

WHITE SLAVERY, PUBLIC HEALTH,
AND THE SOCIALIST POSITION ON
LEGALIZED PROSTITUTION IN
ARGENTINA, 1913–1936*

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In January 1875, the Buenos Aires municipal council legalized female sexual commerce within authorized bordellos. A decade of rapid urbanization and population growth, characterized by a high proportion of unmarried males, had created problems of social control and public health that had to be addressed by city authorities. Assisted in their task by doctors specializing in public health who were aware of European legislation on the issue, councilmen enacted a law purportedly intended to improve public health. Instead, the desire to create revenues from exorbitant license fees meant that municipally regulated prostitution served principally to keep prostitutes off the streets and enlarge city coffers. It was not until 1888 that the *Dispensario de Salubridad* (or Prostitutes' Registry) was established along with the *Sifilicomicio* (the venereal disease hospital) to periodically examine and treat women in licensed houses of prostitution.¹

Municipal attitudes toward prostitutes paralleled official views of other working-class women. During the same years, less successful measures were enacted to register and monitor wet-nurses, female domestic servants, hotel employees, and waitresses. By the early twentieth century, local authorities were discouraging the employment of females as café waitresses by charging their employers high license fees and forcing the women to register as prostitutes. The common goal of these laws was to control independent, lower-class females at the same time that unsupervised women workers were being removed from the urban workplace.²

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According to the 1875 prostitution law, women who sold sexual favors to more than one man had to have biweekly medical examinations and live alone or work in licensed houses. Within the bordellos, prostitutes were treated like part-time jail inmates. Madames (*regentas*) could not leave the premises for more than twenty-four hours, and prostitutes were required to return within two hours of sunset. Women could not appear at windows or doors to entice customers. Outside, all prostitutes had to carry identity cards. If a woman wanted to leave the bordello, she had to prove her good intentions by "volunteering" her services at a charitable institution for one month. Anyone who did not register and was accused of prostitution was automatically treated as a criminal and fined.³

Despite good intentions, the licensing of prostitution in Buenos Aires and other cities throughout the world had unanticipated consequences. Because customers were not encouraged to seek treatment and no effective cures existed for syphilis or gonorrhea until the twentieth century, campaigns to lower rates of venereal disease that included state-regulated prostitution were ineffectual. Legalized prostitution could not control the spread of these illnesses, but it had significant consequences, among them harassment of poor working women and the corruption of public officials by criminals involved in procuring new recruits. It did not improve the lives of prostitutes because it turned what had been a casual activity among poor women into a permanent and quasi-criminal one, legal but monitored by the police. The history of how and why local governments addressed issues of public health and social control through prostitution laws provides an important way of studying the impact of modernization and urbanization on women in Latin America.

PROSTITUTION AND WHITE SLAVERY

Many international reformist groups were particularly shocked by aspects of legal prostitution that purportedly forced some European women to migrate involuntarily to countries like Argentina and provide sexual gratification for men of different nationalities and races. Although the incidence of white slavery was highly exaggerated and the belief that women were mere passive victims mostly unwarranted, the campaign against white slavery, or the international traffic in women and children, became an important issue of moral reform. Initially, the Argentine Socialist party became interested in abolishing licensed prostitution in order to rid the country of white slavers.⁴

Buenos Aires, the Argentine capital, was cited in many reports as a haven for pimps who took advantage of legalized prostitution and made a legal business out of forcing innocent European women into

foreign bordellos. At the tenth meeting of the International Abolitionist Federation, held in Geneva in September 1908, Sir Percy Bunting, director of the *Contemporary Review*, blamed the Buenos Aires system of municipally licensed bordellos for allowing white slavers to operate in Argentina. According to Bunting, one had only to look at the nationality of registered women to realize that "prostitution is controlled by the international traffic and there it is fed by the houses that receive these women and live off their sexual commerce."⁵

Buenos Aires obtained this notoriety because of the large numbers of foreign-born women who plied their trade in the rapidly growing capital and port city. As early as 1877, almost 50 percent of prostitutes registered for the first time were foreign-born, and between 1889 and 1901, they grew to represent 75 percent. This trend occurred at a time when the city's female adult population was as much as 60 percent foreign-born. Not until the 1920s did the number of newly registered Argentine prostitutes begin to increase, and by 1934 they represented 44 percent, even though native-born females constituted 67 percent of the city's population.⁶

White slavery seemed to accompany licensed prostitution in Argentina. Just three months after bordellos became a completely legitimate business, the local *La Nación* reported that a French court had condemned a man and woman to jail terms and fines for having "corrupted the conscience of several young French women and brought them to Buenos Aires to practice the disgusting vice of prostitution."⁷ Within a year, Hungarians were already well entrenched in similar pursuits in Buenos Aires, but their importance was soon surpassed by French pimps and then by Poles, mainly Jews.⁸

Given the prospect of racial and ethnic intermingling, opposition to legalized prostitution helped mobilize moral reformers, feminists, and international political groups to form a worldwide lobby. Heartened by the 1886 repeal of the English Contagious Diseases Acts (which in certain port cities had forced women accused of soliciting into brothels), reformers associated with groups such as the National Vigilance Association, the International Federation of Abolitionists, the International Bureau for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, and even the League of Nation's Special Body of Experts on the Traffic in Women and Children all sought to abolish licensed female prostitution everywhere.

What most groups really wanted was to protect the honor of their countrywomen abroad and ultimately to control the physical mobility of women at home. To accomplish these goals, reformers emphasized either the immorality of forcing their "white women" into sexual slavery abroad or the dishonor of having foreign-born women degraded in local bordellos. This motive was clearly revealed in 1906 when a

Major Wagener, head of the German National Committee, reported to an international anti-white-slavery congress on conditions in Brazil and Argentina. He admitted that German ships were being used to transport women involuntarily but expressed relief that most of the German-speaking women at risk were in fact Polish, Hungarian, or Russian. In 1910 Jewish reformers expressed similarly narrow concerns by stating that they were assembled "to discuss [the subject] as a specifically Jewish one." The implication was that these problems could be prevented if single women stayed at home in their native lands.⁹

During the era of licensed municipal bordellos in Argentina (1875–1936), three political parties enjoyed strong constituencies in Argentina: the Partido Autonomista Nacional (the PAN or the Conservative party), the official party of the oligarchical elites who ruled the country from 1880 to 1916; the Unión Cívica Radical (the UCR or Radical party), a middle-class party that after 1890 challenged the PAN until it won the presidency in 1916; and the Partido Socialista (the PS or Socialist party), which had strong support in the city of Buenos Aires. Only the Socialists took a firm stand on the issue of legalized prostitution, and opinions diverged widely within the party. Some members believed the main issue to be white slavery. Others viewed the abolition of municipally licensed prostitution as a solution to controlling venereal disease and a way to end state harassment of poor women. In any case, because Socialists were committed to the improvement of the working class and to gender equality, they had to find a means of dealing with this particular form of sexual exploitation.

