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## The First Peronists: Indigenous Leaders, Populism, and the Argentine Nation-State

### Abstract

*This article examines indigenous contributions to nation-state formation in Argentina during the first and second presidencies of Juan Perón (1946–55). Perón recognized indigenous people as Argentine citizens and attempted to reorganize the state institutions responsible for their welfare, but he did not institute special policies to improve their dismal living conditions. Moreover, state agents continued to use violence against indigenous communities, sometimes with terrifying results. Nonetheless, many indigenous leaders, known as caciques, embraced both the rhetoric of Peronism and the principles of populism. Their political engagement had mixed results, but its symbolic impact was profound. Peronist caciques made national politics relevant to indigenous communities, expanded their horizons of possibility, and helped to integrate them into the Argentine nation-state. Focusing on such understudied intermediaries helps explain populism's enduring, paradoxical appeal in the Argentine interior.*

In the 1970s, an indigenous man named Montiel Romero looked back on his life and remembered a single political leader who truly cared about Argentina's neglected indigenous communities: General Juan Perón. Arguably the most influential and polarizing leader in Argentine history, Perón rose to national prominence after a 1943 military coup, served as president from 1946 to 1955, spent seventeen years in exile, and returned to the presidency from 1973 until his death in 1974. In an interview conducted not long after Perón died, Montiel Romero spoke of the leader's first presidency with a mix of enthusiasm and nostalgia:

Things had changed in the Chaco from the time that Perón was president. We had an eight hour day and better wages . . . There was respect for Perón's laws, among the white men as well as the Qom, the boss couldn't make a laborer work extra hours or fire him without cause, and the worker had a place to go to claim his rights. I know well because it happened to me.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1940s, Romero harvested sugar, picked cotton, and served in the Argentine military. He voted proudly to reelect Perón in 1951 and heard the

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president speak in Resistencia, Chaco.<sup>2</sup> Perón did not go out of his way to embrace indigenous Argentines like Romero. Rather, in Romero's opinion, Perón tried to ensure that "everyone was respected as equals, both the poor and the rich."<sup>3</sup>

As Romero's story attests, Perón presented himself as the champion of the working class. With help from his second wife, Eva Duarte de Perón, he inaugurated a new form of populist politics that reflected both the influence of popular culture and the active participation of workers' movements.<sup>4</sup> From 1945 to 1955, the "first Peronism" redefined the Argentine nation-state, converting it into the one and only space where workers' claims could be resolved and rights established. At the same time, Peronist discourse emphasized the idea of the people as the nation's primary political subject. All citizens were not actually equal in Peronist Argentina; rather, Peronist rhetoric aimed to heal a society riven by class distinctions by celebrating the people and vilifying their anti-Peronist enemies. Like other populist movements, Peronism presented itself as anti-politics, even as it politicized ordinary people. Historians disagree about how to measure the first Peronism's impact on people's welfare, but Peronist leaders' rhetorical commitment to the "democratization of well-being" is harder to question. For adherents of Peronism, well-being meant not just affordable housing, food, and medical care but also access to education, culture, sports, and leisure, as well as intangible values like dignity and mutual respect.<sup>5</sup>

Strong affective ties between the charismatic first couple and their followers helped to mobilize the masses. Eva Perón built what she called a "bridge of love" between Perón and downtrodden Argentines. She spoke fondly and passionately to people who had previously been excluded from the nation, often referring to them as "*mis queridos descamisados*" (my dear shirtless ones) or "*mis grasitas*" (my little greasers).<sup>6</sup> Her words reached men and women across the country over the radio and became obligatory reading for school children.<sup>7</sup> Some Peronists from the interior had the opportunity to meet Juan or Evita in their home provinces, and some traveled great distances in the hope of presenting a personal appeal in Buenos Aires. For most Peronists in rural areas, however, radio broadcasts, images, and local rituals allowed them to interact with the nation's leaders without seeing them face-to-face.<sup>8</sup> Peronist publications printed photos of Juan and Eva with Argentines who had darker skin and identifiable non-European features; similar representations appeared less frequently in graphics and cartoons. Historian Ezequiel Adamovsky calls these representations "racial marks" and suggests that the visual culture of Peronism may have appealed to Argentines with indigenous or African ancestry.<sup>9</sup> Poor, "non-white" Argentines did not always have access to magazines, but Peronist images, sounds, and ideas probably had special salience for them.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, race remained a flexible signifier in Argentina, and Peronism never displaced the myth of Argentina as a "white nation."

A number of recent works have explored Peronism's cryptic racial dynamics, but few historians have considered indigenous Argentines as political actors who contributed to the Peronist movement.<sup>11</sup> Perón recognized indigenous people as Argentine citizens and attempted to reorganize the state institutions responsible for their welfare, but he did not institute special policies to improve their dismal living conditions. Moreover, state agents continued to use violence against indigenous communities, sometimes with terrifying results. Nonetheless,

many indigenous leaders, known as *caciques*, embraced both the rhetoric of Peronism and the principles of populism. Caciques petitioned local and national authorities, asking for the various markers of well-being that Peronist discourse promised.<sup>12</sup> Their political engagement had mixed results, but its symbolic impact was profound. Peronist caciques made national politics relevant to indigenous communities, expanded their horizons of possibility, and helped to integrate them into the Argentine nation-state.<sup>13</sup> In the words of a Mapuche leader named Jerónimo Maliqueo, indigenous people were “the first Peronists.”<sup>14</sup> They understood the ideas of social justice that animated Peronist doctrine, and they were prepared to demand results.

This article analyzes Peronist state policies toward indigenous people as well as caciques’ responses, concluding with a brief reflection on state agents’ use of violence. It contributes to a growing body of historiography on Peronism in the interior, which thus far has devoted little attention to indigenous people as political actors.<sup>15</sup> This historiography challenges a tendency in Argentine political debates and intellectual life to focus on the city and province of Buenos Aires. In fact, many interior provinces were Peronist strongholds. Recent provincial histories have highlighted the political influence of previously neglected actors, but Nicolás Quiroga suggests that they have failed to adequately explore “the relations between central actors and local actors.”<sup>16</sup> To understand the appeal of Argentine populism, historians must analyze the charismatic ties that united Perón and his followers, as well as the practices of local and regional intermediaries.<sup>17</sup> Like other Peronist intermediaries in the interior, caciques linked local concerns to national debates and helped bind their communities to the nation-state.<sup>18</sup> Their efforts constitute an understudied example of indigenous contributions to nation-state formation.<sup>19</sup>

### Continuity and Change in State Policy

According to one estimate, Argentina had approximately 129,000 indigenous inhabitants in the late 1940s, representing about 0.8 percent of the total population.<sup>20</sup> This relatively small, diverse population was dispersed across three geographical regions: the northwestern Andean provinces of Salta and Jujuy (with smaller numbers in Tucumán and Catamarca), the northern lowland territories of Chaco and Formosa, and the southern Pampas/Patagonian territories of La Pampa, Neuquén, and Río Negro (with smaller numbers further to the south). In the northwest, indigenous agriculturalists and herders were forcibly incorporated into the Incan and then Spanish empires; by the twentieth century, many had lost their land and become rural workers, even as some communities continued to identify as Kolla. In contrast, Argentina’s northern and southern territories remained on the fringes of the Spanish empire; a range of semisedentary and nonsedentary indigenous groups adopted the horse in the seventeenth century and raided and traded with nonindigenous settlements. Between the 1830s and the 1910s, the Argentine military staged a series of campaigns to conquer these territories and their indigenous inhabitants. Many people lost access to land where they had farmed, hunted, fished, and foraged and instead were forced to become agricultural laborers.<sup>21</sup>

While these communities varied in terms of their local practices and historical experiences, all of them were classified as indigenous. In other words,

indigeneity was an invented but meaningful category that conditioned local communities' interactions with the nation-state in the twentieth century. By considering examples from all three regions, this article identifies common trends in indigenous leaders' political engagement and helps explain why many communities remember Peronism as a turning point. Argentina also had many residents of indigenous descent who were not usually considered indigenous in the 1940s; future research might examine the impact of Peronist discourse and politics on people of indigenous descent who migrated to urban areas, and on communities in Mendoza, Misiones, and other areas that were not the focus of Peronist indigenous policies but would later identify as indigenous.<sup>22</sup>

In the early twentieth century, protecting and supporting indigenous people was not a priority for Argentine legislators. Congress failed repeatedly to pass proposals to form a national government body that would supervise all indigenous issues.<sup>23</sup> Instead, responsibility fell to an *ad honorem* committee, the *Comisión Honoraria de Reducciones de Indios* (CHRI), created in 1916. It operated several indigenous reservations in Chaco and Formosa but had limited contact with the rest of Argentina's indigenous inhabitants and was a less influential organization than its Mexican or Brazilian analogues.<sup>24</sup> State agents and settlers continued to use violence to displace indigenous communities, seize their lands, and discipline indigenous workers.<sup>25</sup> Indigenous leaders responded with a variety of tactics ranging from outright resistance to diplomacy or appeasement. Over time, most caciques adopted more conciliatory approaches. They appealed to local and national representatives with increasing frequency but struggled to obtain meaningful concessions. For example, Toba-Qom Cacique Taigoic accrued prestige by mediating indigenous workers' relationships with sugar plantation managers and traveled to Buenos Aires in 1917 and 1918 to present his followers' demands to national authorities.<sup>26</sup> Other caciques pursued similar strategies in the 1920s and 1930s, but their efforts did relatively little to connect indigenous communities to the Argentine nation-state. In 1936, five indigenous representatives from southern Argentina were named as delegates to the CHRI; however, it is unlikely that they were able to influence state policy before the rise of Perón.<sup>27</sup>

Indigenous people had limited national visibility before 1943, and Peronist policies did little to change that situation.<sup>28</sup> Perón and Evita were frequently photographed alongside Argentines with visibly indigenous features, but they avoided references to ethnicity in their speeches and only rarely acknowledged the existence of indigenous groups.<sup>29</sup> Perón's second five-year plan, in 1952, included an ambitious yet enigmatic promise: "The indigenous population will be protected through the direct action of the state, via their progressive incorporation into the rhythms and [living] standards of general national life."<sup>30</sup> A government minister's annotation emphasized that Argentina's indigenous population was extremely small and suggested that the pledge was unlikely to lead to substantive measures; rather, it was included because indigenous people had "always merited the affectionate concern of our President."<sup>31</sup> The national government also recognized an international day of commemoration for indigenous peoples on April 19, although public celebrations were modest.<sup>32</sup>

