

CHAPTER 2

Peronism in *Billiken* and *Billiken* in Peronism (1946–1955)

For a children's magazine to survive for a hundred years is an extraordinary achievement and it is unsurprising that *Billiken* and Editorial Atlántida would want to qualify just how remarkable this was. Prior to this research project, there were two claims upon which Atlántida had settled. The first was that *Billiken* was the world's longest-running Spanish-language children's magazine and the second that it had achieved continuous publication since 1919 without ever having missed a week. The first claim would appear to be too modest as the closest contender, the Russian monthly children's magazine *Murzilka*, was published only from May 1924.¹ The continuity claim, however, is disproved by *Billiken's* publication break of four weeks in 1949, which had been omitted from the publishing house's institutional memory. This occurred during 'el primer peronismo', the term used to refer to General Juan Domingo Perón's first two terms as president, running from his election in 1946 to his re-election in 1952 and ending with his ousting by military coup in 1955. This 'first Peronism' is one of the most comprehensively researched periods of Argentine history and continues to attract studies from a variety of disciplines because of the complex and contradictory nature of the era's politics, the transformative effect it had on Argentine culture and society, and the enduring legacy of, and fascination with, both Perón and his wife, María Eva Duarte de Perón (Evita).

Billiken's break in publication, from 21 February to 21 March 1949, coincided with a month-long printers' strike during which hardly any newspapers and magazines were printed in Buenos Aires.² There is an identifiable 'before' and 'after' the break in *Billiken's* approach to the Peronist regime, which moves from barely registering the regime's existence to publishing *Billiken's* first photograph of Perón on 28 March 1949 (issue 1528). From then until 1952, the majority of Peronist propaganda published in *Billiken* in the form of text, photographs and illustrations, or combinations thereof, falls into one of three categories: i) regime-sponsored events related to schools and children's sports, ii) content

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related to the 'The Year of the Liberator San Martín', commemorating Argentina's foremost independence hero and founding father on the centenary of his death in 1950, and iii) features relating to the death of Evita, in which her love for children was emphasised. From 1953, *Billiken* published more explicitly political propaganda, intensifying the focus on key Peronist dates and featuring the government's Segundo Plan Quinquenal [Second Five-Year Plan], which was by then integrated into the school curriculum.

Peronism changed Argentina's political landscape indefinitely. It was a political and social revolution based on the promise of delivering *justicialismo* [social justice] to the majority working-class public, and explicitly overturning the old order. The Peronist regime embraced both continuities and ruptures, making its ideology hard to pin down. Karush has shown how the regime was crafted out of the sociocultural context of the preceding years, with the popular culture of the radio and cinema of the 1930s creating the conditions for Perón's rise.³ *Billiken*, a cultural product identified with the middle classes whose dominance and privilege Perón sought to overturn, does not presage Peronism in this way. Marcela Gené, however, has demonstrated that the regime appropriated and adapted the graphic style of the magazine industry as one of the ingredients in the creation of a visual identity that was central to the regime's production of propaganda.⁴ The Peronist regime placed emphasis on children, 'the only privileged ones', and their education, because children were the key to the generational perpetuation of the regime's ideology. By the time of Perón's election, *Billiken* was reaching a second generation of readers, had a weekly print run consistently averaging over 300,000 copies and was an established extracurricular vehicle for the formation of future citizens. *Billiken* was clearly of interest to a regime that saw the political advantages of constructing children in terms of their future potential. Nevertheless, the incorporation of *Billiken's* visual identity into the visual identity of Peronism has hitherto gone unrecognised. This chapter, therefore, has a dual purpose: to explore how Peronism found its way into *Billiken* through the magazine's incorporation of Peronist propaganda, and to explore how *Billiken's* visual identity found its way into Peronism.

Billiken's four missing weeks

For the first 30 years of *Billiken*, the material offered to the magazine's readers was seldom anchored to their wider contemporary or political reality. *Billiken* occasionally published notices relating to public health announcements, such as regarding the 'patriotic duty' of fumigating against mosquitos (issue 1380, 29 April 1946), but news relating to national or international events was scarce. A photograph of Ramón Castillo, taken at the inauguration of the first Argentine Book Fair, is the only photograph of a president in 30 years of publication (issue 1222, 19 April 1943). From 1939 to 1945 there were only two pages relating to the Second World War, one featuring British evacuee children and another on an

exhibition of European children's art (issues 1141, 29 September 1941, and 1222, 19 April 1943). In terms of national events, the San Juan earthquake of January 1944 merited a mention, if only to draw attention to Editorial Atlántida's own fundraising efforts. Atlántida donated 10,000 pesos and all employees contributed a day's pay, raising an additional 6,000 pesos (issue 1263, 31 January). Incidentally, the San Juan fundraising event held in Buenos Aires passed into popular memory as the occasion of Perón and Evita's first meeting. Over *Billiken*'s first three decades, the scarcity of incursions from the contemporary world into the magazine compounds the sense of it operating cyclically and in its own time and space. It also makes the infiltration of the contemporary political reality of Peronism into the magazine all the more striking.

Prior to *Billiken*'s 1949 break in publication, references to the Peronist regime were largely contained within small, framed notes containing announcements by the Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión [Secretary of Labour and Social Security], where Perón had developed his power base since its creation in 1943. These notes are similar in length and presentation to the earlier public health announcements and do not immediately appear to be out of place in the magazine:

La Dirección General de Asistencia Social de la Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión aspira a hacer llegar su ayuda a toda persona desamparada o necesitada, sin distinción de sexo o edad (issue 1498, 2 August 1948).

[The General Management of Social Welfare of the Secretary of Labour and Social Security aspires to reach all who are vulnerable or in need, without distinction of sex or age.]

In the same August 1948 issue, and framed within the same serialised story, an editorial note encouraged readers to carry out a good deed by taking books to hospitals, prisons and children's homes. As Perón was laying the foundations for a welfare state and shaping the new order that would send him to power, *Billiken* was still promoting philanthropy and charity, and representing the world view of its middle-class readers whose parents had the disposable income to buy the magazine for them. Aside from the Secretaría notes, there were only two other references to the contemporary political context before the break in publication. The first, placed in a discreet frame, reads:

Con todo el pueblo hemos repudiado el criminal complot contra el Jefe del Estado y su señora esposa, y lo repudiamos con toda nuestra energía, pues tan salvaje atentado, incompatible con la civilización, hiere nuestra convicción y nuestros sentimientos (issue 1508, 11 October 1948).

[Together with all the country we have repudiated the criminal plot against the Head of State and his lady wife, and we repudiate it with all our energy, as such a savage attack, incompatible with civilisation, wounds our conviction and our feelings.]

Here, neither Perón, Evita nor the perpetrator of the attack, Cipriano Reyes, were referred to by name. In the second reference, *Billiken* published a double spread of photographs of a festival of physical education, which, a caption tells us, was attended by the minister of education, also unnamed (issue 1516, 6 December 1948).

Within the Atlántida archives there are no records— they either do not exist or I have not been permitted to see them—of conversations, correspondence or business decisions that would shed light on what happened during the four-week printers' strike in 1949 that led *Billiken* to increase its Peronist propaganda content. The publishing house's institutional memory of *Billiken*'s dealings with the Peronist regime was constructed from recollections of former employees and is based on anecdotes that cannot be corroborated by archival documentation. These anecdotes create an overarching narrative of *Billiken*'s ability to endure and resist during Peronism, even as the regime cut the publishing house's paper supply, and this in itself offers a valuable insight into Atlántida's self-image. Tellingly, the institutional memory of *Billiken* under Perón does not include reference to the break in publication or any comments regarding *Billiken*'s subsequent publication of Peronist material. Luján Gutiérrez, long-standing former director of Atlántida's *Gente* magazine, recalled conversations with former colleagues who had been at the publishing house during the Peronist period and clarified that the quota of paper allowed by the government applied to the publishing house as a whole and that the decision of how to distribute that paper would have been taken internally. In order to protect the circulation of the magazine in Argentina, *Billiken*'s Pan-Latin American ambitions were curtailed and its 'Grancolombiano' edition distributed in Colombia and Venezuela was shelved.⁵ Retired head of systems Abel Valenzuela remembered a conversation with Constancio C. Vigil's former secretary who stated that Perón had reduced the paper supply and the matter was eventually resolved through the Ministry of the Interior. Perón is alleged to have said: 'Sé que Constancio Vigil no me quiere, pero déjenlo entrar papel porque tampoco usa sus medios para atacarme' [I know that Constancio Vigil does not like me but let him get paper in because neither does he use his media to attack me]. Regardless of whether this can be taken as accurate or representative of what Perón may have said, or thought, about Vigil, it is offered here because of the emphasis placed on Vigil's personal relationship with Peronism. Editorial Atlántida's institutional memory, retained by retired employees who had worked with the Vigil family, rejects the notion that Vigil was in any way aligned to Peronism, despite his inclusion in Goldar's list of intellectuals close to the regime.⁶ The key idea expressed here is that the Vigil family did not support Perón but pursued a policy of what Plotkin has called 'passive consent'.⁷

There is enough historical context to suggest that, during these four missing weeks, *Billiken* entered into a period of negotiation with the regime regarding the extent of the propaganda that the magazine would have to publish in order to ensure its continued access to the government-controlled paper supply. What is surprising about this situation is not so much that a conservative house like

Atlántida published Peronist propaganda but that *Billiken* was able to publish as little as it did, and that the Vigil family retained control of their publishing empire. The Peronist regime's expropriation of *La Prensa*, Argentina's largest daily newspaper, is the most famous example of Peronist press control, but this title was just one of the constituent parts of what Cane calls Perón's 'para-state media apparatus' with major opposition newspapers *El Mundo*, *Crítica*, *Noticias Gráficas* and *La Razón* already having been brought under Peronist control. Cane states that this apparatus was assembled by those closest to Eva and Perón via a myriad of strategies 'both behind closed doors and in the streets' and that included 'popular violence against newspaper buildings, denial of paper quotas and official advertising, labor slowdowns and bureaucratic footdragging'.⁸

Perón's media strategy was constructed out of the problematic relationship between the owners of print media companies and the state that had been brewing since the 1930s. Perón had laid the groundwork for the Journalists' Statute under Edelmiro J. Farrell's administration and this was ratified after the 1946 election, redefining the relationship between the state and the media as it established professional norms for the industry.⁹ Also, at this time, Perón was able to evoke an existing anti-speculation law that had been passed in 1939 as a result of the onset of the Second World War. In a letter to Gabriela Mistral dated 30 May 1942, Constancio C. Vigil wrote that: 'Nosotros nos salvaremos [*sic*] las dificultades que plantea la guerra a los gráficos porque teníamos gran provisión de papel en previsión de lo que está sucediendo' [We will save ourselves from the difficulties posed by the war on the graphic industry because we had a large stockpile of paper in anticipation of what is happening].¹⁰ By the following year, however, notices in *Billiken* apologised to readers in other countries that, due to paper shortages, the central double-colour feature page, or *lámina*, had been suspended (issues 1210, 25 January 1943, and 1245, 27 September 1943). As Varela confirms, the scarcity of paper was a real, international crisis but the ability to control the provision of imported newsprint gave Perón the opportunity to put pressure on opposition print media and was a factor in many agreeing to sell to agents of the regime.¹¹ Even within this framework of 'passive consent', there are hints that the relationship between the regime and Atlántida may have been more complex than the publishing house's institutional memory suggests. According to Sirvén, in 1949 the Buenos Aires Graphic Federation had reached an agreement with the Secretaría to resolve the strikers' pay dispute but the membership did not support it.¹² For Cane, this 'wildcat strike' 'presented the "workers' government" with the horrifying specter of its own deepening internal contradictions: Peronist labor combating Peronist capital'.¹³ In particular, this confrontation with printers put the proprietors of newspapers and publishing houses on the same side as the government, at least temporarily, and may have been a factor in Atlántida's negotiation of its relationship with the regime.