Founded in 1890 by immigrant ideologues, the Socialist party saw its future assured when Juan B. Justo, an Argentine physician, joined the group and became its leader. One of many doctors who allied themselves with the Socialist cause, Justo wanted to cure social ills by improving, rather than destroying, the existing order.¹⁰ Other Socialist physicians such as Angel Giménez, Nicolás Repetto, and Alicia Moreau de Justo drew heavily on their medical expertise and commitment to sexual prophylaxis and education to develop a multifaceted campaign against involuntary sexual slavery and state-regulated prostitution. Their attitudes toward prostitution reveal the way that medically oriented positivism enabled party members to recognize many of the injustices suffered by women in Argentina.

Over the years, Socialists were elected as national senators and deputies, and they also won significant representation on the Buenos Aires municipal council. From these positions they persuaded other legislators to enact laws to ameliorate social and economic conditions. Much of this effort was geared toward creating public health facilities for the indigent. Socialists advocated treatment strategies for malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, and venereal disease.

The party also had a special commitment to expand women's political, social, and legal rights. Defenders of the right to divorce, female suffrage, and publicly supported sex education, Socialists also campaigned against municipally licensed female prostitution.

Most of the Socialist physicians were *higienistas* who were committed to public health care rather than to private practice. They often worked with other *higienistas* in municipal hospitals and on the city council. Their joint knowledge about the causes of communicable diseases probably had more impact on urban planning and social control in Buenos Aires and other Argentine cities than any other group of trained professionals.

The goal of *higienistas* was to instill better sanitation and health practices among the poor. They initiated programs for child care and maternal education in the hope of improving the reproductive capacity of immigrant and native populations and training parents to assume more responsibility for the appropriate socialization of their children. To achieve these varying goals, new behavior norms had to be inculcated in the working class for the sake of future generations. For this reason, public health physicians targeted women more frequently than men as objects of reform because they were most responsible for child rearing.

Much of what physicians recommended for improved urban health thus transcended their task as healers of biological disease and underscored their role as social reformers. Doctors identified lower-class urban residents as both the cause and the victims of disease. While *higienistas* campaigned and proposed treatment for epidemic and pandemic diseases, their proposals thus advocated lower-class moral reform.¹¹

From 1875 on, moralistic doctors operated public hospitals, the Dispensario, and the Sifilicomio. They shaped prostitution legislation while serving on the municipal council, and the ordinances they helped design, as well as the internal regulations they wrote for the Dispensario and the Sifilicomio, demonstrated their firm conviction that doctors could control venereal disease by examining prostitutes, who were expected to behave deferentially. A physician could even declare a prostitute unwell and incarcerate her in the Sifilicomio if she resisted the physician's authority during an examination.¹²

Eventually, Socialist *higienistas* campaigned for new public health laws that relied on less coercive and less moralistic reasoning and offered more comprehensive medical treatment. To create public health legislation that was free of unscientific assumptions, Socialist *higienistas* had to scrutinize municipal laws and join forces with other positivist physicians. All of them had to overcome a long tradition of dealing with prostitutes according to policies that derived from class-

and gender-based moral judgments rather than from sound medical practices.

Despite extensive evidence of male prostitution and the role of males as sources of contamination for healthy prostitutes, no men were ever subjected to prostitution registration or mandatory medical examination until the advent of compulsory prenuptial blood tests after 1936. Argentine physicians knew that Buenos Aires contained a significant homosexual population, male and female, and that male prostitutes could be found not only among streetwalkers soliciting sex but within supposedly all-female bordellos. Nevertheless, no one ever suggested licensing male prostitutes or criminalizing homosexual activity among male or female adults. This stance resulted from the doctors' view that male homosexual prostitutes—unlike inherently immoral female prostitutes—had acquired their sexual preferences and were temporarily mentally ill because they misunderstood female sexuality. Equally important was the belief that homosexuals were not health risks. These doctors clearly believed that prostitution and venereal disease originated from gender-based social, moral, and medical considerations. It became the task of Socialist higienistas to point out the unscientific way that other physicians viewed these issues.¹³

To the great dismay of all public health officials, most prostitutes evaded registration. Unwilling to define their sexual activities as a permanent profession and to submit to medical examinations that might prevent them from working, many women were also unable to open their own businesses because of high rents and municipal fees. Consequently, they worked out of apartments, cabarets, bars, restaurants, and theaters or cruised the crowded downtown streets in search of customers. Over the years, their numbers grew as a result of poor prospects for employment at a decent wage, the need to pay high rents for lodging, and the inability of men to support families on a single income.

A specialist in venereal disease claimed in 1903 that there were eight to ten thousand prostitutes in Buenos Aires, yet less than eight hundred had registered. By 1915 the number of clandestine prostitutes was estimated to have increased to almost nineteen thousand. Dr. J. J. Puente calculated that the number of registered prostitutes in 1929 equaled 10 percent of the total. In the 1930s, it was believed that twenty-five to thirty thousand women practiced prostitution in Buenos Aires, although less than three hundred were usually registered. None of the estimates presumed that more than 10 percent of the adult female population of Buenos Aires engaged in prostitution in these years, but although other cities might have had a higher proportion of presumed prostitutes, this likelihood provided little comfort to the doctors who had tried to contain commercial sex within legal bordellos.¹⁴