Peronism's most significant pro-indigenous policy was also its most ambiguous; the state classified indigenous people as Argentine citizens without taking specific measures to ensure that they enjoyed the rights of citizenship. When

Peronist legislators rewrote the Constitution in 1949, they implicitly affirmed that equal status by removing the document's "anachronistic" reference to "racial differences" among Argentines.<sup>33</sup> Peronist legislators occasionally debated "the problem of the Indian," but they preferred to treat indigenous people as workers and to try to incorporate them into national life through the labor market.<sup>34</sup> In the words of a Peronist legislator from Tucumán, indigenous people "are as Argentine as we are . . . I have seen them cheer for the country and for [the president] . . . in whom they have placed all their hopes for social redemption."<sup>35</sup> Such thinking fit with Peronism's emphasis on national unity. Peronist leaders also avoided talking about race because they feared lending credence to accusations that Peronism was fascist and antisemitic.<sup>36</sup>

In the 1940s and 1950s, some indigenous people received military enrollment and citizenship papers for the first time, probably thanks to Peronist organizing campaigns. For example, in 1949, an Anglican missionary working with indigenous communities in northern Argentina reported, "Civil status is now being offered to the younger generation, which involves a term of military service at eighteen years, leading to a close affinity with the Argentine way of life and language. This process, at some of our stations, has already gone quite a long way, whilst on others it has, as yet, hardly begun."<sup>37</sup> Many indigenous people lived in national territories that received voting rights after the constitutional reform of 1949, a process that provided further incentive for voter registration campaigns.<sup>38</sup> In 1953, a Peronist legislator commended Perón for promoting general enrollment and reported that only a small number of indigenous people had yet to be registered.<sup>39</sup> While he may have exaggerated the success of prior efforts, his comment suggests that some registration campaigns had taken place.

Indigenous women may have received documents in this period as well. After women earned the right vote in 1947, the Peronist Party divided in two according to gender, with Eva Perón at the helm of the *Partido Peronista Femenino* (Women's Peronist Party). Eva Perón chose twenty-three census delegates to supervise subdelegates, who would survey women across Argentina; their real job was to convince women to join the party.<sup>40</sup> It is difficult to assess the quantitative impact of this process; however, at least one of the subdelegates reported that she had visited rural indigenous communities.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, historian Carolina Barry estimates that hundreds or thousands of women were registered each day in poorer, Peronist-leaning provinces like Tucumán, where many residents had mixed-race ancestry.<sup>42</sup> When they received citizenship papers, indigenous people tended to treasure them.<sup>43</sup> The documents could become a reason to swear lasting loyalty to Perón and Evita. For example, a Mapuche interlocutor told anthropologist Claudia Briones that "Perón made us people! He gave us documents."<sup>44</sup>

The Peronist government took few concrete measures to improve the lives of Argentina's indigenous residents. In 1943, the ascendant Coronel Perón officially assumed responsibility for indigenous affairs as director of a newly created labor ministry, the *Secretario de Trabajo y Previsión*, which was to oversee the CHRI and its reservations. A 1945 decree recognized that "the state's actions to protect indigenous populations have been characterized by narrowness and ineffectiveness, principally because they were never designated sufficient and lasting facilities or resources."<sup>45</sup> This state of general neglect persisted under Perón,

despite various bureaucratic changes. In 1946, the CHRI was renamed the *Dirección de Protección del Aborigen* (DPA). In 1949, the DPA became part of the new *Dirección Nacional de Migraciones*, and in 1955, it was transferred to the *Ministerio del Interior y Justicia*.<sup>46</sup>

The DPA continued to oversee several indigenous reservations, but a federal investigation in 1950 found little evidence that the agency was functioning more smoothly or effectively under Perón. The report repeated a recurrent criticism, accusing authorities of taking advantage of indigenous labor:

In brief strokes, there is clear evidence of indecision and lack of authority in those responsible for managing these colonies, a product perhaps of the evident disinterest of superior authorities . . . Limited funds are handled with no accountability . . . and [officials] resort to arbitrary [actions] to eliminate the day's problems (this without noting that the same [arbitrary actions] might even constitute crimes).<sup>47</sup>

Also in 1950, in another indication of possible administrative corruption, one of the DPA's directors was criminally accused of abusing minors.<sup>48</sup> The DPA oversaw and inspected the contractual arrangements that allowed three large sugar producers to hire indigenous workers but did little to improve the miserable working and travel conditions that seasonal labor demanded.<sup>49</sup> In at least one instance, DPA inspectors helped the territorial government of Formosa to recruit indigenous laborers during the cotton harvest.<sup>50</sup>

A major administrative change at the DPA took place in 1953, when Mapuche leader Jerónimo Maliqueo became the organization's first indigenous director. A popular Peronist periodical, *Mundo Peronista*, introduced Maliqueo to readers with a photo of him standing proudly, arm-in-arm with Perón. The accompanying article, entitled "A Peronist Cacique Protects his Race," declared, "The Indian does not belong to a defeated race. He exists. He is as authentic as the Pampas, as the Andes, as corn . . . and tobacco. He is ours." Maliqueo promised to visit indigenous communities in northern and southern Argentina and pledged, "As the Indian I am, I will never abandon the cause of the Indians. I will continue to be a nuisance no matter who is in power."<sup>51</sup> Maliqueo had already established himself as an influential leader in the 1940s.<sup>52</sup> Perón probably chose him to lead the DPA because of a personal connection; as a young military officer, Perón had traveled regularly to Patagonia and apparently met Maliqueo there.<sup>53</sup>

The administration's decision to nominate Maliqueo inspired indigenous communities across Argentina. Cacique Pablo Machado reported that the news had left all of the Toba-Qom "with their hearts full of joy." Machado expressed confidence that Maliqueo would defend them "because we are all sons of the government of the people." Like many other caciques, Machado used Peronist language: "now is the time of invincible movements of higher powers that support our rights."<sup>54</sup> Shortly after Maliqueo's appointment, the national government authorized the establishment of twelve farming colonies where indigenous people could receive "primary education and practical classes in agricultural instruction."<sup>55</sup> Maliqueo apparently took an ambitious and energetic approach to his role. For example, in a 1954 letter calling for an investigation to protect the holdings of an indigenous landowner in Patagonia, Maliqueo reported that



**Figure 1.** Jerónimo Maliqueo and Juan Perón (1953), *Mundo Peronista*, “Un cacique peronista protege a su raza,” *Mundo Peronista*, September 1, 1953, 9.

Perón had directed him “to ensure that the rights of indigenous people were definitively respected, no matter who disagreed.”<sup>56</sup> Indigenous people of diverse ethnic backgrounds viewed Maliqueo as a potential intermediary and interlocutor. In practice, however, his influence was limited because Perón’s administration offered almost no substantive support.

As Maliqueo met with indigenous leaders from across Argentina and attempted to curtail abuses, he and his allies continued to praise Perón and Evita. In 1954, Maliqueo apparently arranged for hundreds of indigenous men from northern and southern Argentina to sign letters that lauded Juan Perón as the “first indigenous person of this noble and generous nation of brave Argentines,” quoted a popular line from one of Evita’s speeches, and extolled the “life-giving breath of Peronist doctrine.”<sup>57</sup> On April 19, 1954, Maliqueo’s private secretary made an unauthorized radio address celebrating Maliqueo as well as Juan and Eva Perón.<sup>58</sup> The incident prompted Peronist leaders to launch an investigation. Maliqueo was criticized for sanctioning the radio address, failing to observe appropriate administrative procedures, and using incendiary language.<sup>59</sup> A few months later, he was forced to resign.<sup>60</sup> His brief tenure may

have inspired other indigenous leaders, but it did not bring about lasting policy changes.

### Peronist Petitions

Caciques from northern Argentina took note of Perón's rhetorical promises, and some assumed more active roles in the new populist system to demand official attention and aid. They filed petition after petition to various authorities in the territorial and national governments, requesting land, agricultural tools, seeds, clothing, food, and better education for their children.<sup>61</sup> Archival records provide few indications about how these petitions were drafted. In many cases, the indigenous authors were able to sign their own names but clearly had help from notaries, government officials, political organizers, or other nonindigenous allies. The results of some petitions are similarly unclear. Nonetheless, the mere fact that caciques turned to the Argentine state with such insistent appeals provides a clear indication of their willingness to participate in the nation's political life. Some caciques had submitted similar petitions to local and national authorities in earlier eras; in the 1940s and 1950s, however, they appear to have done so more frequently.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, many petitions used Peronist rhetoric, suggesting that their authors may have been familiar with and receptive to the basic tenets of Perón's movement.

Caciques learned by necessity to negotiate with multiple representatives of the territorial and national governments. When local authorities ignored their requests, they collected funds from their followers or sought official assistance to travel to Buenos Aires to meet with national authorities. For example, a Toba-Qom leader named Ignacio Ávalos wrote to the governor of Chaco in 1945 asking for train tickets so that twelve indigenous residents of Tres Isletas could "go down to the federal capital to personally describe our painful situation . . . to the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Agrarian Counsel, with the just hope of finding justice and that that they will secure for us the firm and peaceful possession of the little bit of land that we till with such fervor."<sup>63</sup> The governor suggested they send their request to the acting director of the CHRI, but sources offer no indication of whether they were able to make the trip.

Petitioners reinforced their claims by engaging strategically with Peronist discourse. In 1947, for example, José Villeta wrote to the governor of Chaco in the name of 180 residents of El Zapallar, requesting legal title for the lands they occupied. To justify his claim, Villeta echoed Peronism's embrace of the working class, emphasizing the labor they provided to local settlers during the cotton harvest and the work they had put into the land over forty years. In addition, Villeta asked the governor to open a new school in El Zapallar "so that his sons could learn to read and write, because the school that functions there does not have space to educate all the school-age children."<sup>64</sup>

In 1946, Toba-Qom Cacique Antonio Gómez met with the head of the DPA in Buenos Aires to protest the fact that nonindigenous ranchers were using land in Colonia Tacuarí that had been allocated to Gómez and his followers. Gómez complained that a local government land agent had treated him violently and pushed him out of his office, maintaining that the lands in question were not appropriate for growing crops. "I have not studied, and neither have the others," Gómez admitted, "but I can assure you that . . . we know very well



through experience that the lands that they expect unjustly to dispossess us of are perfectly appropriate for agriculture.”<sup>65</sup> Gómez wrote again to the Ministry of Interior in 1950, pleading for a definitive resolution of the still unsettled land claim.<sup>66</sup> Gómez spent more than a decade petitioning local and national authorities for schools, land, seeds, tools, technical training, and medical aid.<sup>67</sup>

The Toba-Qom Cacique Ramón Gómez, leader of a group of cotton growers in La Matanza, near Napalpí, showed similar persistence in requesting assistance from state officials. In 1942, he asked the governor of Chaco to help him obtain cotton seeds and credit from the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Bank. Although his request was denied, it is worth noting the nationalist language Gómez employed: “All this to collaborate [with] the land that is the base of our nation’s riches . . . to be able to attend to my situation and that of my people under my charge. I don’t want to be delinquent or of that ilk.”<sup>68</sup> In 1946, Gómez again requested aid from the governor, who forwarded his petition along.<sup>69</sup> A few months later, Gómez wrote the governor once again, complaining about the lack of response to a previous letter, and criticizing the hypocrisy and false promises of the DPA.