In October 1949 *Billiken* gained a competitor in the form of *Mundo Infantil*, published by Editorial Haynes, where Constancio C. Vigil had founded *Mundo Argentino* in 1911. The Haynes portfolio also included the magazines *El Hogar* and *Selecta* as well as *El Mundo*, then Latin America's second-largest

newspaper.¹⁴ Editorial Haynes was in Peronist hands by early 1949 and in 1951 added to its portfolio *Mundo Peronista*, the official magazine of the Escuela Superior Peronista, a training school for Peronist leaders.¹⁵ Haynes also started publishing Peronist versions of existing magazines. In direct competition with Atlántida's publications were *Mundo Deportivo*, the Peronist answer to *El Gráfico*, *Mundo Agrario*, created to compete with *La Chacra*, and *Mundo Infantil*, the regime's alternative to *Billiken*. Contrary to Plotkin's claim that *Mundo Infantil* 'started a new pattern in children's magazines', *Mundo Infantil* based itself on *Billiken*. The content cited by Plotkin as evidence of *Mundo Infantil*'s originality—stories that 'dealt with things that interested both children and young boys and girls', 'fixed sections on model planes, sports, and a female advisor to whom girls wrote to seek advice for their personal problems'—all has precedence in *Billiken*. Plotkin also claims that *Mundo Infantil* in a move that was 'quite unusual for the times ... featured material that could help children with their homework', when *Billiken* had been offering this for some time.¹⁶ In 1949, when *Mundo infantil* took over from *Figuritas* as *Billiken*'s main competitor, it drew inspiration from both magazines and its originality lay in the Peronist reconfiguration of their content. The process is similar to that examined by Gené: the images associated with Peronist visual aesthetics such as representations of *descamisados* [shirtless ones], workers and working families did not originate in Peronism but were elaborated upon and reconfigured by the regime.¹⁷ *Mundo Infantil* reconfigured content found in *Billiken* that was itself there as a result of reconfigurations of earlier publishing conventions. For example, the Peronist take on the 'Great Men' trope, so familiar to readers of *Billiken*, can be found in *Mundo Infantil*'s 1951 section 'Hombres de la Nueva Argentina' [Men of the New Argentina]. One of the men chosen is Carlos Aloé, candidate for governor of Buenos Aires and the director of Editorial ALEA and *Mundo Infantil*.¹⁸ Whilst *Mundo Infantil* replicated the conservative gender norms of *Billiken* in the way it addressed girl readers, there were key differences in the content directed at the male future citizen reading the magazine. Whereas *Billiken*, at this time, gave no real steer as to children's desirable future occupations other than that they be virtuous, *Mundo Infantil* promoted the recently established technical schools by guiding boys towards technical professions.¹⁹ The mapping of *Mundo Infantil* onto *Billiken*'s existing sections supports Bontempo's argument that *Billiken* created a 'código comunicacional' [communicational code] for Argentine children's magazines.²⁰ The continuities between the magazines also extended to the editorial construction of childhood. Both publications constructed children as future citizens but, for *Mundo Infantil*, these citizens were to be Peronist.

Billiken's presence in the market is a major factor when considering why *Billiken* was allowed to exist alongside *Mundo Infantil* at a time when so many opposition publications were taken over by the Peronist regime. We can also look to Cane, who argues that the newspapers amassed by Perón were changed in political orientation but were not drastically altered in terms of graphic

identity, target audience and register, with the result that ‘the broad contours of the Buenos Aires editorial landscape remained fairly stable’. The idea was not to homogenise all the publications and risk alienating established audiences by creating a ‘Peronist journalism’: the goal, rather, was to create a ‘Peronist public.’²¹ Although Cane does not specifically consider magazines, this is helpful in terms of *Billiken*, particularly if we accept that the middle-class, opposition buying public (the parents of *Billiken*’s readers) were more likely to continue to buy *Billiken* than they were to switch to the Peronist *Mundo Infantil*. The Peronist propaganda content of *Billiken* was reduced and more selective than that of *Mundo Infantil* but it was guaranteed to reach *Billiken*’s significant readership. A notice in *Billiken* from 1950 supports Cane’s thesis. This thanked Editorial Haynes for having come to Atlántida’s aid following a fire in the printing workshop. The notice reports that Editorial Haynes, along with Editorial Emilio Rodríguez and Compañía General Fabril Financiera, offered help ‘en un espíritu de compañerismo que enaltece el periodismo nacional’ [in a spirit of companionship which ennobles national journalism] (issue 1597, 24 July 1950).²²

The ‘Year of the Liberator San Martín’ and Peronist propaganda in *Billiken*

Billiken’s first photograph of Perón shows him swearing in the new constitution and is placed above a photograph of the crowds in the Plaza del Congreso watching a military parade (issue 1528, 28 March 1949). The next photograph of Perón to feature him in a purely political context shows him being sworn in for his second presidential term in June 1952 (issue 1697, 23 June). From 1949 to 1952, the themes around which Peronist propaganda in *Billiken* were grouped illustrate the sociocultural proximity of *Billiken* to Peronism, even as they were politically incompatible, and highlight the conservative underpinnings of Peronism even as it presented itself as a radical break from the past. Other photographs of Perón, and Perón and Evita, in *Billiken* show them at events related to children and schools, rendering as less incongruous their presence in a children’s magazine unaccustomed to featuring political figures. The events reported in *Billiken* reflected only a small percentage of the regime’s initiatives for children, however. The scale of these is much more apparent in *Mundo Infantil*, with each issue dedicating several pages to Evita’s charitable foundation and the Torneos Infantiles Evita [The Evita Children’s Games].²³

A number of the photographs that *Billiken* published of Perón are of inaugurations: of the Ciudad Infantil [Children’s City] with Evita (issue 1545, 25 July 1949), of the Ribera Norte School Baths (issue 1573, 6 February 1950), and of the Argentine championship of children’s football (also with Evita, issue 1575, 20 February 1950). This event, by now called Campeonatos Infantiles Evita [Evita Children’s Championships], was featured in *Billiken* 1951 with

photographs of the competition finalists, and with photographs of Perón in the corresponding issues in 1952 and 1953.²⁴ In 1954 and 1955, Perón was photographed at the latest incarnation of the children's sporting event, the *Olimpiada de los Deportes Juveniles Juan Perón e Infantiles Evita* [Olympics of the Juan Perón Youth Sports and Evita Children's Sports]. According to Pons, photographs like these were part of the regime's visual propaganda in which sport was linked to morality, or virtue, and was shown as a space in which the youth could develop their national consciousness.²⁵ The desire to be present in every part of children's lives—at home, at school, in children's spiritual life and in their leisure time—was, as we have seen, also shared by *Billiken*.

Another suite of photographs of the presidential couple in *Billiken* featured them at commemorative events relating to the hundredth anniversary of the death of independence hero General José de San Martín in 1950, declared as 'Año del Libertador San Martín'. The commemorations culminated on 17 August, the anniversary of San Martín's death, in a ceremony in Huaura, Peru, attended by Perón and Evita and recorded in a double-page photographic spread in *Billiken* (issue 1603, 4 September 1950). One photograph shows Perón ringing the Huaura bells to mark the exact time that San Martín 'entró en la inmortalidad' [passed into immortality], a phrase that would be used a little under two years later to mark Evita's death and was repeated on the radio every day at the hour of her death for the remainder of Perón's time as president. In January 1951, another double-page spread of photographs marked the closing of the San Martín year in Mendoza, the province and city on the edge of the Andes from where San Martín led his liberating army. These photographs, linking Perón and Evita to San Martín, helped to integrate the presidential couple into the pages of *Billiken* (issue 1622, 15 January 1951).

Of all the founding fathers, San Martín holds the undisputed prime position in Argentine history, as the scale of his achievements and the timeframe in which he accomplished them allowed his legacy to rise above and beyond the later political and ideological battles over Argentine nationhood and national identity. Such was the Liberator's symbolic power that the proponents of competing liberal and revisionist narratives of Argentine history were united in their admiration for him. By respecting the 'official', liberal or *mitrista* history hitherto taught in schools and promoted by *Billiken*, Peronism did not engage in the historical revisionism that emphasises the role played by federalist caudillos such as Juan Manuel de Rosas. Rather, by identifying himself with San Martín, Perón sought to legitimise his 'New Argentina' as the manifestation of the nation's true destiny, faithful to the ideals of the independence movement.

As part of the 1950 commemorations, all newspapers, magazines, books and official documents were obliged to include the motto 'Año del Libertador San Martín'.²⁶ *Billiken* included the motto on every right-side page, where it replaced the usual saying, moral message or trivia statement in a tradition first instigated by founder Constancio C. Vigil. *Billiken* exceeded its obligations by dedicating the first cover of the year to the 'Año del Libertador' with an illustration of the monument in Plaza San Martín in Buenos Aires. The first contents page

of that issue displays an illustration of San Martín overlaid by text, the first paragraph of which reads:

Este año de 1950 es el consagrado al Libertador general don José de San Martín. El gobierno y todo el pueblo se aprestan a conmemorarlo. “Billiken” rinde homenaje al Gran Capitán y dice con todos los niños argentinos: ¡Gloria al Libertador! (issue 1568, 2 January 1950).