Medical inspection of female prostitutes not only discouraged registration, it also failed to contain the spread of venereal disease. While their uninspected customers infected their wives or other sexual partners, ill prostitutes taught each other a variety of ways to contaminate their vaginal secretions to mask the presence of venereal disease. Confronted by a system they perceived to be coercive, one in which their customers were neither inspected nor treated, these women resisted medical treatment. As a consequence, the number of deaths in Buenos Aires from venereal disease actually increased after medical inspection of prostitutes was implemented. By 1906 public health officials charged with monitoring legalized prostitution in the capital city characterized the ability to control venereal disease by this means as “completely illusory” and were convinced that the problem could be handled better if prostitution were not municipally regulated.¹⁵

Confronted by such evidence, many higienistas, Socialists and non-Socialists alike, began to argue for reforms. Dr. José Manuel Irizar, Director of the *Dispensario de Salubridad* in the 1890s, lambasted the system in 1902 by stating that “any ordinance that stresses a coercive spirit will be counterproductive as a method of prophylaxis.” He recommended that instead of relying on the health of prostitutes, programs of public education and treatment of all infected persons should be undertaken.¹⁶

The following year, Dr. Enrique Prins, Secretary of the Buenos Aires public health program (the *Asistencia Pública*), published a concise indictment of legalized prostitution based solely on empirical reasoning. He refuted the notion that written laws influence a woman’s decision to engage in commercial sex. “They do it when the tendency and opportunity are suited to their necessity,” and not at the age that the municipality defines as appropriate. He questioned whether the organization and location of legal *bordellos* had any effect on public morality. Above all, he criticized the mandatory hospitalization and incarceration of diseased prostitutes, arguing that they would be less dangerous if allowed to make their own decisions. Prins’s arguments supported the assertion that prostitution control had little medical or moral utility.¹⁷

PALACIOS AND THE ANTI-PIMPING LAW OF 1913

During the first few years after the Socialist party was founded, no mention was made of the prostitution issue. But by the time Alfredo Palacios was elected as the first Socialist in the Chamber of Deputies in 1904, he responded to the reformist clamors of the anti-white-slavery movement by joining the international campaign and sponsoring a national law to punish pimps. Although Palacios had no personal desire

to abolish licensed prostitution, he was outraged by the impunity with which white slavers imported allegedly defenseless immigrant women into Argentina merely to supply legal and clandestine houses with fresh young recruits.

The origins of the bill, as well as its fate in Congress, illustrate the important role played by the Socialist party in encouraging public debate and support for laws aimed at ending female exploitation. The Palacios Law, as it soon became known, was originally drafted by a group of moral reformers called the *Asociación Nacional Argentina contra la Trata de Blancas*. Formed in 1902 by Dr. Arturo Condomí, the association was supported by important members of the foreign community, including their religious leaders. The following year, the association asked PAN member Dr. Miguel Cané to present a bill to the Senate. The projected law would incarcerate anyone, male or female, who seduced or otherwise forced a female minor to commit acts "that would satisfy the dishonest desires of others." The length of prison terms would depend on the age of the woman and on whether the guilty party was related to the victim. A convicted man would be required to reimburse the costs of repatriating the woman and to support any offspring resulting from the alliance.¹⁸

The project did not pass in Congress that year nor in subsequent ones. Even with Socialist backing, not until after 1907 did sufficient public interest in the issue cause the bill to be debated in Congress. Revised and sponsored by Palacios, the bill was ignored until 1913. A catalyzing event in 1912 was the Buenos Aires visit of William Coote, president of the International Bureau for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. Coote noted in his memoirs, "In view of the absence of any public opinions on morals, . . . the wonder was that things were not worse." His visit heartened those who had been battling for so long to get the anti-pimping bill passed.¹⁹

Finally, on 8 August 1913, Palacios introduced yet another bill. As before, the legislation was designed to punish pimps. But this bill broadened the definition of white slavery to encompass corruption of minors, both male and female, and adult women under age twenty-two, thereby differing from the 1903 plan advocated by the *Asociación Nacional Argentina contra la Trata de Blancas*. Once again, the guilty party would face a jail sentence, and if a relative, husband, or tutor, would lose the right to exercise parental authority (*patria potestad*) over the woman or the minor. Foreign-born pimps faced deportation if convicted of white slavery more than once.

The Palacios measure parted company with the goals of the anti-white-slavery group when it came to the issue of legalized prostitution. Whereas pimps, parents, and guardians would automatically be tried for the crime of corrupting minors, *bordello* madames would not. Only

when madames knowingly took in minors would they be considered coauthors of the crime.²⁰

In his accompanying message, Palacios mentioned how impressed he had been by Cooté's visit and how embarrassed he was that Buenos Aires was known in Europe as "the worst of all the centers of the immoral commerce in women."²¹ During his speech, Palacios did not attempt to analyze the problem from a Marxist or even a public health perspective. Nor did he challenge the system of licensed prostitution as fostering illegal traffic in women. For him, it was simply a matter of national shame and embarrassment that Argentina was allowing the illegal traffic in young women to operate anywhere in the republic. According to his view, in order to eliminate the scandal, female minors—even if they were prostitutes—had to be given legal protection from pimps.

When the bill emerged from the Chamber of Deputies' legislative commission on which Palacios served, its modifications included legal protection of adult females. According to the revision, if adult women were forced into prostitution because their consent had been given under deception or threat of violence, the author of the crime would face from one to three years in prison. With this provision, the projected law ensured for the first time that any woman forced into prostitution involuntarily, whether by a stranger or a relative, could seek legal redress.²²

In support of their bill, committee members pointed out that on 26 February 1904, the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Relations had promised to honor the recommendations of a 1902 international anti-white-slavery conference held in Paris. The conference urged all nations to enact appropriate legislation to prevent international traffic in women and children from operating in their own countries. An international accord was signed in 1904, but Argentina was not a signatory partner. Thus the legislation at hand merely fulfilled the Argentine promise.²³ Congressional debates indicated that the majority of deputies, mostly members of the PAN and the Radical party, had few specific objections to the revised legislation. The only discordant note came from another Socialist deputy, Dr. Nicolás Repetto, who objected to the article that excluded madames who "simply admit women into licensed houses of prostitution" from being accused of corrupting women or children. Repetto believed that no national law ought to dignify such a profession.