Several months have already passed since we sent . . . an informative note about the critical economic situation that the tribe I mention is suffering, as a consequence of the various bad harvests we had, caused by plagues and by the lack of a fence to protect the fields . . . and the lack of agricultural tools, seeds, and credits to acquire food and clothing; that note that requested help from the state, to demonstrate to the men of the government and to our adversaries and detractors that we are capable of working, fulfilling our promises and administering ourselves without the supervision of people who want to perpetuate our misery and slavery and of false “saviors.”<sup>70</sup>

Gómez went on to stress that his people had taken care of themselves for nearly two decades. They rejected the insufficient and condescending assistance of the DPA and refused to live on the reservation in Napalpí, Chaco. He pointed out that “hunger and misery” were driving indigenous residents away from the reservation to seek work elsewhere, while the administrators “enjoy good salaries and comforts.”<sup>71</sup> Even so, Gómez recognized the advantages of forming productive relationships with agents of the territorial and national governments. His description of his followers as “capable of working” reverberates with Peronist discourse.

In the southern territories of Neuquén and Río Negro, indigenous delegates appointed by the DPA attempted to mediate local land claims and resolve complaints about evictions and abuses by local merchants. Mapuche leaders also traveled to Buenos Aires to present their concerns directly to national leaders.<sup>72</sup> Historian Enrique Mases argues that the delegates’ activities helped indigenous communities to build a new relationship with the national government and encouraged them to identify with the Peronist movement.<sup>73</sup> Like their counterparts in the Chaco, Mapuche leaders adopted Peronist rhetoric. For example, in 1954, a delegate named Nazario Chico echoed Maliqueo’s description of indigenous people as the nation’s “first Peronists”:

I am a man of the New Argentina; and from the first moment I identified with the Peronist movement . . . even before getting to know General Perón and his

magnificent work for the common good . . . before the year 1943 I was already proclaiming justice for my indigenous race, and I remained firm defending the reason of my race.<sup>74</sup>

Another petition, by a Mapuche woman named Benita Reuque, used gendered language typical of the Women's Peronist Party. She described Jerónimo Maliqueo and Juan Perón as her "protectors" and praised Evita, "the infinite mother."<sup>75</sup>

### Appealing Directly to Perón

Peronism encouraged its adherents to imagine a personal relationship with the nation's leader, and many indigenous people admired the president and adored his wife. Some leaders traveled to Buenos Aires hoping to meet with the president, while others pleaded with the president to visit them. For example, in 1947, the police chief at a Franciscan mission in Formosa indicated that some indigenous residents had the impression that they would be able to speak with Perón in Formosa's capital. The president planned to return the following month from an official visit to Bolivia along the Río Paraná, so their hope had some basis, although there is no official record of such a meeting.<sup>76</sup> Some communities remember personal visits from the president or first lady that never took place. Anthropologist Gastón Gordillo reports that some Toba-Qom individuals who worked at the sugar plantation San Martín de Tabacal retain vivid memories of a day in the 1950s when Perón got off the train to speak with their caciques and then threw coins at the crowd like they were candy. Perón did travel around the country throwing coins during his 1951 electoral campaign, but according to Gordillo, he never visited San Martín de Tabacal.<sup>77</sup>

Caciques' desire to form a direct relationship with the nation's top leader had historical precedents, but Perón enjoyed far more widespread popularity among indigenous people than any other Argentine leader. The most visible example of indigenous people attempting to appeal directly to Perón was the so-called *Malón de la Paz* (Raid for Peace) of 1946, when 174 Kolla from the northwestern provinces of Salta and Jujuy traveled by foot, horse, and wagon to Buenos Aires to speak with the president and demand new administrators for the DPA.<sup>78</sup> According to Marcelo Valko, three Kolla leaders initially traveled to Buenos Aires in 1945 to complain to the CHRI about "abusive landowners." There, they met with Lieutenant Mario Bertonasco, who later encouraged them to plan a communal march to Buenos Aires in 1946.<sup>79</sup> In Jujuy, Kolla leaders, including Daniel Dionicio, a local church leader, and his son Viviano Dionicio, who served as a provincial legislator, began to organize a caravan and encourage others to participate. Their communities were inspired by the Peronist slogan "land for those who work it" and hoped that Peronist lawmakers would expropriate land on their behalf.<sup>80</sup> In Viviano Dionicio's words, "We are not asking for anything; we don't want anything . . . only to defend what is ours."<sup>81</sup>

As the Kolla made their way across Argentina, they attracted curiosity and enthusiasm. By emphasizing the petitioners' poverty and helplessness, newspaper reports and images reinforced stereotypes, ignored the protestors' agency, and generated widespread public sympathy.<sup>82</sup> Press coverage also tended to minimize the role of the Kolla leaders, focusing instead on Lieutenant Bertonasco, who

accompanied them and served as an interlocutor with the national government and the press.<sup>83</sup> Congress established a commission to study the issue. One legislator spoke admiringly but condescendingly of the Kolla's "simplicity" and "childlike mentality," while others raised concerns about how to assess their leaders' legitimacy.<sup>84</sup> In San Antonio de Areco, about seventy miles from their destination, the Kolla caravan had a ceremonial meeting with a Mapuche delegation led by Jerónimo Maliqueo. Indigenous leaders gave speeches in Mapuche and Quechua and publicly embraced as the crowd applauded.<sup>85</sup>

The Kolla received an even more enthusiastic welcome in Buenos Aires on August 3, 1946. The director of the DPA escorted them to Congress, where they met members of the new commission. Next, they marched along the city's central thoroughfare toward the *Casa Rosada* (presidential palace), carrying a replica of the Virgin Mary plastered with signs reading "Perón."<sup>86</sup> Students from schools along the way came outside to watch, and a large crowd greeted the caravan in the *Plaza de Mayo* with cheers of "Long Live Perón" and "Long Live the Indians." Perón's response appeared highly choreographed. First, he walked out onto the balcony of the Casa Rosada alongside several other influential Peronist leaders. Perón then summoned Dionicio, Bertonasco, and other representatives from the caravan to come inside. Dionicio and Perón shared a historic embrace on the balcony in full view of the crowds, and Perón pledged his support.<sup>87</sup> Two Kolla women enacted a gendered interpretation of the charismatic bond by posing for a photo with large portraits of Juan Perón in his military uniform.<sup>88</sup>

The Kolla's visit ended disastrously, but even this outcome did not sever their ties with Peronism. When the rally ended, they retired to the *Hotel de Inmigrantes*, where indigenous visitors to the capital usually stayed. Perón visited them that very evening to make sure they were comfortable. Over the next three weeks, the Kolla toured the capital, met with government representatives, presented flowers to Eva Perón, and played an exhibition football match in front of a crowd of forty thousand.<sup>89</sup> Then, in the early morning hours of August 29, 1946, most of the indigenous protestors were expelled from Buenos Aires. Police and naval officers used tear gas and forced the Kolla onto a train back to the northwest.<sup>90</sup> Three Kolla men witnessed the violence but avoided being pushed onto the train. They attempted to publicize their grievances and get the national government's attention by telling their story to *Noticias Gráficas*. According to the reporter, they did not blame Perón for what happened and hoped he would meet their demands: "We want those who went away yesterday to come back. They should bring them again and we should be allowed to speak with Perón. We still have confidence in him. The president of the Argentines cannot tell a lie. It cannot be him who ordered this sir."<sup>91</sup>

Dionicio also remained in Buenos Aires, and continued to advocate for the Kolla. He managed to secure a meeting with Perón, who allegedly claimed that someone had told him "that the Indians were tired of Buenos Aires," prompting Perón to agree that they should return by train "surrounded by comforts that would make up for the hardships suffered" on their trip to the capital.<sup>92</sup> Congress ordered an official investigation of the violence, but the matter was eventually dropped.<sup>93</sup> Nonetheless, Kolla leaders pressed their claims for land, and some legislators remained sympathetic. Perón had promised to redistribute large tracts of land held by his political opponents in Jujuy even before the Malón de la Paz. In 1949, after several years of further debate, he finally



**Figure 2.** Kolla with Replica of Virgin Mary and Peronist Signs (1946), Archivo Crónica, caja C00776, sobre AR00090915, Archivo de Redacción de Crónica, Fondo Editorial Sarmiento, Departamento de Archivos, Biblioteca Nacional, Argentina.



**Figure 3.** Juan Perón Watches the Kolla Arrive in Buenos Aires (1946), Archivo General de la Nación, caja 3166, #170499, Departamento de Documentos Fotográficos, Archivo General de la Nación, Argentina.