[This year of 1950 is consecrated to the Liberator, General Don José de San Martín. The government and all the people are preparing to commemorate him. *Billiken* pays homage to the Great Captain and says, together with all Argentine children, Glory to the Liberator!]

The first photograph of Perón related to the ‘Año del Libertador’ shows him at the ‘Justicialist’ primary school, in the neighbourhood of Los Perales, in an event to mark the beginning of the school year. The caption reads:

El presidente de la Nación, general Juan Perón, dando por iniciada, con un brillante discurso, la campaña de alfabetización, que se desarrollará con el lema ‘En la patria de San Martín no debe haber analfabetos’ (issue 1580, 27 March 1950).²⁷

[The president of the nation, general Juan Perón, launching, with a brilliant speech, the literacy campaign which will be rolled out with the motto ‘There must be no illiterates in the homeland of San Martín.’]

The rationale for linking San Martín to literacy in this motto was fleshed out in a speech given by Oscar Ivanissevich, minister of education, at the conference marking the universal literacy campaign’s launch. Literacy, he said, was so central to Perón’s vision because it would play a fundamental role in ensuring the equality of the citizenry: ‘Todos los argentinos serán iguales porque todos podrán leer a SAN MARTÍN a través de Mitre’ [All Argentines shall be equal because all will be able to read San Martín through Mitre].²⁸ In *Billiken*, however, no further comment was offered on the campaign or its evocation of San Martín and this Peronist identification of San Martín with education and literacy was ignored by the magazine. In Ivanissevich’s 1950 back-to-school message to the readers of the Ministry of Education’s communications bulletin, he referred to Perón as ‘Primer Maestro de la Nueva Escuela Argentina’ [First Teacher of the New Argentine School].²⁹ This honorific was never used in *Billiken* and the magazine resisted displacing Sarmiento from his position as Argentina’s great educator, pioneer of the schooling system and literacy campaigner. *Billiken* continued to herald Sarmiento as the father of Argentine education throughout the Peronist period, particularly in its issues commemorating 11 September as the Day of the Teacher. The issue corresponding to the Day of the Teacher in 1950 was largely dedicated to Sarmiento as usual. In this issue, the page on

'Efemérides del Libertador' [The Liberator's historic anniversaries] was placed alongside 'Recuerdos de Sarmiento' [Memories of Sarmiento], emphasising the parity of the two figures (issue 1604, 11 September 1950). These details reveal that *Billiken's* editors tried to embrace the 'Año del Libertador' on their own terms, resisting, where possible, the promotion of the link between Perón and San Martín.

The 'Año del Libertador' was embraced by *Billiken*, but to suggest that all content relating to San Martín published by *Billiken* during this year should be considered Peronist propaganda would fail to take into account *Billiken's* pre-existing affinity with, and promotion of, San Martín. In 1950, the recurring sections 'Diccionario sanmartiniano' [San Martín Dictionary] and comic-style 'Efemérides del Libertador' were in keeping with *Billiken's* previous three decades of San Martín-related content. Also fitting seamlessly into *Billiken* was the full page dedicated to Segundo Manuel Argañaraz's lyrics to the 'Hymn for the Liberator', the winning entry in a national competition organised by the state-led National Commission of Homage to the Liberator (issue 1578, 13 March 1950). By the time of the 'Año del Libertador', Atlántida already had a sizeable back catalogue of San Martín-related material, which straddled the divide between education (school material) and entertainment (serialised fiction and comics). The more innovatively presented of the two, *Los granaderos de la libertad*, was a serialised graphic historical novel focussing on San Martín's military career and his command of the Regiment of Mounted Grenadiers in the Argentine War of Independence. Written by Gabriel Fagnilli Fuentes and illustrated by Carlos Lugo, it was published in *Billiken* from issue 1324, 2 April 1945, to issue 1463, 1 December 1947. From 1944 to 1947, Arturo Capdevila contributed four serialised historical novels based on San Martín's personal life. *La infanta mendocina* [The Infanta from Mendoza] invites readers to discover 'los detalles íntimos de la vida de un prócer a través de su hija [Mercedes]' [the intimate details of the life of a founding father through his daughter Mercedes]. *El niño poeta* [The child poet] looks at San Martín's childhood, and *El abuelo inmortal* [The immortal grandfather] focusses on his legacy. The final novel, *Remeditos de Escalada*, is the story of 'la abnegada esposa de San Martín' [San Martín's selfless wife].³⁰ Following serialisation in *Billiken*, Capdevila's novels were published by Atlántida's books division as part of the *Biblioteca Billiken* children's book collection. They were allocated a place in the Blue Series, *Hombres de América* [Men of America], underscoring the inconsequential role played by Mercedes and Remedios in their own biographies. In April 1950, the four Capdevila novels were republished in special editions in homage to the 'Año del Libertador' and were joined by a new edition of Alberto Larrán de Vere's 1943 biography of San Martín. Advertisements emphasised the books' affordability: these special editions were still priced at 4 pesos 50 cents, the same as other *Biblioteca Billiken* books with colour illustrations. Their republication not only allowed Atlántida to exploit the

commercial opportunities afforded by Perón's focus on San Martín, but also enabled those in charge of *Billiken* to control the discourse around the magazine's commemorations of this founding father. These pre-existing *Billiken* publications had been written 'con el mejor homenaje que un escritor puede rendir a San Martín' [as the best homage that a writer can pay to San Martín] and were perfectly suited to the centenary at a time when 'sentimos la necesidad de asociarnos de alguna manera al momento que vive la nación' [we feel the need to associate ourselves in some way with the present moment that the nation is living] (advertisement in *Billiken*, issue 1589, 29 May 1950).

Given San Martín's prominence in *Billiken*, it is certain that the magazine would have commemorated the centenary of San Martín's death even if the government of the day had not obliged the editors to include such material. If there is a line to be drawn across *Billiken*'s content that divides business as usual from propaganda, the literary and educational material related to San Martín could be placed on one side and photographs of Perón and Evita at San Martín-related events on the other. The consideration of how blurred any line might be during Peronism is useful in the context of examining *Billiken* in the later military dictatorship (1976–1983). During this period, which will be the focus of Chapter 4, the conservative content that *Billiken* had always published blurs into propaganda when viewed in the context of the political moment. That these blurred lines exist at all in a children's magazine underscores the power of this medium to both reflect and shape society, and to project visions of nationhood onto child readers, constructing children simultaneously as future citizens and current political subjects. In *Billiken*, Perón was removed as the mediator between San Martín and the readers, and the commemorations of the centenary were divested of their Peronist political context. The underlying assertion was that it was *Billiken* that was best qualified to pay homage to San Martín. Furthermore, it was the San Martín imagined by *Billiken*—not by Perón—that was commemorated by this magazine and its publishing house.

As Peronism encroached into *Billiken*, first with the publication of propaganda photographs and, after 1952, with content from the Peronist school curriculum, the aesthetics of *Billiken* and its 'communicational code' also found their way into the grand Peronist tome *La Nación Argentina. Justa, libre, soberana*. Published by the State Control of the Presidency of the Nation, led by Colonel Dalmiro Jorge Adaro, who would later oversee the Secretariat of State Intelligence (SIDE), this imposing physical object measures 35cm × 27cm and contains 806 pages filled with full-colour illustrations. The title references the 1949 Justicialist constitution, which proclaimed Argentina to be 'una nación "socialmente justa, económicamente libre y políticamente soberana"' [a nation 'socially just, economically free and politically sovereign'].³¹ The book employs an illustrated graphic format to herald the achievements of the regime so far by examining the state of the country in 1943, the progress made to 1950, and the

projection forward to an even more prosperous future. For Punte, this notion of time links *Justa, libre, soberana* to children: 'los niños materializan el futuro. Son presencia actual de algo que está por hacerse y que apunta a otra dimensión temporal, la de aquello que todavía no es' [children materialise the future. They are the current presence of something which is about to happen and that points towards another temporal dimension, that which is not yet here].³² Perón linked the central themes of *Justa, libre, soberana* to children during the speech inaugurating the academic year of 1950 that was featured in *Billiken* in issue 1580. Perón noted that the name of the school—Justicialista—'nos pone en contacto con todas las aspiraciones de una patria justa, libre y soberana con que soñamos' [puts us in contact with all the aspirations of the just, free and sovereign homeland of which we dream].³³

A note in the third and final edition of *Justa, libre, soberana* clarifies that the volume's material had been produced solely by existing state employees with no contracting of external services.³⁴ The names of 18 artists appear at the end of the first edition and include Amleto Scarzello, watercolourist, illustrator and employee of the Ministry of Public Works, Walter Ciocca, creator of the gauche *Hormiga negra* comic strip published in *La Razón* in 1950, and Horacio Alvarez Boero, an artist employed by Office of Post Propaganda, who would later produce several series of postal stamps.³⁵ As *Justa, libre, soberana*'s illustrators came from a number of different artistic backgrounds, there are a variety of styles and influences present in the book's illustrations, ranging, as Santoro describes, from Soviet-influenced political propaganda to images reminiscent of US post-war consumer advertising, to popular graphic art.³⁶ In Gené's study of the Peronist images of workers, she describes the process by which the regime appropriated existing graphic traditions and reinscribed them with new symbolic meanings. Recognising the regime's borrowings from graphic print culture, Gené states: 'No fueron ... las artes eruditas sino las gráficas el vehículo privilegiado para visualizar la acción y los objetivos del gobierno' [The graphic arts, rather than the erudite arts, were the privileged vehicle used to visualise the government's action and objectives].³⁷ One of Evita's portraits that was extensively reproduced in political posters was painted by Raúl Manteola. Manteola's contribution to Atlántida extended beyond the portraits of Argentina's Great Men commissioned by *Billiken* and he produced covers for *Para Ti* from 1935 for nearly 30 years.³⁸ By illustrating Evita in the manner of a *Para Ti* cover, Manteola brought the aesthetics of women's weekly cover artwork into the sphere of political propaganda.