But Deputies Arturo Bas and Palacios, both members of the commission, defended the inclusion. As a staunch Catholic, Bas believed prostitution was a necessary evil that had to be controlled. Palacios supported the exclusion of madames for different reasons. He justified legalized prostitution because it was already sanctioned by municipal law and because it would be "English hypocrisy" to deny the right of

local governments to regulate an inevitable situation that he grudgingly labeled a result of "the present economic system."²⁴

Once Bas and Palacios began to discuss the value of prostitution laws, discord arose in the congressional debate. After an exchange of ideas regarding the merits of legalized prostitution and the legal rights of madames, most of the legislators refused to engage in the debate. After all, the ordinances were local, and it was one thing to prosecute procurers and quite another to prohibit municipally regulated prostitution. This legislative success, however, did little to quiet objections by Repetto to the clause excluding madames.

Local and international responses to the legislation were favorable. Most European and Argentine moral reform groups were delighted. According to the British *Vigilance Record*, "The effect [of the bill] was electrical; according to the investigation department no less than 2,000 procurers . . . left the capital as if fleeing from an earthquake."²⁵ Nevertheless, many Argentine Socialists were not satisfied with merely stopping the international traffic. They wanted the complete eradication of legal bordellos.

Even before the law was enacted, a debate emerged on the pages of the Socialist newspaper, *La Vanguardia*. It began on 19 September 1913 with an editorial announcing that the clause recognizing the rights of madames elevated "the legal prostitution traffic to a necessary and lawful profession."²⁶ In subsequent issues on 20 and 21 September, Dr. Angel Giménez wrote two more editorials, both entitled "Prostitution, the Bankruptcy of Its Legislation," in which he concluded that it was "inefficient, useless, and dangerous to regulate prostitution in any way so as to extend the tutelage of the state to something that should be a completely private act." He also criticized Palacios indirectly by ridiculing those who believed that the repeal of the English Contagious Diseases Act was hypocritical.²⁷

But some members of the Socialist party were not about to give up on the question of legalized prostitution. Some referred to Carolina Muzilli's 1913 study of Argentine working women that identified the most common causes of prostitution as limited job opportunities, low wages, and male deceit. Others, like Giménez and Alicia Moreau de Justo, supported the educational work of the Socialist Sociedad Luz, founded in 1898 by Juan B. Justo to provide free education for the working class. They also applauded the efforts of the Liga Argentina de Profilaxis Social (the Argentine Social Health League), founded in 1921 to promote public sex education through conferences, movies, and pamphlets.²⁸

The split within the Argentine Socialist party mirrored the diverse positions taken by other reformers on the issues of white slavery and legalized prostitution. Although everyone recognized some evi-

dence of international traffic in women and children for the purpose of prostitution, disagreements arose as to its extent and cure. Many Catholics believed that St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas had cogently justified prostitution as a necessary evil. According to this view, pimping, rather than prostitution, should be eliminated. For others, the debate centered on laws dealing with immigration reform.

In response to this view, certain European feminists objected to the term "white slavery" because it made false distinctions or exaggerated the passivity and helplessness of immigrant women. They argued that claims of white slavery were highly exaggerated and that women had to take responsibility for their actions. Most believed that all licensed prostitution was involuntary and coercive because the state was forcing women to continue working as prostitutes with no regulation of male sexuality.²⁹

Latin American feminists shared many of these views but criticized the unusual concern for the nationality of the woman involved. As Uruguayan Dr. Paulina Luisi, a firm advocate of abolitionism in Uruguay and Argentina, responded to an international resolution prohibiting the entry of foreign prostitutes, "I would like to know why my Government could expel a woman merely on the grounds that she is a foreign prostitute? . . . In that case why should we allow our nationals to commit crimes? We should be nationalising prostitution and not admitting foreign competition. That would be too base a principle to accept."³⁰ With such a range of opinions on this controversial subject, it is no wonder that Argentine Socialists did not always agree on how to deal with prostitution. But after the debate over the Palacios Law subsided, it became clear that a new political strategy needed to be devised to avoid future disagreements. The solution came about when physicians within the party redirected the debate away from issues of morality and nationality to that of public health.

POSITIVISM AND PROSTITUTION LAWS

In order to deal with social problems, Socialist public health physicians applied positivist principles that reflected their awareness of gender and class relationships. Positivism was based on the observable rather than on metaphysical beliefs, having been formulated in France in the 1840s to control social unrest by "introducing a system of order via a knowledge and application of society's laws. Sociology was the capstone which crowned . . . a hierarchy beginning . . . with mathematics, then proceeding to astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, in that order, and finally sociology. Sociology from on high would insure political order 'in the midst of profound moral disorder.' "³¹

Positivism, public health, and socialism in Buenos Aires were further linked by local philosophical developments and practical applications. One of Argentina's most famous positivists, José Ingenieros, was both a Socialist and a physician. Although he never joined the party formally, he attended party rallies as a medical student in the 1890s with Angel Giménez. Ingenieros broke with the Socialists in 1905 over particular political disagreements rather than over Socialist philosophy.³²

After Ingenieros received his medical degree, he worked as director of the Servicio de Observación de Alienados (the mental health observation service) of the Buenos Aires police department from 1904 to 1913. He and his associates examined jail inmates in order to investigate all that was "morbid and antisocial" in the capital city. The results of their research became the basis of modern Argentine criminological theory as well as a justification for subsequent Socialist-sponsored urban reforms.³³

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Ingenieros and his colleagues had gathered enough empirical data on crime in Buenos Aires to justify introducing new forms of social control. Although Ingenieros adhered to a Darwinist faith in biology and the struggle for life, he believed that criminality and deviant behavior were not immutably based on biology or morality. Instead, many definitions of criminality were reflections of class or group interests. The separation of social and biological concerns in criminology would identify these factors and ultimately reform the legal system. As Ingenieros noted:

Each group or class has its own morality. There is no way to claim that the one espoused by the dominant class at any time or in any place is superior to any other, rather, it is more useful to the governing class. These kinds of moral definitions are particularly perceptible in the realm of crimes against the social order as compared with crimes against property. . . .