**Figure 4.** Kolla Women in Buenos Aires with portraits of Juan Perón (1946), Archivo General de la Nación, caja 258, #297824, Departamento de Documentos Fotográficos, Archivo General de la Nación, Argentina.

expropriated an extensive list of properties in Jujuy, but very little of that land was redistributed to the Kolla.<sup>94</sup> Even so, later generations of indigenous activists frequently celebrated the legendary story of the Malón de la Paz.<sup>95</sup>

### Cacique Pedro Martínez

Of all the indigenous leaders who associated themselves with Perón, Toba-Qom Cacique Pedro Martínez was probably the most successful. Martínez accrued influence and prestige by mediating relationships between Toba-Qom communities and government agents and became a recognized interlocutor with the Peronist state. He also founded twenty-two evangelical churches across Chaco and Formosa. His dual roles as a cacique and pastor reinforced his prestige. Many indigenous people responded enthusiastically to political and religious messages that promised to alleviate their suffering, without perceiving a contradiction between Peronist and evangelical doctrines. For example, a missionary reported that several Toba-Qom wrote to Perón in 1946, asking him “to respect faith and beliefs in the Gospel and treat them as they treat other Argentine citizens, by permitting them to secure the land for their own reservations.”<sup>96</sup>

In the early 1940s, heterodox forms of evangelical Christianity had spread throughout many indigenous communities in Chaco and Formosa, thanks in part to brief encounters with foreign missionaries. In 1941, groups of poor indigenous people walked to Resistencia to hear the North American Pentecostal missionary John Lagar, participate in large celebrations, and eat barbecued meat.<sup>97</sup> With help from another North American missionary and several

indigenous assistants, Lagar organized meetings across the Chaco and claimed to have converted thousands of people.<sup>98</sup> According to a police report, the preachers sold Bibles and gave indigenous people certificates confirming their identity and asking authorities to protect and assist them.<sup>99</sup> These certificates had no legal validity, but indigenous people must have appreciated them as they did other formal documents. British missionary John Church's Emmanuel Mission, the Anglican South American Missionary Society, and a Mennonite mission near Sáenz Peña also exposed indigenous people to Christianity.<sup>100</sup> According to anthropologist Elmer Miller, many Toba-Qom adopted Pentecostal beliefs—especially an emphasis on faith healing and possession by spirits—at a moment of profound social crisis, when they had lost confidence in traditional shamans.<sup>101</sup>

In 1946, Pedro Martínez traveled to Buenos Aires with another Toba-Qom leader, named Domingo F. Sarmiento. They met with President Perón to request land, tools, clothing, and credit and also met Marco Mazzucco, the leader of Argentina's *Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal*.<sup>102</sup> When Martínez returned to the Chaco, he began traveling around with several indigenous preachers to promote new religious beliefs. They established churches; appointed indigenous residents as church leaders, music directors, and treasurers; and collected offerings, which Martínez apparently promised to deliver to God personally.<sup>103</sup> Some indigenous people doubted the cacique's intentions, but Martínez's authority made him a dangerous enemy. In 1951, for example, when Martínez accused another indigenous man, Bonifacio Ramírez, of threatening to kill him, the police quickly detained Ramírez.<sup>104</sup> When Martínez died in the mid-1950s, rumors spread that he had left behind a house filled with riches.<sup>105</sup>

For the most part, the national government tolerated the existence of indigenous churches, thus weakening the influence of the Catholic Church and its missionaries and helping to ensure the loyalty of future voters. A 1948 presidential decree required non-Catholic religious groups to obtain government approval before holding public meetings, by registering with a bureau known as the *Fichero de Cultos*.<sup>106</sup> Like citizenship and military enrollment papers, church *ficheros* (registration papers) were valued documents in indigenous communities and seemed to grant a stamp of approval from Perón for their activities.<sup>107</sup> The territorial police in Chaco and Formosa occasionally shut down meetings of churches that did not have *ficheros*, inspiring fear and anxiety among indigenous adherents.<sup>108</sup> Some sectors within the national government also regarded evangelical missionaries with suspicion; in 1949, the National Defense Counsel proposed a plan for “coordinated action” to “put an end” to the activities of evangelical missionaries in Chaco, Formosa, and Salta, but the Counsel's request to form a commission to address the issue was denied.<sup>109</sup>

The *Iglesia de Dios* in Buenos Aires may have helped Cacique Martínez to obtain *ficheros* for some indigenous churches, but ministry archives contain no records of such an application.<sup>110</sup> In 1955, Mennonite missionaries Albert Buckwalter and John Litwiller began working with the Toba-Qom preacher Aurelio López to obtain *ficheros* for an independent indigenous church, which they named the *Iglesia Evangélica Unida* (IEU). Initially comprised of twenty-eight Toba-Qom congregations in both Chaco and Formosa, the IEU eventually spread to Pilagá and Mocoví-Moqoic communities. The IEU's *fichero* was not

actually granted until 1961, years after Perón was deposed in a 1955 military coup.<sup>111</sup>

Many indigenous people believed that Perón had instructed Cacique Martínez to establish a church for every Toba-Qom community.<sup>112</sup> Although historical records offer no evidence to confirm that suspicion, reports about meetings between Perón and Cacique Martínez helped legitimate the existence of indigenous churches and incentivized believers to associate evangelical beliefs with Peronist politics. As a well-known, larger-than-life figure across Chaco and Formosa, Martínez personified the link between both movements. He cultivated the impression that he knew Perón well, and many Toba-Qom remembered that he wore a military uniform Perón had given him.<sup>113</sup> These ties, whether real or imagined, defined Martínez's identity as a leader.

Like Viviano Dionicio in Jujuy, Martínez also worked to secure indigenous land rights in the Chaco. After their trip to meet Perón in 1946, Martínez and Sarmiento penned a letter to the Governor of Chaco on behalf of sixty-two indigenous cotton farmers, requesting seeds and insecticide. Their petition wound its way through official channels to the Interior and Agricultural Ministries, the Secretary of Industry and Commerce, and the Central Bank, but they did not receive a response in time to plant cotton that year.<sup>114</sup> The following spring, Martínez and Sarmiento assembled approximately one thousand indigenous people from across the Chaco and repeated their request for plows and seeds. The gathering of discontented people worried the governor, who considered the situation critical. Sarmiento traveled again to Buenos Aires in August of 1947 to explain their demands, and they eventually received sixty-four plows, an annual supply of seeds, and a guarantee that they could continue to occupy public lands in Pampa del Indio.<sup>115</sup>

Argentine authorities recognized Martínez's superior negotiating abilities and often referred to him as *Cacique General* of the Toba. In the 1950s, he began signing his letters with an official stamp that read "Cacique Gral. de la Tribu Argentina Pampa del Indio Prov. Pres. Perón."<sup>116</sup> Martínez had a particularly close relationship with Governor Felipe Gallardo, who traveled on several occasions to Pampa del Indio to meet with residents and listen to their demands. In addition, Martínez took advantage of his rapport with local authorities to support petitions and complaints from other indigenous people in the territory. For example, in 1951, Martínez gave a letter of introduction to a group of indigenous residents of El Espinillo, who were asking Napalpí's administrator to protect them from local landowners. They claimed that local landowners had pastured their cows on their land and damaged their cotton plants, while also demonstrating a "disrespectful" attitude toward President Perón.<sup>117</sup> By assisting communities with local problems, Martínez encouraged positive associations with Peronism.

Martínez credited Perón with ensuring the Toba-Qom's land rights in Pampa del Indio. In a 1954 letter to the DPA, Martínez introduced himself by emphasizing his close personal relationship with the president. "I am the first Cacique and my translator is Domingo F. Sarmiento. We are the two who have spoken to our President. He knows us very well . . . When we asked our President Perón he gave us this place because our ancestors [and] grandparents have been located [here]." Martínez spoke of Perón's presidency as a defining moment in the history of his people and of all indigenous Argentines:

Pampa [del Indio] has been abandoned by the first *casiquillos* [minor caciques] and they [were] exploited by the whites: But today we have a man and a woman of much faith who are Juan Perón and Eva Perón: when they took control of Government we already were helped [along with] more than 20,000 indigenous people, we were very happy that we felt many speeches saying that they would help the poor, and we are the poor, abandoned and tricked by the whites.<sup>118</sup>

Martínez recognized that Peronism should be defined as much by its promises as by its achievements; indigenous people had heard “a lot of speeches” and were waiting for results.

### The Las Lomitas Massacre

The decision to embrace Peronism did not protect indigenous communities from violent treatment at the hands of policemen and agents of Argentina’s border security force, the *Gendarmería Nacional*. Unsurprisingly, state archives preserve little evidence about the daily brutality that many indigenous people faced. As state agents consolidated their power, they were increasingly likely to dictate not only how violence was used but also how its use was recorded. If a gendarme decided to pull out his weapon in an encounter with an indigenous person, he had no obligation to document that interaction. In 1947, when gendarmes killed an unknown number of Pilagá men, women, and children in Formosa, officials managed to cover up the event almost completely.<sup>119</sup> Perón himself did not order the gendarmes to slaughter the Pilagá, but government policies characterized by disorganization and neglect enabled the extrajudicial use of extreme violence against indigenous people.

In 1947, in the midst of a calamitous drought exacerbated by plagues of locusts, hundreds of destitute indigenous people in Formosa had turned toward a charismatic religious movement.<sup>120</sup> Some people walked more than two hundred miles, from the sugar plantation of San Martín de Tabacal in Salta to Las Lomitas, Formosa.<sup>121</sup> They were there to listen to a charismatic Pilagá leader, known as Luciano Córdoba or Tonkiet, who prophesied the arrival of a new age and the end of their suffering. Luciano’s followers painted their faces and participated in special dances at a site they called the *corona* (crown), alarming local settlers.<sup>122</sup>

In the days leading up to the massacre, another local leader, Cacique Pablo Navarro (also known as Oñedié), persistently sought government assistance to feed and clothe Luciano’s followers.<sup>123</sup> Navarro spoke Spanish and had probably acquired relevant negotiating experience while working at the sugar plantations, but his efforts at mediation in Las Lomitas proved futile. According to the recollection of gendarmes who were present, Navarro asked for food for the Pilagá, as well as clothing for six representatives, so that they could travel to Buenos Aires and present their demands to President Perón and other national authorities. Navarro apparently hoped to obtain land where they could settle permanently, thus eliminating the need for arduous annual trips to the sugar plantations. He may have asked Perón to come to Las Lomitas “to see how they lived.”<sup>124</sup> When a DPA delegate arrived in Las Lomitas, Navarro supposedly asked him “if he had ‘come to rob them again,’ demanding payment for pending debts for planted



and harvested cotton.”<sup>125</sup> Although some gendarmes later suggested that the Pilagá had been armed, it seems more likely that they maintained a peaceful stance.

Alarming reports from the governor of Formosa, the Gendarmería, and the DPA eventually prompted the national government to send basic rations to Las Lomitas by train, but much of the food had spoiled by the time it arrived. The Pilagá had no choice but to eat the rotten food. Many fell ill and a few died, perhaps including Navarro’s mother. When the Gendarmería informed the DPA about the condition of the provisions, a delegate supposedly responded, “Why worry so much if in the end they are Indians?”<sup>126</sup> A sixteen-year-old Pilagá boy named Orlando, who worked for the Gendarmería cutting firewood, later reported that a corporal had warned him that the gendarmes were planning to attack the Pilagá camp. When Orlando tried to warn the elders, they ignored him, believing that Luciano would protect them.<sup>127</sup>

On October 10, 1947, Navarro asked for a meeting on an open field with the local commander of the Gendarmería, Emilio Fernández Castellanos. The cacique approached the agreed-upon meeting spot in the company of hundreds of men, women, and children. One gendarme recalled that the Pilagá were carrying portraits of Juan and Evita Perón, perhaps signaling their adherence to the populist system and their hope for the government’s support.<sup>128</sup> A few gendarmes opened fire and then continued killing as defenseless people fled from the site. Evidence from recent excavations and interviews with survivors suggests that gendarmes may have killed hundreds of Pilagá on October 10 and over the weeks that followed.<sup>129</sup> The traumatic impact on survivors cannot be quantified. Although Pilagá communities had decades of experience with Argentine state violence, especially during the Chaco War of 1932–35, leaders like Navarro had tried to build more constructive relationships with Argentine state agents.<sup>130</sup> Their efforts were once again crushed.