According to Santoro, the influence of popular graphic art in *Justa, libre, soberana* renders its style naïve, and the quality of some of the illustrations varies downwards from the amateurish bordering on the incompetent.³⁹ The book's image-based communication strategy leads Soria and Ballent to question who its intended readership was. For Soria, the book is an instruction manual, probably intended for use in schools, and she also identifies Peronist propaganda's

use of children's and school texts to reach a popular audience.⁴⁰ For Ballent, the book's pastel-coloured images recall school reading books and its historical, geographical and statistical content presupposes use in schools. Simultaneously, however, Ballent recognises that the book's use of images speaks of collective mythmaking: 'la obra parece atribuir a su público de ciudadanos las habilidades e intereses de una población infantil. En otras palabras, el lector presupuesto es un niño, y el lector real se siente invitado a serlo, en sentido literal o figurado' [the work seems to attribute to its readership of citizens the skills and interests of children. In other words, the presumed reader is a child and the real reader feels invited to be one, in a literal or figurative sense].⁴¹

Santoro, Soria and Ballent all identify the mixture of influences including illustrations for children and the popular graphic art found in print media, yet only Soria makes a brief reference to the similarity of *Justa, libre, soberana*'s 'Algunos jalones de nuestra historia' [Some milestones in our history] to *Billiken*'s regular page 'Nuestra historia' [Our history], which had been published from 1932.⁴² The graphic similarity goes beyond that section, however, as many of the pages of *Justa, libre, soberana* use versions of a standard grid format in which captioned panels are linked in rows, as in comics. In *Justa, libre, soberana*, sections as diverse as the Statute of the Rural Worker (see Figure 2.2), 'Hogares de tránsito' [shelters for women and children], 'Los niños santiagueños empiezan a vivir' [Santiago's children start living] and 'Algunas reformas universitarias' [Some university reforms], amongst others, reproduce *Billiken*'s organisation of graphic material.⁴³ Many other pages modify the style by omitting borders or angling images.

Santoro states that 'una síntesis radical que aporta *Justa, libre, soberana*, son los pictogramas que enumeran casas, escuelas, barcos, fábricas ... en centenares de cuadrículas, como en un extenso inventario gráfico' [a radical synthesis that *Justa* ... brings are the pictograms which enumerate houses, schools, boats, factories ... in hundreds of grids, like an extensive graphic inventory].⁴⁴ This use of images organised in grids to present educational material could not be considered 'radical' by 1950. This system was not exclusive to, and was not invented by, *Billiken*, but *Billiken* pioneered the transmission of this to a mass readership. From 1937, when *Billiken*'s educational material was increased and formalised, emphasis was placed on the visuality of this material. *Billiken*'s graphic presentation of history was extended from this point to other subjects including geography and vocabulary, creating, in effect, a graphic inventory presented in squares and grids, of objects ranging from animals to machinery and from plants to rural customs. The Peronist visual aesthetics showcased in *Justa, libre, soberana* appropriated and reconfigured the pre-existing graphic layouts used in *Billiken*, widening the readership of image-based pedagogical material from children to include the adults who also needed to be educated about their new roles, rights and responsibilities in the 'New Argentina'.

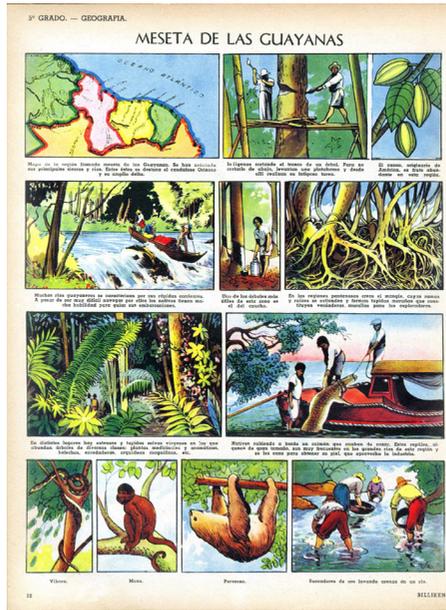


Figure 2.1: Image-led school material, in this example the Guiana Plateau for third-grade geography. *Billiken*, issue 1176, 1 June 1942. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

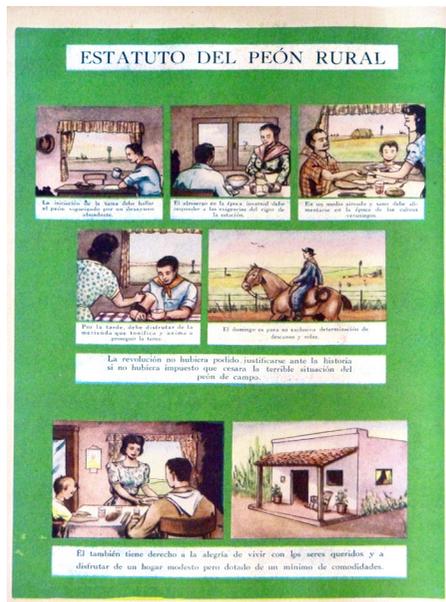


Figure 2.2: There is a similar layout in the presentation of material in *La Nación Argentina. Justa, libre, soberana*, 1950 (p. 162). Anonymous work, public domain. Photograph courtesy of Rosana Drossi.

Evita's death and children's Peronist privilege

In 1950, *Billiken* and Peronism were largely held in balance, with each extracting benefit from their association: the regime by transmitting select propaganda to households of different political affiliations who may not have chosen to buy *Mundo Infantil*, and *Billiken* by capitalising on the commercial opportunities afforded by the 'Año del Libertador'. In 1952 this balance shifted with the amount of Peronist material published in *Billiken* increasing, not least because of the references to Evita's death on Saturday 26 July. This was acknowledged by *Billiken* at the earliest possible opportunity in issue 1703 on Monday 4 August. The title page of issue 1703 was replaced with Numa Ayrinhac's 1950 portrait of Evita that had been used for the cover of Evita's book *La razón de mi vida*.

The caption in *Billiken* can be translated as:

Mrs Eva Perón, Spiritual Leader of the nation, whose passing has motivated moving demonstrations of grief, and who continues to live in the hearts of those on whom she lavished her love and tenderness in the vast and admirable endeavour inspired by the beautiful motto that 'children are the only privileged ones'.



Figure 2.3: The notice of Evita's death in *Billiken*. Issue 1703, 4 August 1952. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

The phrase 'En la Nueva Argentina los únicos privilegiados son los niños' [In the New Argentina, children are the only privileged ones] is number 12 of the 'Veinte verdades peronistas' [20 Peronist Truths] referred to in Perón's speech from 17 October 1950. Prior to this, Perón had already called children 'los únicos privilegiados' in the context of schools and literacy, in his speech on the inauguration of the school year in 1950, made at the same event reported by *Billiken* in issue 1580 in March 1950 and referenced earlier. In his speech, Perón proclaimed: 'Que sean ellos [los niños] los únicos privilegiados en el país; que reciban en cada escuela el privilegio que les corresponde ... y que aprendan cuanto deben aprender los niños argentinos para asegurar el futuro de la patria' [May they be the only privileged ones in the country, and may they be given, in every school, this privilege that is owed to them ... and may they learn all that Argentine children must learn to ensure the future of the homeland].⁴⁵ The 'Veinte verdades' were then printed in full in the first issue of *Mundo Peronista*, on 15 July 1951, and also on the final page of *La Nación Argentina. Justa, libre, soberana*. The shortened 'Los únicos privilegiados...' captioned the cover image of *Mundo Peronista*'s issue 6, which shows Evita surrounded by children. In issue 8, the magazine's page dedicated to children, 'Tu página de pibe peronista' [Your Peronist Kid's Page], included one of the few photographs of children to appear in this page and the reminder: 'No olvidés nunca, pibe peronista, que en la Nueva Argentina de Perón "los únicos privilegiados son los niños"' [Never forget, Peronist kid, that in Perón's New Argentina 'children are the only privileged ones'].

This cornerstone of Justicialist political doctrine, taken, as *Mundo Peronista* tells us, from the 'pensamiento vivo de Perón' [living thought of Perón], is turned into a 'hermoso lema' [beautiful motto] by *Billiken* in Evita's death notice. It is further depoliticised and divested of its Peronist context with the magazine's omission of 'Nueva' from 'Nueva Argentina'. Indeed, this 'beautiful motto' was adopted by *Billiken* as a way of reconciling the magazine's spotlighting of Evita in *Billiken*, much in the same way as the earlier photographs of the presidential couple largely featured their participation in events related to children and schools. From its inclusion in Evita's death notice, the phrase 'los únicos privilegiados son los niños' was repeated in the following week's issue, the first opportunity to properly address Evita's death and which also featured three pages of photographs of Evita surrounded by children in different locations across the country (issue 1704). Similarly, on the first anniversary of Evita's death, *Billiken* placed a photograph of Evita on the title page with a caption referring to children as 'los únicos privilegiados' followed by a double spread of photographs of a recent military parade (issue 1753, 20 July 1953).

In Evita's death notice, *Billiken*'s editors arrived at a respectful and tactful accommodation of the nation's grief that did not explicitly express that Atlántida's directors and employees were amongst those saddened by the First Lady's death. As we would expect, this stood in huge contrast to the outpouring of

