p.278.
 24. On this subject, see Pablo Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación (1943–1955)* (Buenos Aires, 1984); and 'Historia del peronismo' ('Cadena de Diarios'), *Primera Plana*, 217, 21 Feb. 1967, 34.
 25. See, for example, *El Gráfico* 1856 (11 March 1955), 3; and 'La Olimpiada Infantil y Juvenil repitió y aumentó sus éxitos anteriores', *El Gráfico*, 1859, 1 April 1955, 22–4.
 26. Carlos Aloé, 'Aprende, hijo', *Mundo Deportivo*, 248, 14 Jan. 1954, 22.
 27. Susana Bianchi, "'El Ejemplo Peronista": Valores morales y proyecto social (1951–1954)', *Anuario IEHS*, 4 (1989), 371–402.
 28. On the political use of the education system, see Mónica Esti Rein, *Politics and Education in Argentina, 1946–1962* (New York, 1998); and Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón*.
 29. See *Mundo Infantil*, 3 July 1950, 10 July 1950, 17 July 1950, and 31 July 1950.
 30. *Mundo Infantil*, 10 July 1950.

31. *Democracia*, 24 Nov. 1947, 10.
32. Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón*, p.275; and Peter Ross, 'Policy Formation and Implementation of Social Welfare in Peronist Argentina, 1943-1955' (Ph.D. diss., University of New South Wales, 1988), pp.280-1.
33. Enrique Pavón Pereyra (ed.), *Perón - El hombre del destino* (Buenos Aires, 1973), Vol.II, 'La promoción del deporte', p.182.
34. See, for example, *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados* (1950), Vol.I, p.818, Vol.II, pp.863, 1099, and 1306, Vol.V, p.3964; (1955), Vol.I, pp.188, 411.
35. See, for example, 'Pequeños futbolistas', *Mundo Infantil*, 40 (3 July 1950), 49; 'Futuros astros del deporte platense' *Mundo Infantil*, 48 (28 Aug. 1950), 37; 'Escuela de campeones', *Mundo Peronista*, 13, 15 Jan. 1952, 35; '¡Honor al privilegio!' *Mundo Peronista*, 18 (1 April 1952), 18-19; 'Los campeonatos infantiles Evita apasionan nuevamente', *Mundo Deportivo*, 231, 17 Sept. 1953; 'Entusiasmo y calidad en los campeonatos infantiles Evita y juveniles Juan Perón', *Mundo Deportivo*, 249, 21 Jan. 1954, 18-19.
36. *Mundo Deportivo*, 257, 18 March 1954, 4-10, 22-3; 307 (3 March 1955), 12-13; 308 (10 March 1955), 12-15.
37. Quoted in Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón*, p.295 n.77.
38. Eva Perón, 'Discurso pronunciado el 15 de febrero de 1950 durante la visita que realizaran al Congreso Nacional los niños que participaron en el Torneo Infantil Evita', in Eva Perón: *Discursos completos* (Buenos Aires, 1986), Vol.2, pp.194-7. See also, in the same volume, 'Discurso pronunciado el 15 de febrero de 1951 en el agasajo a los jugadores que participaron en el Campeonato Argentino de Fútbol Infantil Evita', pp.297-9.
39. 'Discurso pronunciado el 28 de agosto de 1950 al hacer entrega de los premios a los equipos de la Capital Federal que intervinieron en el campeonato de fútbol infantil Evita', in *ibid.*, pp.255-6.
40. On the UES see, for example, Mario Marcilese, *30 días en la UES* (La Plata, 1957); 'La U.E.S.', *Primera Plana*, 11 June 1968, 48-50; 'La U.E.S....es 'La Nueva Argentina' que va a llegar al siglo venidero', *Mundo Peronista* (15 Dec. 1954), 14-19; 'La fiesta de la U.E.S.', *Mundo Peronista*, 68, 1 July 1954, 26-9; 'El sueño de una tarde de verano', *El Hogar*, 9 April 1954; and 'Otra realidad argentina de gran transcendencia social: La U.E.S.', *Mundo Deportivo*, 285, 30 Sept. 1954, 24-6.