As gendarmes pursued the survivors by land and by plane, national authorities concealed the evidence of the grisly incident. In a report to the interior minister, the director of the Gendarmería, Natalio Faverio, reported on various confrontations between indigenous people and gendarmes in the area, without acknowledging the massacre itself.<sup>131</sup> Regional and national newspapers described the event as an indigenous uprising.<sup>132</sup> Nearly two weeks later, a more accurate report emerged, though few people were paying attention. According to Salta’s *El Intransigente*, the Pilagá “were pursued and are still being pursued”; while the gendarmes suffered no casualties, indigenous losses were more difficult to estimate, since some corpses had been burned.<sup>133</sup> The newspaper emphasized continuities with previous massacres and cover-ups in the Chaco:

The first stories, always have been the same. “Uprising of Indians, massacre of whites, panic among the peaceful settlers.” But then the other [stories] arrive, the true ones, the painful ones . . . Later, time takes care of covering it all up. Of throwing dirt on the bullet wounds, the machetes’ blows, and the fires. And thus continues the life of the indigenous person in Chaco, although there is a day in the calendar called: “Day of the Indian.”<sup>134</sup>

Only a few months earlier, indigenous people had gathered in Formosa’s capital to commemorate that day. They had saluted the Argentine flag, sung the

national anthem, listened to an indigenous speaker, and deposited flowers on a monument to independence leader José San Martín.<sup>135</sup>

Symbolic rituals did not protect indigenous people from horrifying violence, but Pilagá leaders had no choice but to continue to cooperate with state agents. Pilagá Cacique Pablo Navarro probably fled with survivors to Paraguay after the massacre. Argentine gendarmes captured him a few weeks later. Navarro and at least a hundred others eventually settled on an Argentine state reservation and resumed their seasonal trips to the sugar plantations.<sup>136</sup> In 1948, another survivor, Cacique Domingo Coquero, traveled to Buenos Aires to secure the legal title for a parcel of land and spoke highly of Perón in an interview with a Peronist newspaper.<sup>137</sup> A few years later, Cacique Coquero petitioned the Argentine government to open a primary school for Pilagá children.<sup>138</sup> Like other indigenous leaders in the 1950s, he must have concluded that the next generation would be better off living as Argentine citizens than trying to defend their autonomy.

### Remembering Perón

As the Argentine state repeatedly demonstrated its superior force, more and more caciques began to operate within the political system, requesting benefits, protection, and political rights. When Perón assumed the presidency in 1946, many caciques saw him as a leader who might finally pay attention to their demands. They adopted a Peronist idiom, speaking about their followers as good workers who were ready to contribute to Argentina's future. Their petitions were not always successful. Navarro could do nothing to avert a brutal massacre, while Martínez may have amassed a personal fortune at his followers' expense. Nonetheless, indigenous participation in the Peronist movement connected local communities to national political debates. Peronism mattered less for what it gave indigenous people than for what it encouraged them to think might be possible. Between 1945 and 1955, as Perón consolidated his power and territories became provinces, indigenous leaders from across Argentina turned again and again to state agents, and many indigenous people began to identify as Argentine citizens and Peronists.

Focusing on such understudied intermediaries helps explain populism's enduring, paradoxical appeal in the Argentine interior. Particular visions of Juan and Eva Perón proved attractive to many rural Argentines, especially women and people of indigenous ancestry, but the mechanisms of political organization in the interior drew on local traditions. In her analysis of Peronism in Mendoza, historian Mariana Garzón Rogé stresses the importance of studying what she calls "situated practices." She points out that both Peronist and anti-Peronist rhetoric have contributed to a tendency to think of Peronism as emotional, irrational, and apolitical. To avoid that trap, historians must look closely at what Peronists in the interior did and try to understand what they thought they were doing.<sup>139</sup> In an analysis of recent historiography on Peronism, historian Matthew Karush argues that Peronist workers simultaneously "reproduced" and "transformed" Peronism.<sup>140</sup> The same might be said of many caciques and their communities. Such examples highlight the rewards of a bottom-up approach to the history of populism that considers political activity alongside discourse.<sup>141</sup>

Many indigenous communities remember Perón's first years in power as a turning point in their relationships with the government and the Argentine

nation. Of course, indigenous people were hardly the only Argentines to look back at the first Peronist period with nostalgia. These memories reveal as much about the economic chaos, political tumult, and violence that Argentines faced in subsequent decades as they do about the history of the 1940s. To a certain extent, this positive image of Perón may also reflect real improvements in indigenous people's living conditions, thanks to generalized social and labor reforms. Some may have been able to access cheaper food, primary education, credit, and redress from bad working conditions. These economic factors were intertwined with Peronism's discursive and rhetorical strategies.

Without a doubt, many indigenous people exhibited a degree of enthusiasm for Juan and Eva Perón that far exceeded any material benefits they received in the 1940s. Even some survivors of the Las Lomas massacre have positive memories of Perón and insist that he was not responsible for the bloodshed.<sup>142</sup> Peronism offered unprecedented opportunities for political participation and citizenship, which in turn encouraged some indigenous people to dissociate state violence from the nation and its leader. Caciques developed new strategies and new vocabularies to deal with a government that finally appeared willing to listen, although most of its representatives did not live up to their promises. As an indigenous leader from the Chaco who made several trips to Buenos Aires to defend his people's rights later recalled, Perón's government "did not call us Indians; they treated us like men."<sup>143</sup> Subsequent indigenous movements would place more emphasis on ethnic identities, but many early Peronist caciques appreciated being "treated like men" and citizens.

### Endnotes

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1. Montiel Romero, *Yo, Montiel Romero, de raza toba. Historia de vida de un indio toba de Chaco argentino*, ed. María Cecilia Stroppa and Edelmi E. Griva (Ensenada, Mexico, 1983), 84–85. All translations from Spanish are my own. When quoting from primary sources, I translate both *indígena* and *aborigen* as indigenous, and *indio* (not always a derogatory term in the 1940s–50s) as Indian. *Qom*, which means "the people," is now the preferred term for the indigenous people from the lowlands of the Gran Chaco previously known as Toba.

2. Romero, 70–86.

3. Romero, 92.

4. Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946–1976* (Cambridge, 1994), 20.

5. Juan Carlos Torre and Elisa Pastoriza, "La democratización del bienestar (1943–1955)," in *Nueva historia argentina. Los años peronistas (1943–1955)*, ed. Juan Carlos Torre, vol. 8 (Buenos Aires, 2002), 257–312; see also Natalia Milanésio, "Food Politics and Consumption in Peronist Argentina," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 90, no. 1

(2010): 75–108; Daniel James, *Doña María's Story: Life History, Memory, and Political Identity* (Durham, NC, 2000).

6. Eva Perón, *Discursos completos*, 3 vols. (Buenos Aires, 1985).

7. Andrea Matallana, *Locos por la radio. Una historia social de la radiofonía en la Argentina, 1923–1947* (Buenos Aires, 2006), 37; Christine Ehrick, *Radio and the Gendered Soundscape: Women and Broadcasting in Argentina and Uruguay, 1930–1950* (Cambridge, 2015), chap. 3; Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Mañana Es San Perón: A Cultural History of Peron's Argentina*, trans. Keith Zahniser (Wilmington, DE, 2003), 108–9.

8. On political rituals, see, Plotkin, *Mañana Es San Perón*, esp. 41–58.

9. Ezequiel Adamovsky, “Race and Class through the Visual Culture of Peronism,” in *Rethinking Race in Modern Argentina*, ed. Paulina Alberto and Eduardo Elena (New York, 2016), 155–83.

10. On Peronism as a “noisy phenomenon,” see Ehrick, *Radio and the Gendered Soundscape*, 104; Ezequiel Adamovsky and Esteban Buch, *La marchita, el escudo y el bombo* (Buenos Aires, 2014).

11. See, among others, Matthew B. Karush and Oscar Chamosa, eds., *The New Cultural History of Peronism: Power and Identity in Mid-Twentieth-Century Argentina* (Durham, NC, 2010); Alberto and Elena, eds., *Rethinking Race in Modern Argentina*.

12. Recent research has drawn attention to the practice of writing letters to Juan and Eva Perón, relying especially on a collection of letters sent after Perón solicited popular input for his second Five-Year Plan in 1951; however, I have been unable to locate any indigenous petitions submitted in response to this call. See Omar Acha, “Sociedad civil y sociedad política durante el primer peronismo,” *Desarrollo Económico* 44, no. 174 (September 2004): 199–230; Eduardo Elena, “What the People Want: State Planning and Political Participation in Peronist Argentina, 1946–1955,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37, no. 1 (2005): 81–108; Donna J. Guy, *Creating Charismatic Bonds in Argentina: Letters to Juan and Eva Perón* (Albuquerque, NM, 2016). Acha refers to a letter from the “Unidad Básica de Tobas, Presidente Roca,” but the author is actually Ernesto Rastellini, Secretaría General de la Unidad Básica Peronista in Presidencia Roca, Departamento Tobas, a town along the Bermejo River in northeastern Chaco. Rastellini does not specify the ethnic background of those who would benefit from his request to appropriate land; it is possible but unlikely that indigenous people were involved. Acha, 217–18; “Distribución de tierras en Presidencia Roca (Chaco),” 1951, legajo 73, Fondo Secretaría de Asuntos Técnicos de la 1° y 2° Presidencia de Perón, archivo intermedio, Archivo General de la Nación, Argentina [subsequently SAT, AGN].

13. This article complicates Diana Lenton's claim that “during the period of Peronist hegemony the indigenous communities were not the object of novel measures nor the agents of any major changes.” Diana Lenton, “The Malón de La Paz of 1946: Indigenous Descamisados at the Dawn of Peronism,” trans. Beatrice D. Gurwitz, in *The New Cultural History of Peronism*, ed. Karush and Chamosa, 88. For interpretations that place less emphasis on continuity, see María Elba Argeri, “Los indígenas de Río Negro en el estado peronista,” *Todo es historia* 449 (2004): 72–78; José Marcilese, “Las políticas del primer peronismo en relación con las comunidades indígenas,” *Andes* 22, no. 2 (2011); Enrique Mases, “La Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión y el mundo indígena en la norpatagonia,” in *La sociedad del trabajo: Las instituciones laborales en la Argentina (1900–1955)*, ed. Mirta Zaida Lobato and Juan Suriano (Buenos Aires, 2013), 267–92; Carlos Martínez Sarasola, *Nuestros paisanos los indios: Vida, historia y destino de las comunidades indígenas en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1992), 410–11.