Undoubtedly the advent of a new morality must be accompanied by a transformation of the notions of honesty and delinquency, of virtue and vice, of good and evil. From this perspective, the diffusion of scientific philosophy will eventually subvert the legal concept of crime and ultimately force the law to approximate biological reality.³⁴

Ingenieros's assertion that social crimes were not rooted in biology provided Socialists with a clearer understanding of how to approach class and gender issues. If no provable biological explanation for a crime existed, then the decision to define the act as a crime was politically and ideologically inspired. Thus scientific evidence proving that legalized prostitution did not prevent the spread of venereal disease would unmask the false claims that providing medical treatment for poor prostitutes—but not for their elite and poor customers—would

solve the problem. Scientific inquiry could also be used to question the definition of sexual crime that made actions legal in authorized bordellos but illegal elsewhere.

In addition to making these criticisms of the system, Ingenieros offered his own thoughts on the causes of prostitution. Although he published research on the subject carried out by colleagues who assumed that prostitutes were immoral but criminal only when they or their accomplices defrauded the customers, Ingenieros disagreed on both points. In an introduction to one such study published in 1908, Ingenieros reiterated his assertion that social crimes derived from norms of the moment and that crime is defined by the "limits the collectivity places on the individual in the struggle for life."³⁵ Thus from his perspective, the decision to monitor female prostitutes for moral purposes while characterizing male homosexual prostitutes as mentally ill and ignoring their commerce was a class- and gender-based approach. Ingenieros developed his ideas further in subsequent studies of marriage and the family in which he implicitly addressed the assumptions that led to criminalizing sexual commerce.³⁶

SOCIALIST PHYSICIANS AND PROSTITUTION LEGISLATION

An eventual shift in the position of Socialist legislators toward Ingenieros's theories helped them outlaw municipally regulated prostitution in Argentina. The process began when Dr. Angel Giménez, who taught young people sex hygiene and treated venereal diseases in the city's hospitals, became a national deputy and subsequently served as a representative to the Buenos Aires Municipal Council. Giménez drafted laws to abolish licensed prostitution and provide free national health care for venereal disease as well as sex education.³⁷ In 1917 he launched a personal crusade in the Argentine Congress to abolish legalized prostitution. He introduced a new bill to punish anyone "who is in any way involved in the traffic of women, promotes or facilitates their corruption and prostitution with the intent to make money, even with the permission of the victim."³⁸ The legislation also included provisions for punishing any national, provincial, or municipal authority who allowed such crimes to continue. This project, which was also sponsored by the other Socialist deputies, proclaimed a full-scale war on the licensed bordellos and directly blamed them for the continued existence of white slavery in Argentina.³⁹ Like the earlier attempts by Palacios to enact the first anti-white-slavery law, Giménez's new bill was buried in congressional committees.

Undeterred, Giménez took his campaign to the local arena. Elected to the Buenos Aires municipal council in 1919, he worked with fellow party members to ban licensed prostitution in the city while cre-

ating ten municipal clinics to treat victims of venereal disease and offer sex education classes.⁴⁰ This time Giménez presented a clearly developed class and gender argument against licensed prostitution, one that incorporated concepts developed by Ingenieros. He questioned why upper-class courtesans never went to the Prostitutes' Registry and why better-paid women workers were not compelled to do so. He also pointed out how low wages led to the sexual exploitation of domestic servants, clearly the most typical female employment in the city, and that similar conditions faced female entertainers and "artistes" in the city. The explanation was the link between female poverty and prostitution. Thus legalizing prostitution had ignored the causes of female sexual commerce, just as it had failed as a prophylactic measure. Giménez concluded with the pragmatic observation that "licensed prostitution is . . . an obstacle to medical treatment" because it offers the public the illusion of protection against infection. Furthermore, the system would never work as long as women evaded medical treatment.⁴¹

Giménez thought initially that victory was at hand. Unfortunately, on 6 June 1919 the Buenos Aires Intendente Municipal (the city mayor) went to the council and threatened to veto any attempts to abolish prostitution or to implement the Giménez program. Despite the intendente's threats, the Socialist program passed with the minimum number of votes. Again threatened with a veto, the council reached a compromise with the mayor. The ordinance only allowed *bordellos* with one prostitute to operate. The city promised to provide free medical care to anyone suffering from syphilis and to establish ten evening clinics to serve the working class. Thus even though the victory appeared to be pyrrhic, the compromise struck between the intendente and the municipal council gave the Socialists half of what they had recommended.⁴²

Although the municipality reached a temporary agreement to continue regulating prostitution, the Buenos Aires debate had not occurred in a vacuum. International groups continued to pressure local and national authorities to abolish legalized prostitution. Thus the shameless reputation of Buenos Aires in the international community continued. In 1924 the League of Nations Committee on the International Traffic in Women and Children went to Buenos Aires to survey the white slavery situation there. The Buenos Aires visit was just one of hundreds made by committee reporters, but the final study (published in 1927) proved extremely embarrassing for Argentina.

According to the study, the Buenos Aires police were well aware of the white slavery problem but had been hampered by court cases that had essentially nullified the *Palacios Law*. The police kept track of some five hundred known traffickers but did little to stop them. The committee concluded that Buenos Aires had "a high percentage of alien

prostitutes, and a body of underworld characters who assist and finance prostitutes, and who live with impunity upon the earnings of the victims."⁴³

The audacity of a small group of pimps and traffickers finally turned public opinion against the system of licensed houses in Buenos Aires. Over the years, their wealth and political influence had become a political embarrassment. Every time the municipal council attempted to change the regulations by raising the minimum age, limiting the number of women in each *bordello*, banning bawdy houses from the downtown area, or refusing to license new *bordellos* (between 1927 and 1934), a group of men and women, including immigrant Jews, financed some of the *bordellos* and made accommodations with the police. Gradually, they became more daring and inventive in their methods. They opened up clandestine houses all over the province of Buenos Aires as well as in the city. They also invested in establishments in Rosario and other Argentine cities. Unable to operate as before, they became more criminal and consequently less controllable by public authorities.