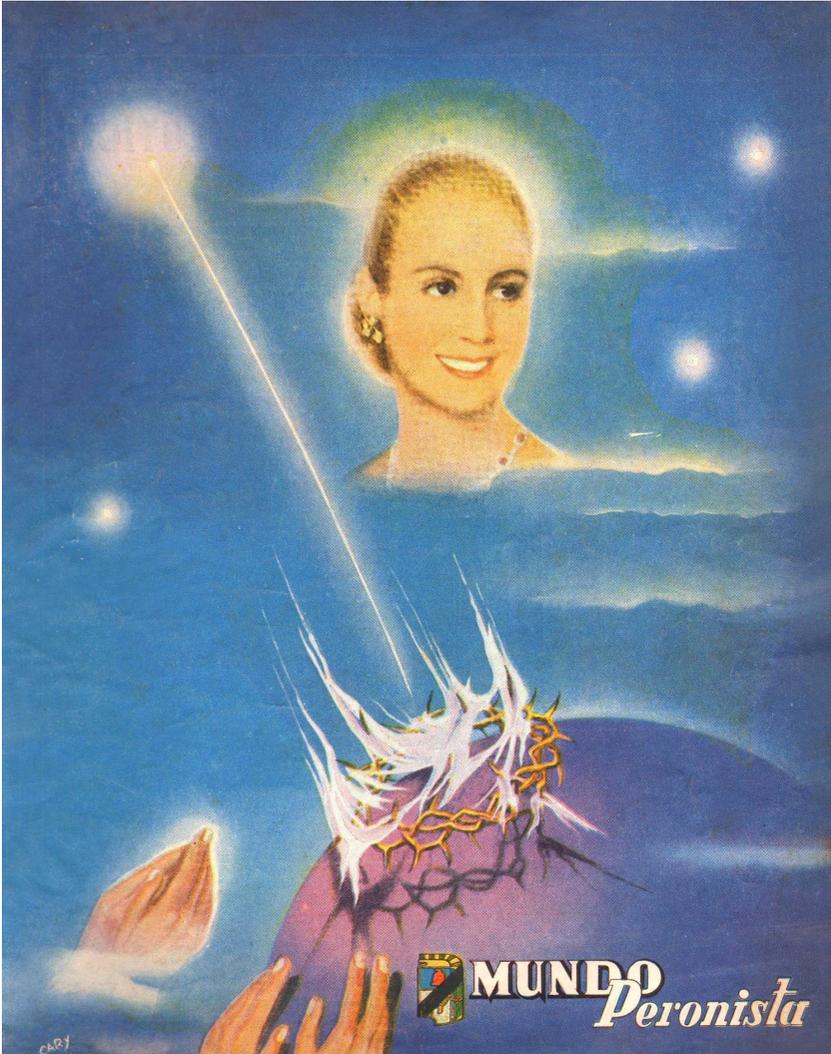


Figure 2.4: The cover of *Mundo Peronista*, issue 26, 1 August 1952. Anonymous work, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mundo_Peronista_-_Revista_n%C2%BA26.pdf.

grief in the corresponding issue of *Mundo Peronista*. All 91 issues of *Mundo Peronista* featured either Perón or Evita or both on the cover, in either illustrated versions of photographs or reproduction of portraits. Versions of Evita's portrait by Ayrinhac had been used for issues 3, 7, 9 and 25 but it appeared in issue 26 with religious imagery, in keeping with her devotees' perception of her saintliness.

In that week's 'Tu página de pibe peronista', there was, first, an acknowledgement of the reader's grief: 'La que te quiso como una madre, querido pibe, está hoy en el Cielo' [She who loved you like a mother, dear kid, is today in Heaven] and later an exhortation never to refer to Evita in the past tense, 'Porque los seres que han sembrado de actos grandes su camino jamás mueren' [Because those who have sown their way with great deeds never die]. Another passage mixes emotive language, religious imagery and the reinforcement of Justicialist discourse:

No puedes ver la corona de luz que Evita luce en estos instantes. Mucho más luminosa que todos los diamantes de la tierra ... Esa corona deben haberla hecho los ángeles con las lágrimas de dolor que ella enjugó en los ojos de los enfermos, de los viejecitos, de los niños y de los pobres (*Mundo Peronista*, issue 26, 1 August 1952).

[You cannot see the crown of light that Evita is wearing at this instant. It is much more luminous than all the diamonds of the earth ... This crown must have been made by the angels from the tears of suffering that she wiped away from the old, from children, and from the poor.]

The corresponding issue of *Billiken* and the following three issues all displayed a black mourning band on top left corner of the cover image, which was repeated on the title page. With the covers of issues 1703 and 1704 dedicated to the anniversary of San Martín's death, the following two covers would normally have been illustrated by Lino Palacio. Instead, issue 1705 depicts children sitting quietly and attentively listening to an older girl read to them, and 1706 shows a blond-haired toddler peering over the bars of his cot. The cover artists' names are not given and both illustrations are drawn in a style reminiscent of early *Billiken* covers. The incongruity of these cover images suggests that further accommodation had been made for the mourning issues, with Palacio's humorous and irreverent style deemed inappropriate.

The focus on children was maintained in *Billiken's* commemoration of the anniversaries of Evita's death, the final one occurring just weeks before Perón was deposed in September 1955. There was no moderation of the covers in these instances as all three feature Lino Palacio artwork. The second anniversary issue used for the title page the same photograph of Evita as had appeared in issue 1704 from shortly after her death (issue 1806, 26 July 1954). The caption for this depiction of Evita, surrounded by children, references all she did for 'los humildes' [the humble ones] and, in particular, 'los niños'. By focussing on

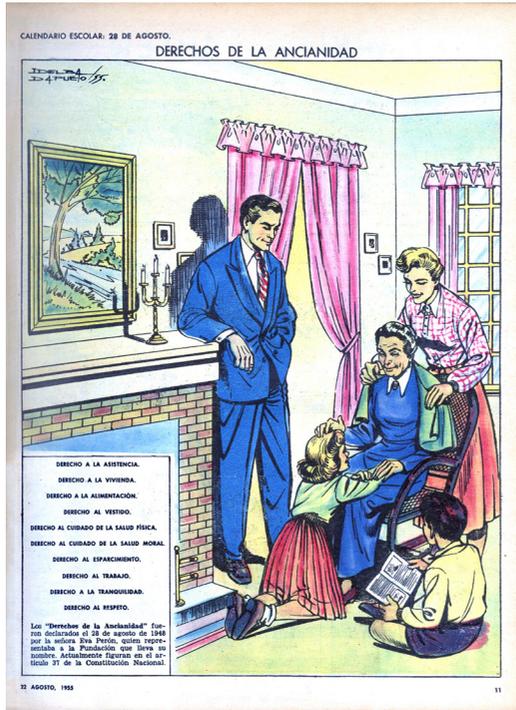


Figure 2.5: ‘Rights of the elderly’. Illustration by Idelba Dapueto, *Billiken*, issue 1862, 28 August 1955. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

children, *Billiken* was able to tailor the nature of its tributes, keeping them within the contours of a children’s magazine. A shift in this content starts to take place as early as issue 1706. In addition to the photographs of Evita’s funeral which occupied two pages, an illustrated page reproduced the ‘Derechos de la Ancianidad’ [Rights of the elderly], taken, we are told, from a speech made by Eva Perón on behalf of her foundation. Its inclusion extends Evita’s presence in *Billiken* beyond the connection with children to encompass the other vulnerable beneficiaries of welfare according to Justicialist political discourse. In doing so, *Billiken* includes more of what Girbal-Blacha terms the ‘protagonists’ of the Peronist era.⁴⁶ *Billiken*’s visual representation of the rights of the elderly from 1955 has the distinction of being drawn by Idelba Dapueto, a pioneer woman Argentine comic artist and professional illustrator.⁴⁷

By the third anniversary of Evita’s death, in 1955, she was no longer featured on the title page but her death had now passed into the ‘Calendario escolar’ [school calendar], where photographs are of Evita surrounded by children, and of initiatives for children she supported, including the Ciudad Infantil (issue 1858, 25 July 1955). Given the increase of Peronist material in *Billiken* from



Figure 2.6: The anniversary of the death of Eva Perón integrated into *Billiken's* school calendar. *Billiken*, issue 1858, 25 July 1955.

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1953, specifically with the inclusion of material related to Perón's Segundo Plan Quinquenal [Second Five-Year Plan], it is surprising that it took until 1955 to incorporate Evita into the school calendar.

Billiken and the Segundo Plan Quinquenal (1953–1955)

The Second Five-Year Plan was approved in December 1952 and passed into the school curriculum the following year. Mónica Rein identifies the Peronisation of the education system as a two-stage process. The first 'structural and institutional' stage focussed on building schools to increase equal access to education. This is reflected in photographs of schools published in *Billiken* in 1951, with accompanying text stating that hundreds had been opened in the previous few years:

Una de las preocupaciones fundamentales del gobierno presidido por el general don Juan D. Perón es la de proporcionar a la niñez modernos establecimientos educacionales ... para que pueda cumplirse en un

ambiente feliz la educación integral de todos los niños y jóvenes que habitan en nuestra querida patria (issue 1638, 7 May 1951).

[One of the fundamental preoccupations of the government presided by General Don Juan D. Perón is that of making available modern educational establishments to childhood so that the integral education of all children and young people who inhabit our beloved country can be carried out in a happy environment.]

The building project was the groundwork for the second phase, that of ‘manifest political indoctrination’, which would last until Perón was deposed.⁴⁸ The revised school curriculum was approved in 1951 but the rewritten school reading books were available only from 1953. From 1953, school textbooks incorporated the Second Five-Year Plan and manuals instructing teachers on how best to integrate the plan into lessons were also produced. The epigraph to one such manual is a quotation from Perón: ‘Nosotros estamos dedicados a entregar a los maestros la educación de nuestros hombres, persuadidos de que, al hacerlo, estamos poniendo en manos capaces y virtuosas la formación del espíritu, del intelecto argentino, de la propia Nación’ [We are dedicated to handing over the education of our men to our teachers, persuaded that, in doing so we are placing in capable and virtuous hands the formation of the Argentine spirit and intellect, of the nation itself].⁴⁹

As Artieda and Cañete demonstrate, Peronist school reading books transmitted the message that reading and studying was essential work if children were to participate in the construction of a collective future.⁵⁰ This is reminiscent of the editorial interventions found in *Billiken* in the 1930s, examined in the previous chapter, which promoted the practice of reading to guarantee a better future. Carli also detects two stages in the Peronist approach to children as she identifies the first mandate’s focus on ‘los únicos privilegiados’ giving way to the evocation of the ‘new generation of the year 2000’.⁵¹ Embedding the Segundo Plan Quinquenal within the school curriculum was one of the strategies of a political call to children. From 1953, *Billiken*’s educational material increasingly focussed on the key Peronist dates, which had by now been incorporated into the ‘Calendario escolar’, and curriculum content related to the Second Five-Year Plan. *Billiken*’s changing treatment of Peronism’s two key dates—17 October and the reinscribed 9 July—provides a barometer for the increasing influence of the regime on the magazine.