14. “Un cacique peronista protege a su raza,” *Mundo Peronista*, September 1, 1953, 10.

15. See, among others, Aixa Bona and Juan Vilaboa, eds., *Las formas de la política en la Patagonia: El primer peronismo en los Territorios Nacionales* (Buenos Aires, 2007); Mark Alan Healey, *The Ruins of the New Argentina: Peronism and the Remaking of San Juan after the 1944 Earthquake* (Durham, NC, 2011); Darío Macor and César Tcach Abad, eds., *La invención del peronismo en el interior del país* (Santa Fe, NM, 2003); Darío Macor and César Tcach, eds., *La invención del peronismo en el interior del país II* (Santa Fe, NM, 2013). On recent historiographical trends, see Eduardo Elena, “New Directions in the History of Peronism,” *E.I.A.L.* 25, no. 1 (2014): 17–39.

16. Nicolás Quiroga, “De la inexistencia a la ubicuidad. El partido peronista en la historiografía académica,” in *El hecho maldito: Conversaciones para otra historia del peronismo*, by Omar Acha and Nicolás Quiroga (Rosario, Argentina, 2012), 98.

17. Alejandra Salomón describes such intermediaries as the “third line of Peronist leadership.” She builds on Raanan Rein’s argument about the understudied influence of the “second line,” comprised of national figures like Juan Atilio Bramuglia and Domingo Mercante. Alejandra Salomón, “La tercera línea de liderazgo peronista en localidades ‘extracéntricas’ de la provincia de Buenos Aires, 1945–1955,” *Mundo Agrario* 12, no. 23 (2011); Raanan Rein, *Peronismo, populismo y política: Argentina, 1943–1955* (Buenos Aires, 1998); Raanan Rein and Claudio Panella, eds., *La segunda línea. Liderazgo peronista 1945–1955* (Buenos Aires, 2013).

18. For an analogous example from Mexico, see Gilbert M. Joseph, “Rethinking Mexican Revolutionary Mobilization: Yucatán’s Seasons of Upheaval, 1909–1915,” in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham, NC, 1994), 135–69.

19. Florencia E. Mallon, “Indigenous Peoples and Nation-States in Spanish America, 1780–2000,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American History*, ed. Jose C. Moya (New York, 2011).

20. *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, año 1948* (Buenos Aires, 1948), V: 3969; *IV censo general de la nación* (Buenos Aires, 1947), xxviii.

21. Gastón Gordillo and Silvia Hirsch, “Indigenous Struggles and Contested Identities in Argentina,” *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 8, no. 3 (2003): 8–12; Martínez Sarasola, *Nuestros paisanos los indios*; Christine Mathias, “South America’s Final Frontier: Indigenous Leadership and the Long Conquest of the Gran Chaco, 1870–1955” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2015), 24–113.

22. See, for example, Diego Escolar, *Los dones étnicos de la nación: Identidades huarpe y modos de producción de soberanía en Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 2007); Evaldo Mendes da Silva, “Walking on the Bad Land: The Guarani Indians in the Triple Frontier,” in *Big Water: The Making of the Borderlands Between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay*, ed. Jacob Blanc and Frederico Freitas (Tucson, AZ, 2018), 186–210.

23. See, for example, Dirección de Territorios Nacionales, “Proyecto de Ley, Creación del Patronato Nacional de Indios,” 1914, legajo 6, documento 20, Fondo Isidoro Ruíz Moreno, #3095, sala VII, AGN; Isidoro Ruíz Moreno to Ministro del Interior, June 12, 1924, 1924, legajo 21, expediente 8833, Ministerio del Interior, expedientes generales, archivo intermedio [subsequently MIG], AGN.

24. Gordillo and Hirsch, “Indigenous Struggles,” 12.

25. See, among others, Walter Mario Delrio, *Memorias de expropiación: Sometimiento e incorporación indígena en la Patagonia, 1872–1943* (Buenos Aires, 2005); Mathias, “South America’s Final Frontier.”

26. Mathias, “South America’s Final Frontier,” 95–101.

27. Juan A. Domínguez, "La Comisión Honoraria de Reducciones de Indios en cumplimiento de su deber," *Comisión Honoraria de Reducciones de Indios Publicación* 4 (1936): 5; Mases, "La Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión."

28. On visibility, see Claudia Briones, "Construcciones de aboriginalidad en Argentina," *Bulletin de la société suisse des Américanistes* 68 (2004): 73–90; Gordillo and Hirsch, "Indigenous Struggles."

29. Adamovsky, "Race and Class," 168; Argeri, "Los indígenas de Río Negro."

30. Presidencia de la Nación, *2<sup>o</sup> plan quinquenal* (Buenos Aires, 1953), 33.

31. Presidencia de la Nación, 33n14.

32. April 19 was the anniversary of the first *Congreso Indigenista Interamericano*. Argentina did not send delegates to Pátzcuaro, Mexico, in 1940 but did begin celebrating the anniversary in 1945. "Tuvo una sobria pero efectiva celebración el Día del Indio," *Noéncias Gráficas*, April 19, 1945; "Se celebrará el Día del Indígena," *La Voz Popular* (Formosa), April 18, 1947; Director Nacional de Migraciones, "Resolución N<sup>o</sup> 256," April 19, 1950, legajo 546, SAT, AGN; Lenton, "The Malón de la Paz of 1946," 106n8.

33. Consejo Superior del Partido Peronista, *Anteproyecto de reforma de la constitución nacional* (Buenos Aires, 1949), 34. Where the 1853 Constitution had charged Congress with "providing for the security of the frontiers, maintaining peaceful treatment of Indians, and promoting their conversion to Catholicism," the revised version of that clause referred only to frontier security.

34. See, for example, *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Senadores, año 1948* (Buenos Aires, 1948), I: 366; *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Senadores, año 1953* (Buenos Aires, 1953), II: 1111–14; see also Diana Lenton, "De centauros a protegidos. La construcción del sujeto de la política indigenista argentina desde los debates parlamentarios (1880–1970)" (PhD diss., Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2005), esp. 404, <http://corpusarchivos.revues.org/1290>.

35. *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, año 1948*, V: 3964–65.

36. Eduardo Elena, "Argentina in Black and White: Race, Peronism, and the Color of Politics, 1940s to the Present," in *Rethinking Race in Modern Argentina*, ed. Alberto and Elena, 187–89.

37. H. C. Grubb, "Argentine Chaco Mission Report," *South American Missionary Society Report*, 1949, 18–20; see also Romero, *Yo, Montiel Romero*, 85–86.

38. On the conversion of national territories into provinces, see Martha Ruffini, "Peronismo, territorios nacionales y ciudadanía política. Algunas reflexiones en torno a la provincialización," *Revista Avances del CESOR* 5, no. 5 (2005): 132–48.

39. *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, año 1953* (Buenos Aires, 1953), I: 434–43; Lenton, "De centauros a protegidos," 400–404.

40. Carolina Barry, *Evita capitana: El Partido Peronista Femenino, 1949–1955* (Caseros, Argentina, 2009), 114.

41. *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, año 1953*, I: 608.

42. Barry, *Evita capitana*, 119. Research remains to be done on the political experiences of indigenous women. A Mocoví-Moqoic woman named Mercedes Dominga was known as a cacique in the Chaco, and Rosa Chará, the wife of a Toba-Qom cacique, also played a prominent role in her community. However, I have not found evidence of female indigenous leaders acting as interlocutors before the Peronist state. Ramón Pardal, "La obra desenvuelta por la Comisión Honoraria de Reducciones de Indios y las necesidades del

indio del norte argentino. Comentarios y reflexiones,” *Comisión Honoraria de Reducciones de Indios Publicación* 4 (1936): 46, 68; Mercedes Silva, ed., *Memorias del Gran Chaco*, vol. 2 (Resistencia, 1998), 146; Juan Chico and Mario Fernández, *Napa’lpi. La voz de la sangre* (Chaco, Argentina, 2009), 32–33.

43. See, for example, Gastón Gordillo, “The Crucible of Citizenship: ID-Paper Fetishism in the Argentinean Chaco,” *American Ethnologist* 33, no. 2 (2006): 169; Florencia Tola and Timoteo Francia, *Historias nunca contadas* (Buenos Aires, 2001), 91; J.M. Cerda Castillo to Gobernador del Chaco, August 2, 1943, Aborígenes, 1930–1951, Archivo Histórico del Chaco Monseñor José Alumni, Argentina [subsequently AHC].

44. Claudia Briones, “‘Qué importa quién gane si nosotros perdemos siempre’: Los partidos políticos desde la minoría mapuche,” *Cuadernos de Antropología Social* 7 (1993): 86.

45. *Tratamiento de la cuestión indígena*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires, 1991), 174.

46. *Tratamiento*, 174–76.

47. Director General de Asuntos Legales, Dirección Nacional de Migraciones to Sub-Director Nacional de Migraciones, March 30, 1950, legajo 546, SAT, AGN.

48. Director Nacional de Migraciones, “Resolución N° 372,” June 22, 1950, legajo 546, SAT, AGN.

49. CHRI to Gobernador del Chaco, February 16, 1944, Aborígenes, 1930–1951, AHC; Angel S. Taboada to Gobernador del Chaco, February 6, 1947, Aborígenes, 1913–1950, AHC.

50. Director Nacional de Migraciones, “Resolución N° 506,” August 31, 1950, legajo 546, SAT, AGN.

51. “Un cacique peronista protege a su raza”; see also “Un indio auténtico, el Cacique Maliqueo, es el Director de Protección al Aborigen,” *La Razón*, August 13, 1953; “Hacia la dignificación del indígena,” *La Prensa*, August 15, 1953.

52. See, for example, “En el pago de Areco unieron en fraterno abrazo los coyas del altiplano con los indios araucanos,” *La Época*, July 28, 1946.

53. “Cómo se vivió el 17 de Octubre en Comodoro,” *El Patagónico*, October 16, 2016, <https://www.elpatagonico.com/como-se-vivio-el-17-octubre-comodoro-n1515509>; Diana Lenton, “Aproximación a una historia de las organizaciones de militancia indígena: 1953–1973” (XIV Jornadas Interescuelas/Departamentos de Historia, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Mendoza, 2013), 7, <http://www.academica.org/000-010/301>.