In 1930 members of a Jewish pimps' association, the Zwi Migdal, were arrested. Few convictions resulted, but most pimps fled the country, and the public soon concluded that the white slavery issue had been solved. Although the organized prostitution ring was important, contemporaneous and recent studies alike have tended to overestimate its significance, thereby emphasizing the anti-Semitic aspects of the scandal and further obscuring the other issues associated with the prostitution debate.⁴⁴

By December 1930, Buenos Aires Intendente José Guerrico issued a decree abolishing municipally regulated prostitution in the city. In his prefatory remarks, he admitted that Buenos Aires was considered a center of international white slavery. More important, he recognized the validity of arguments previously made by Giménez and other Socialists that the system of legalized prostitution was ineffective and a farce. To rectify the situation, Guerrico decreed that the city would no longer monitor *bordellos* and ordered the closing of the *Dispensario* and its Prostitutes' Registry. To replace these institutions, he created a committee, which included Angel Giménez, to organize a campaign against venereal disease.⁴⁵

It was one thing to issue a decree but quite another to have the order carried out. Between 1930 and 1934, Buenos Aires mayors bickered with members of the municipal council until everyone recognized the inevitability of abolishing licensed houses. They finally agreed to ban them after 31 December 1934 and replace existing ordinances with laws offering medical care and repatriation or help in finding "honest

jobs" for those leaving bordellos. The municipal council also authorized more comprehensive municipal campaigns against venereal disease.⁴⁶

Even though the city of Buenos Aires banned licensed bordellos after 1934, it remained unclear whether prostitution itself was illegal. Many also wondered how effective such a law could be when the city suburbs still allowed houses to operate both legally and clandestinely. At this point, it became evident that municipalities had little control over the prostitution business so long as their neighbors were reluctant to adopt similar policies. Under these circumstances, local governments were unable to stop either the activities of many pimps or the flight of prostitutes to the suburbs. Consequently, the military president, General José Uriburu, began in March 1931 to consider national measures to resolve the problem. He authorized a committee to study prostitution in Buenos Aires. Members were urged to suggest new regulations, although the possibility of prohibiting licensed houses was still not mentioned.⁴⁷

Until the national debate over legalized prostitution finally became a vocal one in the 1930s, the Socialist party continued its policy of protesting legalized prostitution and encouraging better medical facilities for venereal disease. Its efforts were reinforced by important modifications to the Civil Code in 1926 that legally protected women from undue parental or spousal pressures. According to the new law, married and minor women could choose their own professions and did not have to turn their wages over to husbands or fathers. Although this legislation did not ensure that women would no longer be victimized by family members, at least they could turn to the courts.⁴⁸

In 1933 Socialists led by Angel Giménez introduced into Congress the first proposal for national venereal disease treatment. The intent of the legislation was to have the national government take over all treatment centers for venereal disease, make sex education mandatory in primary schools and the armed forces, prohibit licensed prostitution, and require prenuptial medical exams. It also established as grounds for divorce a spouse's contracting a venereal disease.⁴⁹ In a single piece of legislation, Giménez and his supporters managed to tie together a series of Socialist goals and present them to the public in the name of public health reform. The tactic was a brilliant one, and although it was never completely implemented, the Argentine public gradually became more sensitized to such matters, and eventually a series of public health measures were approved.

Throughout the 1930s, the Socialists worked with others to promote greater state control of the economy and public health, and thus the idea of a national venereal disease law was not unrealistic. But it was not until 1934 that Argentine politicians allied with the military

began to formulate their stance on the issue. The opportunity arose in May 1934, when Deputy Tiburcio Padilla, a prominent conservative physician who claimed to be apolitical, offered a national venereal disease law that excluded sex education and made no mention of prostitution or divorce. Then in June 1935, Padilla introduced another sex education bill. This version specified the grades in which sex education should be offered and made it obligatory for bars, hotels, and other sites of assignation to sell prophylactic devices. He also insisted that bachelors over twenty-five pay a tax of 3 to 5 percent to encourage them to get married.⁵⁰

Eventually the Commission of Hygiene and Social Assistance was formed in the Chamber of Deputies to aid Padilla and Giménez in working out a compromise bill that would resolve the differences between the Socialists and the Conservatives. The final version of this legislation was passed in December 1936. It included provisions for abolishing licensed prostitution throughout the nation and for setting up a national program of mandatory prenuptial exams for males.⁵¹

The abolition of licensed prostitution did not end prostitution in the city of Buenos Aires. Indeed, prostitution continued to flourish despite the increased legal and medical protection offered by Socialist legislation. Nurtured by the rising rate of Argentine female unemployment and low wages, the international economic depression, and the persistence of family coercion, prostitution continued to exist but was finally hidden from public scrutiny. It is also questionable whether the new Argentine laws actually ended the prospects of international white slavery. The diminution of European immigration to the Americas occasioned by the outbreak of World War II probably had a more decisive role in the decline of reported cases. Nevertheless, most national and international moral reformers were delighted with the new law. Argentines could claim a moral victory by ignoring the plight of poor women, and Europeans could contentedly believe that their women were safe in Buenos Aires. As with many other attempts to control "dangerous women," prostitution laws were unenforceable because they failed to address the causes of female poverty. But if poor women could not be driven off the streets, they could be rendered invisible by ignoring their plight.

CONCLUSION

The history of prostitution in rapidly modernizing Latin American cities is an important topic that needs to be reexamined from the perspective of women's history. Efforts to control and criminalize female sexual commerce provide an index of female-focused moral reform activity in developing countries and also show how host countries

responded to external moral pressures during periods of intense immigration. While this issue is a significant one, it should not define the extent and nature of the prostitution controversy in any country, however.

As seen in the Argentine case, anti-white-slavery lobbies were racist and nationalistic in their desire to protect only foreign-born women from sexual exploitation. Nationalistic concerns tended to obscure the interrelationships of local economic conditions to female sexual commerce and to female immigration. It also completely ignored the issue of clandestine prostitution because of the impossibility of determining the nationality of the women involved. Yet the clandestines must be studied because they always greatly outnumbered those who registered.

The focus of the antiprostitution campaign on conditions in the port city of Buenos Aires also obscured the impact of legalized prostitution in other Argentine cities. In many of these municipalities, proportionately far more native-born women entered legal bordellos than immigrant women, yet this difference rarely entered into the national debate. Comparative studies of prostitution are therefore necessary in order to understand the situation in Buenos Aires.