The symbolic birth of the Peronist movement on 17 October, celebrated as ‘Día de la Lealtad’ [Loyalty Day], marked the congregation of the masses on the Plaza de Mayo on that day in 1945 to demand Perón’s release from prison.⁵² The first mention of this in *Billiken*, in 1950, signalled Peronism’s inclusion into the *Billiken* universe. It was highlighted as a commemorative date now recognised under the ‘Calendario escolar’ and was depicted with an illustration, rather than a photograph (issue 1609, 18 October). Ballent identifies

the two poles of Peronist visual aesthetics as the use of illustration typified by *Justa, libre, soberana* and the modernism of photographs.⁵³ The other commemorative volume released to coincide with the 'Año del Libertador', *Argentina en marcha* [Argentina on the move], narrates a day in the life of the Argentine government through a collection of 250 photographs with accompanying text showcasing the achievements of the past four years. According to Soria, these photographs 'se presentan como testimonios visuales de una patria que se identifica con la nueva cultura del trabajo' [are presented as visual testimonies of a country which identifies with the new culture of work].⁵⁴ Although photography has been seen as more powerful than illustration for its function as *testimonio*, in the context of *Billiken*, illustration is the visual medium with the most power and significance when chosen for a portrait of an individual. For Perón to join *Billiken's* catalogue of illustrated Great Men meant that he had gained equivalence with them. Perón was not completely assimilated into the *Billiken* pantheon of Argentina's *próceres* as no Manteola portrait was commissioned for him by *Billiken* and he never appeared on a cover. However, his appearance in illustrated form inside the magazine projects the idea of historical posterity and integrates Peronism into *Billiken's* narrative of Argentine history.

In *Billiken's* first Loyalty Day illustration, Perón and Evita are on the balcony of the Casa Rosada looking out onto the crowds in the Plaza de Mayo. The balcony, draped in the colours of the Argentine flag, mirrors the banners held by the crowd, one of which reads 'Perón cumple' [Perón delivers]. Within the crowd, a schoolteacher is one of the most prominent figures. Distinguishable because of her white teacher's smock, she appears in profile with her arm outstretched towards the balcony. The caption reads that Perón and Evita 'contemplan la gran multitud reunida en la histórica Plaza de Mayo y agradecen las demostraciones de lealtad y simpatía del pueblo, que nunca les han faltado desde el 17 de Octubre de 1945' [contemplate the great multitude gathered in the historic Plaza de Mayo and thank the demonstrations of loyalty and kindness of the people, which they have never lacked since 17 October 1945] (issue 1609, 18 October 1950). In 1951, a photograph of the crowds in the Plaza de Mayo celebrating the anniversary of 17 October 1945 shares the page with another event in the October 'Calendario escolar', namely the death of President Julio Argentino Roca, remembered for leading the so-called 'Conquest of the desert' against the Indigenous populations. This is representative of the content in *Billiken* that preceded Peronism and that would continue to be featured beyond the regime. It took decades for Roca's military 'campaign' to be re-evaluated as genocide and he was replaced, by Evita, on the 100-peso banknote in 2012.

For Loyalty Day in 1952 the illustration from 1950 is reused (issue 1713, 13 October). The corresponding issue of 1953 features Columbus on the cover and, inside, a page of two photographs depicting 17 October: one showing Perón pinning medals to worthy Peronists and, below, another captioned: 'La enorme multitude reunida en Plaza de Mayo aclama con entusiasmo las

palabras del general Perón recordando la histórica jornada de 1945' [The enormous multitude gathered in the Plaza de Mayo enthusiastically acclaims the words of General Perón remembering the historical day of 1945] (issue 1765, 12 October 1953). This issue also features a double page of captioned illustrations organised into a grid format, framed in the top left by 'Semana de Justicialismo' [Justicialist Week] as the single day of 17 October is now amplified into a whole week in the 'Calendario escolar'. The verso of this spread has five rows of panels dedicated to 'Social Justice', demonstrating the breadth of the regime's interventions from 'Workers' Rights' to the 'Children's City' to 'Homes for the Elderly'. On the facing page, four rows of five panels each are organised under 'Economic Independence', featuring illustrations dedicated to 'Industrial Progress', 'Nationalisation of the Central Bank' and 'Nationalisation of the Railways', amongst others. Below this, two rows depict 'Soberanía política' [Political Sovereignty], with illustrations that include a couple dancing *zamba* and the caption: 'Recuperación de nuestras tradiciones. Conciencia nacional' [Recuperation of our traditions. National consciousness] and women at the ballot box: 'Voto femenino' [Women's Vote] (see Figure 2.7). The grid format of these Second Five-Year Plan curriculum pages recalls the graphic design of *La Nación Argentina. Justa, libre, soberana*, creating a circle of borrowings and transpositions with connect *Billiken* and Peronism in terms of visual identity.

Billiken's treatment of Independence Day followed a similar pattern. On 9 July 1947 Perón declared Argentina's 'economic independence' at the same house in Tucumán where independence had been declared on the same date in 1816. The treatment of this date in *Billiken* had the potential for greater impact than 17 October because it appeared in the issue that would normally be dedicated to the original 9 July, thus reinforcing this retrospective historical legitimisation of Peronism by placing the two side by side. In 1948, 1949 and 1950, *Billiken's* July independence issues dealt with 1816 as usual, with no mention of Peronism. In 1951 the Act of Economic Independence was surrounded by illustrations representing Argentina's economic wealth in the form of crops, beef, factories, trains and ships, and a mention of Perón in the caption (issue 1647, 9 July). The representation of the Act of Economic Independence in 1952 was very similar apart from the addition of an illustration of Perón at the proclamation and a subtle change in the framing of the text (issue 1699, 7 July). This was now presented as old document, yellowed with rough edges, and is a subtler version of the same text's appearance in *La Nación Argentina. Justa libre soberana*, where the ageing of the new document reinforces its link to the original Declaration of Independence.⁵⁵

In the 1953 issue, Perón's 9 July receives special treatment in the centre-page pull-out, which features an illustration of the 1816 Declaration of Independence above an illustration of Perón on the occasion of the 1947 proclamation of Economic Independence, presenting the two events as equivalent (issue 1751, 6 July). The illustration depicting 1816 had already appeared on *Billiken's* covers, most recently in 1949, and is a version of Francisco Fortuny's 1910 painting *El Congreso de Tucumán*.



Figure 2.7: School material in honour of the week of 17 October, 'Social Justice' and 'Economic Independence'. *Billiken*, issue 1765, 12 October 1953. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.



Figure 2.8: Perón's Economic Independence of 1947, represented as a continuation of the 1816 Declaration of Independence. *Billiken*, issue 1751, 6 July 1953. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

By replicating this scene in the illustration of the Peronist Act of Independence, *Billiken* reproduced the Peronist discourse that sought to legitimise the regime by placing Perón on a par with the independence statesmen. The 9 July issues of 1954 and 1955 stand out for being the only *Billiken* issues that reference both dates of independence on the cover, as well as inside (issues 1803, 5 July 1954, and 1855, 4 July 1955). In 1954 the Casa de Tucumán is framed by the dates 1816 and 1947, and in 1955 schoolchildren are decorating, with ribbon in the colours of the national flag, a blackboard illustration of the same house (Figure 2.9).

Workers' Day, 1 May, predates and postdates Peronism but, as Plotkin shows, was appropriated by the regime.⁵⁶ This date did not appear regularly in *Billiken's* school calendar until 1951 with issues around that date featuring instead the Day of the Animal (29 April) and the Day of the 1853 Constitution, also falling on 1 May (see issue 1432, 28 April 1947). In 1951, a page of photographs of, mostly, men, representing different professions (the women are a nurse and a housewife) was offered for 1 May (issue 1637). In 1952, the photographs are replaced by illustrations and in 1953, the illustrations take on the grid format used for curriculum content related to the Segundo Plan Quinquenal (issues 1689 and 1741). In 1953, the page is framed as '1 de mayo: Día de los trabajadores' but here both the Plan and the 1949 National Constitution are referenced, and the title of the page is 'Derechos del trabajador' [Workers' rights]. The Workers' Rights taken, we are told, from article 37 of the National Constitution, appear in the centre of the 1 May pages in 1954 and 1955, framed by illustrations representing different professions (issues 1793, 26 April and 1845, 25 April). In 1955, the 'Derechos del trabajador' panel is presented as a placard presented by two workers, the rural 'campesino' and the urban 'obrero' (Figure 2.10). This image is the one that most clearly evokes Peronist political posters, or 'afiches', and this image of the country and city worker side by side, set against the background of their working landscapes, is similar to one reproduced in Gené's *Un mundo feliz*. In turn, Gené demonstrates how the Peronist images of workers were reconfigured out of several existing traditions of political visual culture.⁵⁷

The illustrator of *Billiken's* 1954 Workers' Day image, Manuel Ugarte, also contributed many of the magazine's visual representations of the Second Five-Year Plan. He had been contributing to *Billiken* for several years prior to the first election of Perón, most notably in the long-running 'Nuestra historia' section. His continuing presence suggests that *Billiken* was still in charge of the production of its illustrations and was not publishing work that had not been commissioned by the magazine, even if the content of those images may have been tailored to meet government directives. His presence in *Billiken* beyond the first two Peronist governments helped to provide visual continuity in the magazine throughout the pre-Peronist, Peronist and post-Peronist periods. The reworking, in 1958, of the Workers' Day image shows how those in charge of *Billiken* were able to reassert the magazine's ideological imprints after the Perón years. Whilst the illustrations of some professions remain, the workers evoking



Figure 2.9: Schoolchildren commemorating both dates associated with 9 July. *Billiken*, issue 1855, 4 July 1955. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.



Figure 2.10: Workers' Day featuring the Peronist Workers' Rights. *Billiken*, issue 1845, 25 April 1955. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

a Peronist political poster are absent. Most significant, however, is the change in the text with the Peronist Workers' Rights replaced by Constancio C. Vigil's 'Plegaria del trabajador' [Workers' Prayer] (issue 1999, 28 April 1958).