54. Pablo Machado, n.d., Comisión 31, caja 17, expediente 100737, Fiscalía Nacional de Recuperación Patrimonial, archivo intermedio [subsequently FNRP], AGN.

55. *Tratamiento*, 109–10.

56. Jerónimo Maliqueo to Comandante de Gendarmería Nacional de Ñorquinco, February 12, 1954, Comisión 31, caja 17, expediente 100737, FNRP, AGN.

57. Felipe Suárez *et al.* to Juan Perón, March 15, 1954; Felipe Suárez and Juan Cabral, May 6, 1954, both Comisión 31, caja 17, expediente 100737, FNRP, AGN.

58. Manuel B. Sarmiento, “Discurso,” April 19, 1954, Comisión 31, caja 17, expediente 100737, FNRP, AGN.

59. Dirección General de Migraciones, “Informar acto del día 19 del cte.,” April 20, 1954; Juan Pedro Gasparini, “Informe,” April 1954, both Comisión 31, caja 17, expediente 100737, FNRP, AGN; see also Marina Kabat, *Peronleaks. Una re-lectura del peronismo*

a partir de sus documentos secretos, 1943–1955 (Buenos Aires, 2017), 253–56, 357; Eulogio Frites, *El derecho de los pueblos indígenas* (Buenos Aires, 2011), 11–13.

60. Mario Tesler, *Los aborígenes durante el peronismo y los gobiernos militares* (Buenos Aires, 1989), 16.

61. See, for example, José Villeta to Gobernador del Chaco, August 11, 1947, *Aborígenes, 1930–1951*, AHC; Ministro de Asuntos Técnicos to Ministro de Educación, November 24, 1952, legajo 546, SAT, AGN; “Nuestros aborígenes no piden puestos Públicos, sino Elementos de Trabajo,” *Justicia Social*, December 1954.

62. See, for example, Comisario de Quitilipi, “Actuaciones denuncia de varios indígenas contra proceder del Señor Administrador de la Reducción Napalpí,” May 9, 1932, legajo 10, expediente 13504, MIG, AGN.

63. Ignacio Ávalos to Gobernador del Chaco, January 22, 1945, *Aborígenes, 1913–1950*, AHC; see also Juan C. Vogt to Gobernador del Chaco, August 13, 1943, *Aborígenes, 1930–1951*, AHC.

64. Villeta to Gobernador del Chaco, August 11, 1947. Villeta’s followers were able to remain on this land throughout the Peronist period but were evicted in 1957. Adrian Alejandro Almirón, “Los dueños y los ocupantes del campo Winter. El rol del Estado nacional y provincial del Chaco en un conflicto por la tenencia de la tierra (1945–1972),” *Tempos Históricos* 20 (2016): 284–86.

65. “Un cacique de la tribu de indios ubicada en Colonia Tacuarí formula una grave denuncia,” *El Territorio* (Resistencia), August 23, 1946; see also “La situación de los indígenas de Colonia Tacuarí,” *El Territorio*, August 30, 1946; “Los Indígenas de Colonia Tacuarí Piden Ayuda,” *El Territorio*, October 6, 1947.

66. Gobernador de Chaco to Ministro del Interior, August 2, 1950, *Aborígenes, 1930–1951*, AHC.

67. “Al Gobernador electo se dirigen un jefe de tribu indígena del Chaco,” *Revindicación. Órgano Indigenista Chauqueño*, March 1958; Jonivaz, “A veces la culpa no es del indígena,” *Revindicación. Órgano Indigenista Chauqueño*, February 1958.

68. Ramón Gómez to Gobernador del Chaco, September 7, 1942, *Aborígenes, 1930–1951*, AHC.

69. Gobernador del Chaco to Subsecretario del Interior, June 19, 1946, *Aborígenes, 1930–1951*, AHC.

70. Ramón Gómez to Gobernador del Chaco, November 18, 1946, *Aborígenes, 1913–1950*, AHC.

71. Gómez to Gobernador del Chaco. The complaint prompted an investigation by the territorial police, who forced Gómez to admit that Francisco Racedo, a nonindigenous local resident and “unofficial proponent of social change,” had helped him pen the letter. Comisario de Quitilipi to Comisario de Ordenes, January 24, 1947, *Aborígenes, 1913–1950*, AHC.

72. See, for example, *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Senadores, año 1948*, I: 610–11.

73. I have found no evidence that indigenous people from northern Argentina were named as delegates to the CHRI or the DPA, though a number of northern caciques were employed by the state in other ways. Mases, “La Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión”; see also María Elba Argeri, “La desestructuración de los cacicazgos. Política, justicia e institucionalidad. Pampa y Patagonia (1870–1955),” in *De los cacicazgos a la ciudadanía. Sistemas*



políticos en la frontera, Río de la Plata, siglos XVIII–XX, ed. Mónica Quijada (Berlin, 2011), 349–59.

74. Mases, “La Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión,” 288.

75. Mases, 288.

76. Gobernación de Formosa to Ministro del Interior, November 4, 1947, caja 67, expediente 1130-R (1947), Ministerio del Interior, expedientes secretos, confidenciales y reservados, archivo intermedio [subsequently MI], AGN; see also Coronel Natalio Favero to Ministro del Interior, October 28, 1947, caja 67, expediente 1067-R (1947), MI, AGN.

77. Gastón Gordillo, *Landscapes of Devils: Tensions of Place and Memory in the Argentinean Chaco* (Durham, NC, 2004), 139–45.

78. The best analyses of this event are Adriana M. Kindgard, “Tradición y conflicto social en los Andes argentinos. En torno al Malón de la Paz de 1946,” *E.I.A.L.* 15, no. 1 (2004): 165–84; Lenton, “The Malón de la Paz of 1946”; Marcelo Valko, *Los indios invisibles del Malón de la Paz: De la apoteosis al confinamiento, secuestro y destierro* (Buenos Aires, 2007). The following narrative draws on their work, as well as photos, periodicals, and congressional records.

79. Valko, *Los indios invisibles*, 53–57; see also Mario A. Bertonasco, *De Abra Pampa a Buenos Aires. Diario de viaje del jefe del malón de La Paz* (Buenos Aires, 1946).

80. Kindgard, “Tradición y conflicto social”; Valko, *Los indios invisibles*, 58–61.

81. Regina Monsalvo, “Solo queremos lo nuestro . . .” (unidentified newspaper clipping), caja C00776, sobre AR00090917, Archivo de Redacción de Crónica, Fondo Editorial Sarmiento, Departamento de Archivos, Biblioteca Nacional, Argentina [subsequently Crónica, BN].

82. Photos also emphasized their cultural practices and Catholic religiosity. Caja 258 #B120246, #120265-82, #120474, #58965, #297795, #297808, #297822, Departamento de Documentos Fotográficos, AGN; see also Adamovsky, “Race and Class,” 167; Gastón Gordillo, “The Savage outside of White Argentina,” in *Rethinking Race in Modern Argentina*, ed. Alberto and Elena, 250–51.

83. Bertonasco, *De Abra Pampa a Buenos Aires*; Lenton, “The Malón de la Paz of 1946,” 96.

84. *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados*, año 1946 (Buenos Aires, 1946), II: 272–76.

85. “En el pago de Areco.”

86. “Indios coyas,” August 1946, caja C00776, sobre AR00090915, Crónica, BN.

87. “Ya están los Collas en la ciudad, con un mensaje que no puede ser desoído,” *Noticias Gráficas*, August 3, 1946; Valko, *Los indios invisibles*, 114–22.

88. On masculinity and images of Perón, see Natalia Milanesio, “A Man Like You: Juan Domingo Perón and the Politics of Attraction in Mid-Twentieth-Century Argentina,” *Gender & History* 26, no. 1 (April 1, 2014): 84–104. For similar photos, see “A los coyas de la patria, salud!” *El Laborista*, August 4, 1946.

89. “Brindaron la nota simpática,” *La Época*, August 16, 1946; *El Laborista*, August 20, 1946; Valko, *Los indios invisibles*, 125–38.

90. “Empleando la violencia y gases lacrimógenos, son embarcados los collas,” *Noticias Gráficas*, August 29, 1946; “Una nueva farsa en torno a la larga tragedia del aborígen,” *El Territorio*, August 31, 1946; Anke Fleur Schwittay, “From Peasant Favors to Indigenous

Rights: The Articulation of an Indigenous Identity and Land Struggle in Northwestern Argentina," *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 8, no. 3 (2003): 133–34.

91. "Empleando la violencia."

92. "Perón ordenó una investigación sobre los collas," *Noticias Gráficas*, August 31, 1946; see also "El 'Malón de la Paz' se frustró por la fuerza," *Clarín*, n.d., sobre 05615, Archivo de Redacción de Qué Sucedió en Siete Días, BN; Valko, *Los indios invisibles*, 142–52.

93. *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, año 1946*, III: 820, IV: 530–32, VII: 542–43.

94. *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Senadores, año 1949* (Buenos Aires, 1949), II: 1176–79; Kindgard, "Tradición y conflicto social"; Ian Rutledge, *Cambio agrario e integración: El desarrollo del capitalismo en Jujuy, 1550–1960* (Tilcara, Argentina, 1987), 211–30.

95. Lenton, "The Malón de la Paz of 1946," 102–4; Schwittay, "From Peasant Favors to Indigenous Rights."

96. "News from Emmanuel Mission Fields," *Emmanuel Magazine*, October 1946.

97. Mons. Antonio S. das Neves, Presidente Interino, CHRI to Gobernador del Chaco, May 26, 1944, *Aborígenes*, 1913–1950, AHC.

98. John R. Lagar, "Toba Indians of Argentina," *The Missionary Digest*, July 1946; Eric R. Kurtz and Germán Alegre, *La historia de las iglesias indígenas de la zona de Las Palmas* (Formosa, Argentina, 1998), 4–5.

99. Comisaria de El Zapallar to Jefe de Policía del Chaco, September 11, 1943, caja AH/0027, expediente 42, Sección de Culto, Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto, Argentina.

100. Gobernación del Chaco to John Church, December 1, 1933, vol. 84, Copiadores de la Secretaría de la Gobernación del Chaco, AHC; "Encouragement from South America," *Emmanuel Magazine*, October 1943; John T. N. Litwiller, "Our New Responsibility: The Toba Church," *Gospel Herald*, 1955; Josephus W. Shank, *We Enter the Chaco Indian Work* (Elkhart, IN, 1951); see also César Ceriani Cernadas, "Las enseñanzas de Don Juan Chur entre los Tobas de Formosa (Argentina, 1937–1950)," *Revista electrónica del Instituto de Altos Estudios Sociales de la Universidad Nacional de General San Martín* 2, no. 5 (June 2009).