Another critical issue that needs to be expanded is the way that public health authorities linked control of female prostitutes to the transmission of venereal disease. Preventing pandemic or epidemic diseases has been a major task confronting municipal officials in all rapidly growing cities. If programs to protect the public were flawed by gender and class prejudices, they probably had little chance of success. The Socialist campaign to abolish legalized prostitution should therefore be viewed as part of a larger effort to attack the Argentine medical value system through legislative reform.

In order to accomplish their goals, Socialists encouraged national as well as municipal reforms. The enactment of the national Law of Social Profilaxis in 1936 was part of a series of laws designed to wrest public health reform away from municipalities and place it under national supervision. From this perspective, new inquiries into the social legislation of conservative governments in the 1930s may lead to a re-assessment of this era in Argentine history.

NOTES

1. Municipalidad de Buenos Aires, *Actas del Consejo Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires*, 5 Jan. 1875, 317–23; 10 Sept. 1888, 263–67.
2. Ordenanza de Servicio Doméstico, Municipalidad de Buenos Aires, *Actas*, 7 May 1875, 236–46; 2 Dec. 1887, 552–56; the 1903 waitress ordinance quoted in Ernest A. Crider, "Modernization and Human Welfare: The Asistencia Pública and Buenos Aires, 1883–1910," Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1976, 147–48; the 1910 wait-

- ress ordinance, Municipalidad de Buenos Aires, *Actas*, 1 Apr. 1910, 163–65; 12 Apr. 1912, 174.
3. *Ibid.*, 5 Jan. 1875, 317–23.
 4. Edward J. Bristow has examined the ideology of the moral reform campaigns in Great Britain. Edward J. Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain since 1700* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977), 73–93. In his study of Jewish white slavery, Bristow points out that Jewish immigrants arriving in Buenos Aires were more likely than other immigrant women to fall into the hands of pimps and madames. Edward J. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight against White Slavery* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), chap. 4, 111–45.
 5. Fédération Abolitioniste Internationale, *Dixième Congrès International tenu à Genève, le 7–11 Septembre 1908* (Geneva: Secretariat Générale de la Fédération, 1909), 264–65.
 6. Municipalidad de Buenos Aires, *Memoria* (Buenos Aires: n.p.); statistics included in the reply of Jacinte Fernández, Judge of the Political Division, Buenos Aires Police, to League of Nations Inquiry, 27 Aug. 1924, National Vigilance Association Archives, Fawcett Library, London Polytechnic (hereafter referred to as NVA), Box 111; *La Vanguardia*, 26 May 1919, p. 3; Ernesto Pareja, *La prostitución en Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tor, 1936); League of Nations, *Report of the Special Body of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children*, pt. 2 (Geneva, 1927), p. 19. The statistics on adult female nationality in Buenos Aires came from the 1895 national and 1936 municipal census. See República Argentina, Comisión del Censo, *Segundo Censo de la República Argentina, Mayo 10 de 1895* (Buenos Aires: Taller Tipográfico de la Penitenciaría Nacional, 1898), 2:22; República Argentina, Municipalidad de Buenos Aires, *Cuarto Censo General de 1936* (Buenos Aires: Guillermo Kraft, 1938), 1:227.
 7. *La Nación*, 20 Mar. 1875.
 8. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, 113.
 9. Report of Major Wagener, in *Troisième Congrès International, Compte Rendu du Troisième Congrès International* (Paris: S.A. de Publications Périodiques, 1907), 399–411; Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women, *Special Report on the Traffic in Girls and Women* (London: printed privately, 1910), 67.
 10. Richard Walter, *The Socialist Party of Argentina, 1890–1930* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 18–19.
 11. See *Sectores populares y vida urbana* (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 1984).
 12. Reglamento Interno de la Dispensario de Salubridad, Articles 13 and 23, reprinted in Dr. Emilio Coni, *Código de higiene y medicina legal de la República Argentina*, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: Librería de Juan Etchepareborda, 1891), 1:28–29.
 13. See Dr. Francisco de Veyga, “La inversión sexual adquerida,” *Archivos de Psiquiatría, Criminología y Ciencias Afines* 4, no. 3 (Apr. 1903):193–99; Dr. Eusebio Gómez, *La mala vida en Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Juan Roldán, 1908), 181–89; Dr. Looyer, *Los grandes misterios de la mala vida en Buenos Aires comparada con la de los grandes capitales europeos* (Buenos Aires: Talleres de Rafael Palumbo, 1911), 160. Homosexual activity by men was criminal only if the partner was a minor. According to psychologist Hugo Vezzetti, socialism and public health are directly linked by their mutual quest for social change. He posits further that the history of sexuality in Argentina, particularly as it relates to prostitution, is critical for understanding how gender affected the symbolic representation of women and the family. See Hugo Vezzetti, *La locura en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Folio Ediciones, 1983), 184–203.
 14. These estimates can be found in Dr. Juan Lazarte, *Sociología de la prostitución* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Kier, 1945), 132–33, 159; and in Dr. José J. Puente, *El Día Médico* 5, no. 4 (1932):97.
 15. República Argentina, *Censo general de población, edificación, comercio e industrias de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, Capital Federal de la República Argentina, levantado en los días 16 al 24 de octubre de 1909* (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1910), 2:115, 138; and Municipalidad de Buenos Aires, *Memorias de Asistencia Pública*, 1906, p. 24.
 16. Dr. J. Manuel Irizar, “Reglamento de la prostitución,” *Anales del Departamento Nacional de Higiene* 4, no. 15 (Dec. 1902):782.