This was just one example of the continuities preserved in *Billiken* even as it published Peronist propaganda. When considering the degree of Peronist content in *Billiken* it is also important to note that key texts such as Evita's autobiography, *La razón de mi vida*, which was required reading in schools, never found their way into the magazine. Neither were the famous Peronist texts for first readers which inserted Evita into the traditional formula of 'Mi mamá me ama' replicated in *Billiken's* literacy pages.⁵⁸ Instead, Atlántida was able to preserve and promote pre-Peronist initiatives. Constancio C. Vigil's manual for first readers, *¡Upa!*, from 1934, appeared without changes throughout the period, with 1,095,000 copies published between 1946 and 1954, and 254,000 copies sold in 1952 alone.⁵⁹ Within the magazine, *Billiken's* literacy pages continued to be one of the sites of the reproduction and amplification of traditional gender-based roles within heteronormative families. The interior world of women and girls in contrast to the exterior world of boys and men, as seen in earlier pieces on family life and in the juxtaposition of the Marilú doll



Figure 2.11: Workers' Day post Perón. *Billiken*, issue 1999, 28 April 1958. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

with Borocotó's *Comeñas* character, continued throughout the Peronist era and beyond, exemplified by the contrasting pages seen in Figure 2.12. Mother cooks, cleans and takes care of the children; Father gets to leave the house. This was entirely in keeping with the representations of gender roles transmitted in Peronist school textbooks and more widely. Evita tempered her public image as a woman at the centre of power by subordinating herself to Perón in speeches. The women's right to vote, granted in 1947 and largely overlooked in *Billiken*, was presented by the regime as an extension of women's natural role as society's moral guardians.⁶⁰

Even in 1953, the pivotal year in which *Billiken* seemingly embraced the Second Five-Year Plan, the week of 17 October shared space with material dedicated to the week's other key dates. Columbus was on the cover of the corresponding week, referencing 12 October and what was then known as the Day of the Race, and the issue also acknowledged Mother's Day on 20 October (issue 1765). Similar continuities in *Billiken* undermine the notion that Peronism changed *Billiken*'s presentation of Argentina. Hollman and Lois's study on the representation of geography in *Billiken* under Peronism highlights the new Peronist decrees rendered visible in the magazine, such as the 1946 decree



Figure 2.12: Literacy pages. Left: 'Vocabulary: Mother'. *Billiken*, issue 1637, 30 April 1951. Right: 'Papá sale' [Father goes out]. *Billiken*, issue 1846, 2 May 1955. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

prohibiting maps of the Argentine territory that failed to include the Antarctic section.⁶¹ However, as their study does not consider *Billiken* before Peronism, it presents some of the material as a result of uniquely Peronist preoccupations, rather than Peronist reconfigurations of existing trends or commemorative dates. *Billiken's* showcasing of Argentina as both a country of outstanding natural beauty and a modern, industrialised nation with appropriate infrastructure predated and, indeed, succeeded Peronism. For example, *Billiken's* commemorations of the 'Día del camino' [Day of the road], established in 1925 to celebrate Argentina's modern infrastructure, featured from 1941 in the form of photographs showing long, impressive stretches of Argentine roads (issues 1141, 29 September 1941, and 1194, 5 October 1942). This sits alongside curriculum content on the economic evolution of Argentina, on innovations in aviation, and on the Argentine National Oil Company (issues 1089, 30 September 1940, 1190, 7 September 1942, and 1140, 22 September 1941).

The Peronist construction of childhood shared the belief held by previous political regimes that the child was, to use Sarmiento's words, an 'incomplete being' who could be socialised politically and shaped into a desirable future citizen. The future citizen envisaged by *Billiken* was closer to the one that had been promoted by previous regimes, and with Peronism there is a shift in the

desired political orientation of the future citizen. Nevertheless, the understanding of childhood that underpins this process represents one of the conservative continuities around which Peronism was structured. This is visible even at the level of language employed to talk about children. Perón is quoted here in *Justa, libre, soberana*: ‘He pensado siempre que la tarea del maestro no es solamente la de instruir, sino la de educar y formar el alma y la inteligencia, y *dar armas a los hombres para la lucha por la vida o en la vida*’ [I have always thought that the teacher’s job is not only to instruct, but also to educate and to form the soul and the intellect, and to *give arms to men for the struggle for life or in life*] (p. 238; emphasis mine). In *Billiken*, one of the many editorial interventions that function as advertorials for Atlántida’s books division reads: ‘Todos los niños han de preparar su inteligencia para luchar y triunfar cuando sean grandes. Pedir como regalos a padres y parientes buenos libros es pedir lo indispensable: es *armarse noblemente para la batalla de la vida*’ [All children have to prepare their intellect to fight and triumph when they are older. To ask parents and relatives for good books is to ask for the indispensable: *it is to arm oneself nobly for the battle of life*] (issue 1213, 15 February 1943; emphasis mine).

The years of the ‘primer peronismo’ were unusual in the history of *Billiken* for featuring so much political propaganda. Even so, the proportion of pages devoted to Peronist content was negligible considering that there were 480 issues of *Billiken* published during the Peronist years, each running between 33 and 40 pages. The comparison with *Mundo Infantil* also shows how uneffusive *Billiken* was in its support of Perón. Talía Gutiérrez reaches a similar conclusion when comparing Atlántida’s *La Chacra* with its Peronist, Editorial Haynes rival *Mundo Agrario*. Whilst *La Chacra* included a transcription of the Segundo Plan Quinquenal in January 1953, because this was obligatory for all publications, it omitted the speeches and commentaries found in the corresponding issue of *Mundo Agrario*. Both publications featured a combine harvester on the cover of that issue with *La Chacra* using the name of the machine as the caption in contrast to *Mundo Agrario*’s caption: ‘Perón cumple.’⁶² This suggests that *Billiken*’s practice of publishing just enough Peronist content to be otherwise left alone reflected Atlántida’s wider strategy. Unlike many publications, *Billiken* emerged from Peronism largely intact in Argentina, although paper quotas led to the curtailment of *Billiken*’s pan-Latin American expansion. After *Billiken* reappeared following its four-week break in 1949, its weekly publication continued uninterrupted throughout Perón’s first two periods of government and beyond. *Billiken*’s editors also managed to make the best of the situation capitalising, both culturally and economically, on the ‘Year of the Liberator’. Once again, this speaks to the conservative underpinnings of the Peronist regime and the consequent cultural proximity of *Billiken* to Peronism. Atlántida successfully managed its accommodation of Perón, showing just enough support to continue publishing during the regime but not so much that it was punished by the subsequent, self-proclaimed ‘Revolución Libertadora’ [Liberating Revolution] that sought to erase all traces of Perón and Eva from Argentine culture, politics and society.

Following Perón's ousting by military coup, the new regime was quick to intervene in education. In December 1955, Juan Canter, minister of education for the Province of Buenos Aires, stated the intention to: 'Volver a los principios e ideales que han sido desde los días de mayo los auténticos de nuestra nacionalidad' [Return to the principles and ideals that have been, since the days of [the] May [Revolution], authentic to our nationality].⁶³ We can look to an advertisement in *Billiken* placed by the publishing house Ángel Estrada y Cía Editores to see how this was applied to primary school textbooks. The advertisement confirmed that these textbooks had been adjusted in the light of the ministerial resolutions of September and October 1955 and, as such, were authorised for use by primary schools under the orbit of the Ministry of Education. The advertisement reports that, at that time of the 'recuperación de los valores del espíritu' [recuperation of the values of the spirit], Estrada had restored the 'original dignity' of the first edition of these books by removing political propaganda pertaining to the deposed regime. The advertisement further informs that, in accordance with the new de facto military regime, the new subject of Enseñanza Democrática [Democratic teaching] had been incorporated (issue 1893, 2 April 1956). The accompanying illustration shows a bust of Sarmiento emerging from the heavens to watch over a school. *Billiken* did not offer any declaration of support to the new regime that was comparable to the Estrada advertisement, nor any statement as to the suitability of its content. The transfer of power was registered in *Billiken* on 10 October 1955 with photographs showing the swearing in, on 23 September, of provisional de facto president Eduardo Lonardi, accompanied by his vice president and assorted generals (issue 1868). The change of regime seemingly brought nothing but business as usual for *Billiken*. If anything, *Billiken* thrived in the years following the ousting of Perón. In May 1958, *Billiken* reached its peak when it became the first publication in Spanish to sell 500,000 copies in a week (issue 2003, 26 May). Even as *Billiken* was climbing to these heights of success, the magazine was facing institutional challenges that would soon be thrown into relief by the arrival of competitor *Anteojito*.

Notes

- ¹ As of 2022, *Murzilka* held the record for the longest running children's magazine still in circulation. 'Longest Running Children's Magazine (Publication)', *Guinness World Records* <<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/longest-running-childrens-magazine>> [accessed 10 September 2022]. The claim of uninterrupted publication is repeated in Judith Gociol, 'El largo camino de *Billiken*', *El monitor de la educación*, 5. 10 (2006), 42–46. <http://www.bnm.me.gov.ar/giga1/monitor/monitor/monitor_2006_n10.pdf> [accessed 22 August 2022].

- ² Pablo Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación, 1943–1955* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1984), p. 82.
- ³ Matthew B. Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920–1946* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012).
- ⁴ Marcela Gené, *Un mundo feliz: imágenes de los trabajadores en el primer peronismo 1946–1955* (Buenos Aires: FCE-Universidad de San Andrés, 2005).
- ⁵ Comments made following a presentation I gave at Atlántida on 24 July 2017. The Atlántida archives only hold copies of the first five issues of the *Grancolombiano* edition which include neither the date nor the list of countries to which it was distributed, suggesting they are mock-ups. The covers are by Lino Palacio and the Colombian educational material is overseen by Eleazar Libreros L[orza].
- ⁶ Ernesto Goldar, *El peronismo en la literatura argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Freeland, 1971), p. 147.
- ⁷ Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón: A Cultural History of Peron's Argentina* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003), p. ix.
- ⁸ James Cane, *The Fourth Enemy: Journalism and Power in the Making of Peronist Argentina, 1930–1955* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2011), pp. 178, 194.
- ⁹ Claudio Panella and Guillermo Korn, 'Introducción', in *Ideas y debates para la Nueva Argentina. Revistas culturales y políticas del peronismo (1946–1955)*, ed. by Panella and Korn, 4 vols (La Plata: Ediciones EPC, UNLP, 2010), i, 9–13 (p. 12).
- ¹⁰ Constancio C. Vigil, '[Carta] 1942 mayo 30, Buenos Aires [Argentina] [a] Gabriela Mistral, Petrópolis, Brasil', Biblioteca Nacional Digital de Chile <<http://www.bibliotecanacionaldigital.gob.cl/bnd/623/w3-article-144148.html>> [accessed 13 September 2022]. This letter also gives a rare glimpse into the management structures of Editorial Atlántida, with Vigil commenting that his son, Aníbal, then the general manager of the publishing house, was in charge of the paper supply and that Constancio C. Vigil was no longer personally involved in such matters.
- ¹¹ Mirta Varela, 'Le péronisme et les médias: Contrôle politique, industrie nationale et goût populaire', *Le Temps des Médias. Revue d'histoire*, 7 (2006), 48–63 (pp. 53–54).
- ¹² Sirvén, p. 83.
- ¹³ Cane, p. 217.
- ¹⁴ Alicia Poderti, 'PBT: Alegre, política y deportiva. Nueva época (1950–1955)', in *Ideas y debates para la Nueva Argentina*, ed. by Panella and Korn, pp. 331–62 (p. 339).
- ¹⁵ Claudio Panella, 'Mundo Peronista (1951–1955): una tribuna de doctrina y propaganda', in *Ideas y debates para la Nueva Argentina*, ed. by Panella and Korn, pp. 281–306 (p. 283).