101. Elmer S. Miller, "Pentecostalism among the Argentine Toba" (PhD diss., 1967), 31–32.

102. "El gobierno dará tierras a familias indias del Chaco," *La Época*, June 19, 1946; Fernando Pagés Larraya, *Lo irracional en la cultura* (Buenos Aires, 1982), 175.

103. Albert Buckwalter, "Building the Church among the Toba Indians," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 29, no. 4 (October 1, 1955): 263–75; Miller, "Pentecostalism among the Argentine Toba," 106–15; William David Reyburn, *The Toba Indians of the Argentine Chaco: An Interpretive Report*, 2nd ed. (Elkhart, IN, 1959), 36–60; Patricia Vuoto, "Los movimientos de Luciano y Pedro Martínez: Dos cultos de transición entre los Toba-taksék de Misión Tacaaglé," *Scripta Ethnologica* 10 (1986): 39–45.

104. "Amenazas contra un cacique indio," *El Territorio*, January 27, 1951.

105. Miller, "Pentecostalism among the Argentine Toba," 112–13; Vuoto, "Los movimientos de Luciano," 45n50.

106. Elmer S. Miller, "Mennonite Chaco Mission, Iglesia Evangélica Unida (IEU), and Argentina's Nation-State," *Missiology* 30, no. 3 (July 1, 2002): 358n4; Lila M. Caimari,

*Perón y la Iglesia Católica: Religión, estado y sociedad en la Argentina, 1943–1955* (Buenos Aires, 1995), 194–204.

107. Thanks to the Horst family for their insight on this point. Also see Willis G. Horst, “Spirituality of the Toba/Qom Christians of the Argentine Chaco,” *Missiology* 29, no. 2 (April 2001): 171.

108. Eric R. Kurtz and Valentín Cantó, *La historia de las iglesias indígenas de la Colonia Bartolomé de las Casas* (Formosa, 1998), 9–11; Miller, “Pentecostalism among the Argentine Toba,” 210; see also Gobernador del Chaco to Mons. Antonio S. das Neves, June 2, 1944, *Aborígenes, 1913–1950*, AHC; “News Flashes,” *Emmanuel Magazine*, March 1952.

109. General Felipe Uradpilleta to Ministro del Interior, March 11, 1949, caja 87, expediente 27-S (1949), MI, AGN; General Felipe Uradpilleta to Ministro del Interior, March 21, 1949, caja 87, expediente 37-S (1949), MI, AGN.

110. Edgardo Cordeu, “Notas sobre la dinámica socioreligiosa Toba-Pilagá,” *Suplemento Antropológico* XIX, no. 1 (June 1984): 192–93; Vuoto, “Los movimientos de Luciano,” 39; Kurtz and Cantó, *La historia de las iglesias indígenas de la Colonia Bartolomé de las Casas*, 14–15.

111. Litwiller, “Our New Responsibility: The Toba Church”; Jacob A. Loewen, Albert Buckwalter, and James Kratz, “Shamanism, Illness, and Power in Toba Church Life,” *Practical Anthropology* 12 (1965): 250–80; Miguel Mast, “Una aproximación a la educación teológica entre los tobas de Argentina” (1972), <http://www.jim-mission.org.uk/discussion/chaco-spanish/22-MMast-Edu-teologica-para-tobas-3-cap.pdf>; Miller, “Pentecostalism among the Argentine Toba,” 114–16; Miller, “Mennonite Chaco Mission”; Pablo Wright, “Tradición y aculturación en una organización socio-religiosa toba contemporánea,” *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 95, no. 36 (1988): 74.

112. Miller, “Pentecostalism among the Argentine Toba,” 199.

113. Vuoto, “Los movimientos de Luciano,” 39; José Braunstein and Analía Fernández, “Historias de Pampa del Indio,” *IV Congreso Argentino de Americanistas, 2001* 2 (2003): 188.

114. Pedro Martínez and Domingo F. Sarmiento to Gobernador del Chaco, September 26, 1946, *Aborígenes, 1930–1951*, AHC.

115. “Chaco. Varias tribus indígenas pidieron tierras libres de pobladores blancos,” *La Prensa*, January 29, 1947; Angel S. Taboada to Gobernador del Chaco, October 10, 1947; Administrador de Napalpí to Gobernador del Chaco, November 16, 1947, both *Aborígenes, 1913–1950*, AHC; *Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, año 1948*, V: 3971; Administrador de Colonia Aborígen Presidente Perón to Gobernador del Chaco, August 19, 1950, *Aborígenes, 1930–1951*, AHC.

116. When Chaco Territory became a province in 1951, it was renamed Provincia Presidente Perón. The name was changed back after the 1955 coup, when references to Peronism were banned. Pedro Martínez to Director del Aborígen, August 2, 1954, *Aborígenes, 1954–1999*, AHC.

117. Administrador de Colonia Aborígen Presidente Perón to Comisario de Policía de Castelli, March 1, 1951, *Documentos varios pueblos (policía)*, AHC.

118. Martínez to Director del Aborígen, August 2, 1954.

119. Valeria Mapelman has challenged this silence with a groundbreaking documentary film featuring interviews with survivors. Valeria Mapelman, *Octubre Pilagá: Relatos sobre el*

*silencio*, documentary film, 2010; Valeria Mapelman, *Octubre Pilagá. Memorias y archivos de la masacre de La Bomba* (Temperley, Argentina, 2015).

120. Gobernación de Formosa to Ministerio del Interior, October 1, 1947, caja 66, expediente 977-R (1947), MI, AGN; Gobernación de Formosa to Administrador General de los Ferrocarriles del Estado, November 24, 1947, vol. 137, Libros Copiadores, Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Formosa, Argentina [subsequently AHF].

121. Gobernación de Formosa to Director de Protección al Aborigen, October 1, 1947, vol. 137, Libros Copiadores, AHF; see also Angel S. Taboada to Gobernador del Chaco, February 6, 1947.

122. Ramón Tapiceno, interviewed by Willis Horst, June 15, 1992, in Silva, *Memorias del Gran Chaco*, II: 96–101; Coronel Natalio Faverio to Ministro del Interior, October 11, 1947, caja 66, expediente 997-R (1947), MI, AGN; Anatilde Idoyaga Molina, “Mito y mesianismo entre los pilagá (Chaco Central),” *Mitológicas* 7 (1992): 7–15; Mapelman, *Octubre Pilagá*, 2015, 96–105; Vuoto, “Los movimientos de Luciano”; Patricia Vuoto and Pablo Wright, “Crónicas del Dios Luciano: Un culto sincrético de los Tobas y Pilagás del Chaco argentino,” *Religiones Latinoamericanas* 2 (1991): 149–80.

123. The following narrative is based on several sources: Teófilo Román Cruz, “Último alzamiento indígena,” *Revista Gendarmería Nacional*, 1991, 17–22; Tapiceno in Silva, *Memorias del Gran Chaco*, 2: 96–101; Gobernación de Formosa to Director de Protección al Aborigen, October 1, 1947; Coronel Natalio Faverio to Ministro del Interior, October 11, 1947; Mapelman, *Octubre Pilagá*, 2010; Mapelman, *Octubre Pilagá*, 2015, esp. 143–53, 175–94.

124. Isabelino Ezcurra in Román Cruz, “Último alzamiento indígena,” 22. Some survivors remember that Perón had invited Navarro to Buenos Aires, but Navarro decided not to go. See Mapelman, *Octubre Pilagá*, 2015, 123–28.

125. Néstor Leoncio Perloff in Román Cruz, “Último alzamiento indígena,” 18.

126. María Sol Wasyluk Fedyszak, “La masacre de un pueblo originario,” *Página12*, December 28, 2005.

127. Personal communication from Anatilde Idoyaga Molina, cited in Vuoto and Wright, “Crónicas del Dios Luciano,” 163.

128. Román Cruz, “Último alzamiento indígena,” 18–19. Valeria Mapelman contends that the Pilagá were carrying Bibles rather than portraits. Mapelman, *Octubre Pilagá*, 2015, 224–26.

129. Mapelman, *Octubre Pilagá*, 2010.

130. Mathias, “South America’s Final Frontier,” 60–65, 114–59.

131. Coronel Natalio Faverio to Ministro del Interior, October 16, 1947, caja 66, expediente 1047-R (1947), MI, AGN.

132. “Formosa. En Las Lomitas se produjo un levantamiento de las tribus de indios pilagás,” *La Prensa*, October 12, 1947; “Reclamando viveres y tierras se sublevaron indios pilagás,” *Crítica*, October 12, 1947; “Dominan la rebelión indígena en Formosa,” *Democracia*, October 13, 1947; “El levantamiento de indios en Las Lomitas y la situación general de los pobladores autóctonos,” *El Territorio*, October 20, 1947; “El problema del indígena,” *El Territorio*, October 25, 1947.

133. Excerpted in Vuoto and Wright, “Crónicas del Dios Luciano,” 169.

134. “Los indios tenían hambre,” *El Intransigente*, October 23, 1947.

135. "Se celebrará el Día del Indígena."
136. "Libro Histórico Escuadrón 18 'Las Lomitas'" (1975), Archivo del Servicio Histórico de Gendarmería, Argentina; Idoyaga Molina, "Mito y mesianismo entre los pilagá"; Mapelman, *Octubre Pilagá*, 2015, 205–8; Pagés Larraya, *Lo irracional en la cultura*, 60–76.
137. "Indios de Formosa piden máquinas y útiles de labranza," *El Laborista*, November 14, 1948.
138. Ministro de Asuntos Técnicos to Ministro de Educación, November 24, 1952, legajo 546, SAT, AGN.
139. Mariana Garzón Rogé, *El peronismo en la primera hora. Mendoza, 1943–1946* (Mendoza, Argentina, 2014), 16, 144.
140. Matthew Karush, "Populism as an Identity: Four Propositions on Peronism," in *Transformations of Populism in Europe and the Americas: History and Recent Tendencies*, ed. John Abromeit et al. (London, 2016), 209.
141. See also Milanesio, "Food Politics," 77–78.
142. Sebastián Hacher, "La masacre de los Pilagá," *La Haine*, October 15, 2006, [https://www.lahaine.org/mundo.php/la\\_masacre\\_de\\_los\\_pilaga](https://www.lahaine.org/mundo.php/la_masacre_de_los_pilaga).
143. Miller, "Pentecostalism among the Argentine Toba," 81–82.