41. *La Razón*, 24 March 1955.
42. Quoted in *Libro negro de la segunda tiranía* (Buenos Aires, 1958), pp.155-6.
43. Nelli Rivas, *Mis amores con Perón* (Buenos Aires, n.d.); and Joseph Page, *Perón - A Biography* (New York, 1983), p.291.
44. V.W. Leonard, *Politicians, Pupils, and Priests: Argentine Education since 1943* (New York, 1989), p.134; and Félix Luna, *Perón y su tiempo*, Vol.III, pp.195-7.
45. Orestes D. Confalonieri, *Perón contra Perón* (Buenos Aires, 1956), pp.172-3.
46. On the commission's report, see Confalonieri, pp.173-6; and *Libro negro*, pp.155-60.
47. Details on Argentina's sports record during those years can be found in *Libro de oro del deporte argentino* (Buenos Aires, 1980), especially pp.30-9; *Síntesis del deporte argentino* (Buenos Aires, 1952); Santiago Senén González, 'Perón y el deporte', *Todo es Historia*, 345 (April 1996), 8-20.
48. Carlos Aloé, 'El corazón', *Mundo Deportivo*, 301, 20 Jan. 1955, 22; and *idem*, 'Explotar el éxito', *Mundo Deportivo*, 302, 27 Jan. 1955, 22.
49. Janet Lever, *Soccer Madness* (Chicago, 1983), Ch.1 and 7.
50. 'Los dividendos del deporte', *Primera Plana*, 6 Sept. 1966, 41.
51. Juan Perón, *Delegados del deporte argentino escuchan a Perón* (Buenos Aires, 1950), pp.4-6, 8.
52. See the special expanded issue of *Mundo Deportivo*, which was full of triumphant rhetoric and adulation for the Peróns (15 March 1951), 238 pp.
53. Carlos Aloé, 'Los próximos Juegos Panamericanos', *Mundo Deportivo*, 300, 13 Jan. 1955, 22.
54. 'Fútbol y boxeo', *Primera Plana*, 13 Sept. 1966, 39.
55. D. Viñas, 'Fútbol y política: Dos hipótesis y una expresión de deseos', *Nueva Sión* (1 Dec. 1984), 8-9.
56. On Gatica, see Gerardo Bra, 'Gatica, "el mono de oro"', *Todo es Historia*, 151, (Dec. 1979),

- 60–75; 'Fútbol y boxeo', *Primera Plana* (13 Sept. 1966); and the film *Gatica, el Mono* directed by Leonardo Favio.
57. Pascual Perez, quoted in Pavón Pereyra, *Perón*, p.182; 'Los triunfos deportivos', *Primera Plana*, 3 Sept. 1968, 58; and *El Gráfico*, 1845, 17 Dec. 1954, 26–8.
 58. Bernardo Rabinovitz, *Sucedió en la Argentina (1943–1956): Lo que no se dijo* (Buenos Aires, 1956), 181–2; and Sánchez Zinny, *El culto de la infamia*, Vol.I, pp.151–2.
 59. *El Gráfico*, 1849, 21 Jan. 1955; *Mundo Deportivo*, 302, 27 Jan. 1955, 39. In 1980 Fangio was crowned 'the greatest of the sports greats of Argentina' at the Luna Park Stadium. See *Libro oro*, pp.67–71.
 60. Félix Daniel Frascara, 'Deportes', in Sur, *Argentina, 1930–1960* (Buenos Aires, 1961), p.380.
 61. On the pride Perón felt even in exile over his government's accomplishments in the field of sports, see Juan Perón, *La fuerza es el derecho de las bestias* (Buenos Aires, 1974; 1st ed. 1957), pp.70–1.