17. Dr. Enrique Prins, "Sobre la prostitución en Buenos Aires," *Archivos de Psiquiatría, Criminología y Ciencias Afines* 1, no. 12 (Dec. 1903):722–30.
18. Asociación Nacional Argentina contra la Trata de Blancas, *Memorias* (1902–3), 1–10.
19. See *A Romance of Philanthropy*, edited by William A. Coote (London: National Vigilance Association, 1916), 181–82. For the effort in 1907, see República Argentina, Cámara de Diputados, *Diario de Sesiones*, 20 Sept. 1907, 1240–41.
20. República Argentina, Cámara de Diputados, *Diario de Sesiones*, 8 Aug. 1913, 838–39.
21. *Ibid.*, 838–42.
22. *Ibid.*, 17 Sept. 1913, 321–22.
23. *Ibid.*, speech of Arturo Bas, 321–22.
24. *Ibid.*, 329–31.
25. *The Vigilance Record*, no. 11 (Nov. 1913):91.
26. *La Vanguardia*, 19 Sept. 1913, p. 1.
27. *Ibid.*, 20 Sept. 1913, p. 1; 21 Sept. 1913, p. 1.
28. Carolina Muzilli, *El trabajo femenino* (Buenos Aires: L. J. Rosso, 1916); and Dr. Alfredo Fernández Verano, "Lucha anti-venérea en la Argentina: acción desarrollada por la Liga Argentina de Profilaxis Social," *Semana Médica* 31 (1924):513–16.
29. Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery* (New York: Avon, 1979), 19, 29–30; and Teresa Billington-Grieg, "The Truth about White Slavery," *English Review*, June 1913, 438–39. Discussion of Catholic doctrine can be found in Nancy Sternbach, "The Death of a Beautiful Woman: The Femme Fatale in the Spanish-American Modernista Novel," Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1984, 178.
30. League of Nations, *Report of the Sixth International Congress for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children* (Graz, Austria: League of Nations, 1924), 108–11.
31. Solomon Lipp, *Three Argentine Thinkers* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1969), 14.
32. José Ingenieros, *La Législation du travail dans le République Argentine: essai critique sur le projet du Ministre González*, translated by Charles Berthez (Paris: Eduard Cornely, 1906), 162; Nicolás Repetto, *Mi paso por la política: de Roca a Yrigoyen* (Buenos Aires: Santiago Rueda, 1956), 66–67; Walter, *Socialist Party of Argentina*, 36; Leopoldo Zea, *The Latin American Mind*, translated by James H. Abbott and Lowell Dunham (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 227–28; and Ricarte Soler, *El positivismo argentino* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidós, 1968), 225.
33. Sergio Bagú, *Vida de José Ingenieros* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1963), 33; and Vicente Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario biográfico argentino* (Buenos Aires: Elche, 1968), 6:49.
34. José Ingenieros, *El delito y la pena ante la filosofía biológica* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficas de la Penitenciaría Nacional, 1910), 14.
35. Dr. José Ingenieros, Prologue to Eusebio Gómez, *La mala vida en Buenos Aires*, 7–11. Ingenieros did not mention specific crimes or illnesses but did equate the boundaries of mental illness and criminality with definitions imposed by the social system. For a study of Ingenieros's theories of mental illness and criminality, see Hugo Vezzetti, *La locura en la Argentina*, 173–84.
36. Ingenieros's views on the relationship between marriage and prostitution can be found in José Ingenieros, *Obras completas*, revised by Aníbal Ponce, vol. 23, *Tratado del amor* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones L. J. Rosso, 1940), pt. 3, 103–218.
37. Repetto, *Mi paso por la política*, 66–67; and Walter, *Socialist Party of Argentina*, 36.
38. República Argentina, Cámara de Diputados, *Diario de Sesiones*, 20 June 1917, 133–39.
39. *Ibid.*, 139–49.
40. Angel M. Giménez, *Contra la reglamentación de la prostitución: abolición de las ordenanzas municipales y profilaxis de las enfermedades venéreas. Proyectos y discursos pronunciados en el Consejo Deliberante de Buenos Aires en las sesiones del 7 de enero, 16, 19, 6 y 21 de mayo de 1919* (Buenos Aires: Sociedad Luz, n.d.), p. 3.
41. *Ibid.*, 25–26, 68–69.
42. Although Giménez published his speech to the council, no complete records of the debate exist. The *Actas* of the council contain only the intendente's threats and the final ordinance. See Comisión Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, *Actas*, 6 June 1919, pp. 624–41.
43. League of Nations, *Report of the Special Body of Experts on the Traffic in Women and*

- Children*, 2 pts. (Geneva: League of Nations, 1927), 2:11, 13. One of the League of Nations observers, French journalist Albert Londres, further sensationalized the committee's findings in *The Road to Buenos Aires* (London: Constable, n.d.).
44. For studies of bordellos in the 1920s and 1930s in Buenos Aires and Rosario, see Ernesto Godard, "El burdel," *La vida de nuestra pueblo*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1982); Victor Luis Bessero, *Los tratantes de blancas en Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: n.p., 1930); Julio L. Alsogaray, *Trilogía de la trata de blancas: rufianes, policía, municipalidad*, 2d. ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tor, n.d.); Francisco Ciccotti, *La trata de las blanquísimas* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca PAM, 1932); Héctor Nicolás Zinni, *El Rosario de satanas: historia triste de la mala vida* (Rosario: Editorial Centauro, 1980); and Gerardo Bra, *La organización negra: la increíble historia de la Zwi Migdal* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1982).
 45. Municipalidad de Buenos Aires, *Decreto derogando la ordenanza sobre la reglamentación de la prostitución*, 24 Dec. 1930, Archivo General de la Nación Argentina (hereafter referred to as AGN), Ministerio del Interior, 1931 expedientes, legajo 8, no. 6.362-M.
 46. For the debates in the municipal council of Buenos Aires, see *Actas*, 15 Apr. 1932, 681-82; 3 Oct. 1933, 2184-86; 5 May 1933, 758-59; 18 Sept. 1934, 2137-38, 2150-52; 20 Nov. 1934, 2897-2901; 7 Dec. 1934, 3368; 18 Dec. 1934, 3712-14.
 47. Decree of Provisional Government of Argentina, 27 Mar. 1931, AGN, Ministerio del Interior, 1931 expedientes, legajo 8, no. 6.362-M.
 48. Donna J. Guy, "Lower-Class Families, Women, and the Law in Nineteenth-Century Argentina," *Journal of Family History* 10, no. 3 (Fall 1985):328.
 49. República Argentina, Cámara de Diputados, *Diario de Sesiones*, 15 Sept. 1933, 411-14.
 50. *Ibid.*, 12 June 1935, 333-34.
 51. The Deputies' debates can be found in *Diario de Sesiones*, 26 Sept. 1935, 552-68, and 9 Dec. 1936, 939-49. The Senate debates are located in República Argentina, Cámara de Senadores, *Diario de Sesiones*, 18 Sept. 1936, 261-84; and 17 Dec. 1936, 303-11.