- ¹⁶ Plotkin, p. 188.
- ¹⁷ Gené, p. 13.
- ¹⁸ María E. Bordagaray and Anabella Gorza, 'Socialización política y de género de la infancia durante el primer peronismo a través de la revista *Mundo Infantil* (1950–1952)', in *Ideas y debates para la Nueva Argentina* ed. by Panella and Korn, pp. 255–79 (p. 260).
- ¹⁹ See Bordagaray and Gorza, p. 270 on 'Cuál será mi futuro' [What will my future be] and 'Palabras de un maestro' [Words from a teacher].
- ²⁰ María Paula Bontempo, *Editorial Atlántida: un continente de publicaciones, 1918–1936* (PhD thesis, Universidad de San Andrés, 2012), p. 280.
- ²¹ Cane, p. 194.
- ²² Little information has resulted from searches into Editorial Emilio Rodríguez. On the Compañía General Fabril Financiera see Claudio Fabián Belini and Silvia Badoza, 'Expansión y diversificación de la Compañía General Fabril Financiera durante la industrialización por sustitución de importaciones en Argentina, 1929–1958', *América Latina en la Historia Económica*, 23.1 (2016), 7–40 <<https://doi.org/10.18232/alhe.v23i1.62>>. In terms of this organisation's links to the regime, it is worth noting that it advertised in *Mundo Peronista* (issue 11, 15 December 1951).
- ²³ Bordagaray and Gorza, p. 262.
- ²⁴ The Campeonato Infantil Evita appear in *Billiken* in issues 1628, 26 February 1951; 1680, 25 February 1952 and 1732, 23 February 1953). On the centrality of the Ciudad Infantil to Evita's welfare initiatives see Anahí Ballent, *Las huellas de la política. Vivienda, ciudad, peronismo en Buenos Aires, 1943–1955* (Bernal: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes; Prometeo 3010, 2005), pp. 161–66.
- ²⁵ The event is registered in *Billiken* in issues 1789, 29 March 1954 and 1840, 21 March 1955. María Cristina Pons, 'Cuerpos sublimes: el deporte en la retórica de la "Nueva Argentina"', in *Políticas del sentimiento: el peronismo y la construcción de la Argentina moderna*, ed. by Claudia Soria, Paola Cortés Rocca and Edgardo Dieleke (Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros), pp. 49–65 (p. 53).
- ²⁶ Mónica Rein, *Politics and Education in Argentina, 1946–1962* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 74.
- ²⁷ The speech referred to in *Billiken* is published in the Ministry of Education's Communications Bulletin. See 'El General Perón inauguró el curso lectivo y la campaña sanmartiniana de alfabetización', *Boletín de comunicaciones*, Ministerio de Educación, Year 2, N° 107 (17 March 1950), 98–101. <<http://www.bnm.me.gov.ar/giga1/monitor/Boletin-de-comunicaciones-del-ministerio/Boletin-de-com-1950-101-107.pdf>> [accessed 30 May 2023].
- ²⁸ 'Alcanzó pleno éxito la primera conferencia de Ministros de Educación de la Nueva Argentina', *Boletín de Comunicaciones*, Ministerio de Educación, Year 2, N° 111 (7 April 1950), 254–59. <<http://www.bnm.me.gov.ar/giga1/monitor/Boletin-de-comunicaciones-del-ministerio/Boletin-de-com-1950-110-111.pdf>> [accessed 30 May 2023].

- ²⁹ Oscar Ivanissevich, '¡Volvamos a clase!', *Boletín de comunicaciones*, Ministerio de Educación, Year 2. N° 107 (17 March 1950), 96–97.
- ³⁰ The novels appear in *Billiken* as follows: issue 1280, 29 May to 1294, 4 September 1944; issue 1350, 1 October 1945 to 1368, 4 February 1946; issue 1396, 19 August to 1410, 25 November 1946; issue 1452, 15 September to 1465, 15 December 1947.
- ³¹ Luis Alberto Romero, Luciano de Privitello, Silvina Quintero and Hilda Sabato, *La Argentina en la escuela: la idea de nación en los textos escolares* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2004), p. 125.
- ³² María José Punte, 'Los únicos privilegiados: rastros de las políticas sociales del primer peronismo en las obras de Osvaldo Soriano y Daniel Santoro', *Imagonautas: revista Interdisciplinaria sobre imaginarios sociales*, 1.1 (2011), 4–26 (p. 7).
- ³³ 'El General Perón inauguró el curso lectivo y la campaña sanmartiniana de alfabetización', p. 100.
- ³⁴ *La Nación Argentina. Justa, libre, soberana*, 3rd edn (Buenos Aires: Control de Estado de la Presidencia de la Nación, 1950), p. 806.
- ³⁵ On Scarzello see Vicente Gesualdo, Aldo Biglione and Rodolfo Santos, *Diccionario de artistas plásticos en la Argentina*, Vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Inca, 1988), ii, p. 802. On Ciocca see Judith Gociol and Diego Rosemberg, *La historieta argentina. Una historia* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, 2000), p. 292. On Alvarez Boero see Rodrigo Viñuales Gutiérrez, 'Artistas gráficos en correos y telecomunicaciones', in *Arquitectura moderna y estado en Argentina: edificios para Correos y Telecomunicaciones, 1947–1955*, ed. by Adriana Collado (Buenos Aires: CEDODAL, 2013), pp. 117–20 (p. 118); 'Estampillas. Horacio Alvarez Boero', *Archivo de Ilustración*, 2019 <<https://ilustracion.fadu.uba.ar/2016/09/14/horacio-alvarez-boero-estampillas/>> [accessed 29 May 2022].
- ³⁶ Daniel Santoro, 'La construcción imaginaria de un mundo', in *Perón mediante. Gráfica peronista del período clásico*, ed. by Guido Indij (Buenos Aires: La Marca, 2006), pp. 21–23 (p. 21).
- ³⁷ Gené, pp. 13, 19.
- ³⁸ Marcia C. Veneziani, *La imagen de la moda* (Buenos Aires: Nobuko, 2007), p. 40.
- ³⁹ Santoro, p. 21.
- ⁴⁰ Claudia Soria, 'La propaganda peronista: hacia una renovación estética del Estado nacional', in *Políticas del sentimiento*, ed. by Soria, Cortés Rocca and Dieleke, pp. 31–48 (pp. 35–36).
- ⁴¹ Anahí Ballent, 'Los tiempos de las imágenes: la propaganda del peronismo histórico en los años noventa', in *Políticas del sentimiento*, ed. by Soria, Cortés Rocca and Dieleke, pp. 213–24 (p. 215).
- ⁴² *La Nación Argentina. Justa, libre, soberana*, pp. 24–27; Soria, p. 37.
- ⁴³ *La Nación Argentina. Justa, libre, soberana*, pp. 162–63, 197, 215, 302–3.

- ⁴⁴ Santoro, p. 22.
- ⁴⁵ 'El General Perón inauguró el curso lectivo y la campaña sanmartiniana de alfabetización', p. 101.
- ⁴⁶ Noemí M. Girbal-Blacha, 'En la Argentina peronista "los únicos privilegiados son los niños" (1946–1955). La doctrina desde la Biblioteca Infantil "General Perón"', *Historia Contemporánea*, 1. 50 (2015), 133–62 (p. 136).
- ⁴⁷ See Daniela Páez, 'Las historietistas argentinas. Trayectorias, espacios y dinámicas de trabajo desde los '40 a la actualidad', *Cuadernos del Centro de Estudios en Diseño y Comunicación*, 107 (2020), 40–74 <<https://doi.org/10.18682/cdc.vi107.4202>>.
- ⁴⁸ Rein, p. 6.
- ⁴⁹ Ministerio de Educación. Dirección General de Enseñanza Secundaria, *Cuadernos para la Escuela Media* (Buenos Aires, 1953).
- ⁵⁰ Teresa Laura Artieda and Hugo Cañete, 'Escenas de lectura en los textos "peronistas" (1946–1955)', in *La lectura en los manuales escolares: textos e imágenes*, org. by Roberta Paula Spregelburd and María Cristina Linares (Buenos Aires: UNLu; UNNE, 2009), pp. 159–77 (p. 163).
- ⁵¹ Sandra Carli, *Niñez, pedagogía y política: transformaciones de los discursos acerca de la infancia en la historia de la educación argentina entre 1880 y 1955* (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2002), p. 258.
- ⁵² See Plotkin, p. 39.
- ⁵³ Ballent, 'Los tiempos de las imágenes' p. 217.
- ⁵⁴ Soria, p. 32.
- ⁵⁵ *La Nación Argentina. Justa, libre, soberana*, p. 139.
- ⁵⁶ Plotkin, p. 39.
- ⁵⁷ Gené, Lámina X, folleto s.f. n.p.
- ⁵⁸ On Peronist literacy textbooks see Emilio J. Corbière, *Mamá me mima, Evita me ama: la educación argentina en la encrucijada* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1999), pp. 97–98.
- ⁵⁹ Roberta Paula Spregelburd and Susana Vital, 'Yo aprendí a leer con el libro "¡Upa!"; in *La alfabetización de un siglo a otro: desafíos y tendencias*, coord. by Roberto Bottarini and Roberta Paula Spregelburd (Buenos Aires: UNLu, 2009), pp. 205–25 (pp. 210–12).
- ⁶⁰ Marifran Carlson, *¡Feminismo!: The Woman's Movement in Argentina* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2014), pp. 183–200 <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sheffield/detail.action?docID=1835812>> [accessed 12 September 2022].
- ⁶¹ Verónica Hollman and Carla Lois, 'Imaginarios geográficos y cultura visual peronista: las imágenes geográficas en la revista Billiken (1945–1955)', *Geografia em questão*, 4.2 (2011), 239–69.
- ⁶² Talía V. Gutiérrez, 'El peronismo y el agro. La revista *Mundo Agrario*, 1949–1955', in *Ideas y debates para la Nueva Argentina*, ed. by Panella and Korn, pp. 167–97 (p. 180).

- ⁶³ Quoted in Myriam Southwell, 'Algunas características de la formación docente en la historia educativa reciente. El legado del espiritualismo y el tecnocratismo (1955–1976)', in *Dictaduras y utopías en la historia reciente de la educación argentina (1955–1983)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Galerna, 1997), pp. 105–55 (p. 115).