



EL CONGRESO INTERRUMPIDO

1955-1983

THE CONGRESS INTERRUPTED

After the coup d'état of 16 September 1955, a period of interrupted democracy began, which would last almost 30 years. The Argentine Congress, like all other democratic institutions, was closed down four times when the armed forces rose up against the Constitution (in 1955, 1962, 1966 and 1976).

For most of the period, the proscription of Peronism excluded a large part of society from parliamentary seats. The crisis of legitimacy was evident in the legislative elections of 1960 and 1963, when the blank vote took the first (24.5%) and second place (17%), respectively. Never in the history of our country would such a record be beaten.

Moreover, the constant military presence not only implied intermittent activity in Congress, but also a pressure on the parliamentary agenda regarding the issues discussed. The constraints imposed upon democracy and the rule of law were such that de facto governments were able to impose amendments to the Constitution on two occasions: in 1957, with a limited Constitutional Convention resulting from restricted elections, and in 1972, with a Basic Statute issued unilaterally by the military authority.

The House of Deputies followed a winding path, sometimes yielding to military pressure, sometimes defying it and legislating decisively in favor of majorities:

- Expansion and strengthening of law enforcement.
- Adoption of incentive schemes for investment and industrial development in the country.
- Social legislation on retirement, labor regulations and access to healthcare.
- Reform of the university system and expansion of national science and technology agencies (National Scientific and Technical Research Council, National Space Research Commission, National Institute of Industrial Technology, etc).