**Interview Nº 1 With Alberto Serú García**

Peronist National Deputy, 1963-66

President of Movimiento Popular Menodicino, 1960s

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Mendoza, Argentina

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JM: How do you view the goals of the project that has been called "Peronism Without Perón" that included the MPM and the efforts of Vandor to do his own style of politics? What was the vision of the role of Perón in this movement?

ASG: It began with the fall of Perón in 1955, when some leaders, including Bramuglia, tried to create a party, which later became the UP. We who were in prison then, myself included, didn't like these efforts by Bramuglia. In particular John William Cooke, then a very active leader who was in the same prison as I was on the Calle Las Heras -- one of the mistakes of the repressive military governments is that they put all the political leaders in touch with one another, kind of a permanent congress. Juan was one of those who most criticized this effort by this great leader Bramuglia, because he was a great leader, of Socialist origins. After we got out of jail in 1956 they exiled me, I went to Chile, the Mendoza police took me to the airport and said if I didn't get on a plane they were going to send me to the South. A big group of Peronist leaders were living in Santiago when the escape from the Rio Gallegos prison took place, with Jorge Antonio, Kelly, Cámpora, Gomis, Espejo, Cooke, and maybe some others. They went to Chile and got together with us in Santiago.

JM: Have you read the book by Joseph Page, Perón: A Biography? [ASG: Yes]. He devotes a whole chapter to this escape. He said Cámpora's attitude was a bit different than that of the others.

ASG: Like a pansy! [muy maricón]! He was scared. He and I, with our wives, lived together in an house in Chile. Very nice people. He was very nice, very considerate, a great conversationalist. We lived in the Calle Arlegui (?) in Piña del Mar. They lent it to us. [goes on about this for a while]. He was worried that I continued my political activity in Chile. Not of the Chilean police, who helped us; they were very Peronist. We went to an Estanica owned by a group of Chilean nationalists, mostly military, who called themselves the Linea Recta. We transmitted from there. But the Argentines figured out where we were and complained to the Chilean foreign ministry. Cámpora said he continued to be a Peronist, but said he'd never act in politics again. He'd had a bad experience. According to what I heard from Jorge Antonio, from Kelly, from Cooke -- I wasn't there -- they told him at the very last minute that they were escaping from Rio Gallegos. They didn't trust his nerves. They drove to the Chilean border where a friend of Jorge Antonio's met them. The rest of us didn't know they were escaping; it took us by surprise. But they told me that poor Cámpora was praying the whole time, playing with a rosary. Once they had to get out of the car to push it, and he wouldn't get out to push. It was a disaster.

JM: I may have gotten you off the track. But how did you envision Perón's role in the future? If you and Vandor and others were forming a political party without Perón...

ASG: In December 1957 we had a plenary session of Peronist leaders in Caracas. A bunch of us went from Chile: Llanola (?) who was a secretary of Cámpora, Dr [unintelligible] of Mendoza, myself, Bañasco (?) who was a Peronist deputy in the first period, a leader from Lanús. We had a meeting with Perón. It went from about Monday to Friday, I can't remember exactly. We met in a building that might have been called River Plate, near Semana Grande, I can't remember. We sat around a table, a big group of leaders, Cooke, Vicente Saadi, Bañasco, Zanola or Yanola, Hipólito Paz, Borlenghi. [from audience: Jorge Antonio?] Jorge Antonio wasn't at the meeting, but he was in Caracas. Cornejo Linares was there; his son was recently governor fo Saadi. There were a lot of us, we filled the table, maybe 15 or 16, two union leaders, one from Bahia Blanca I think, but I can't remember their names. We all talked one by one for a week. We went punctually from 8 in the morning till noon and then from 4 in the afternood until 8 at night. We talked a lot, nearly an hour, each of us. My thesis was "General, the Peronist movement is a vertical movement, where all of the leaders obey the Chief, which is Perón. All of us are prepared to give our lives for Perón (this is a slogan of the leadership). Nevertheless, General Perón, you order us, ask us, exhort us permanently to maintain unity and brotherhood among the leaders. And no one obeys you. We are all able to lay down our lives for you, but none of us can obey your orders to remain united. Instead of united we all at odds with one another. This is one of the reasons the movement has not been able to organize itself. There is only one explanation that I can think of for this. At the same time as Perón was ordering unity, some other authority ordered disunity. But I looked all around, and concluded that this other authority didn't exist. In Peronism only Perón existed. So I came to the conclusion it was Perón himself who on the one hand ordered one thing and on the other hand ordered another. I say this with all respect (because I wanted to salvage something that couldn't be salvaged), I don't think it is for any perverse reason, but that it is a necessity of leadership, which is what I believe, the vertical control he maintained from above. Afterwards we all got together at night in the Hotel Tamanasco (?) to talk and have a drink. Borlenghi was there. He said to me: 'Dr. Serú, I congratulate you. You did very well. Your exposition was brilliant. In fact it was much better than is good for you. You'll never get anywhere as long Perón is alive.'" In this meeting in Caracas Perón never said that we should support Frondizi. On the contrary, he gave us the impression that we were going to support blank ballots. I remember that Jorge Antonio himself was convinced that in the end it was going to be blank ballots. It seemed that Perón had told him this at the last minute. But at the end of the meeting, given that some of us had organized parties in the country -- Saadi had a party organized in Catamarca, I had one in Mendoza with Tabanera, Cremachi, Querubiuni (sp.?), with a lot of other Mendoza leaders, we had organized the Partido Blanco here in Mendoza. So I stayed to send a coded telegram to Corvalán Nanclares to see if we were going to participate or not with the Partido Blanco. So when the meeting ended I got together with Saadi and asked Perón for a private meeting. We asked him what we should do, because we had organized provincial parties, we asked him if we should participate. "Of course!" he said, "of course! If you have a pro-Peronist party organized, you must participate under your own label." So I sent a telegram to Corvalán that said "Cariños Negros," which was a code that meant we were to participate. But later we didn't participate because of the vote for Frondizi. He had already decide this but didn't let us know. On the contrary. We had discovered that Frigerio had arrived in Caracas, and when we told him, Perón said it wasn't important. "You know how those Radicals are," he said, "they talk and talk and talk." There were two union leaders, one from Bahia Blanca, to whom he gave written instructions that were to be opened four weeks before the elections, which were on February 23, but he also told them that it was going to be blank ballots. To them. So they had a press conference that said it was going to be blank ballots, and it was broadcast all over. But when they opened the envelope it said to vote for Frondizi. He kept the secret. So these parties were being created, but they weren't "Peronism without Perón," but a way of avoiding proscription. The Partido Blanco got its name because after the constituent assembly elections there were so many blank ballots that the Partido Blanco was created here in Mendoza.

JM: There were a lot of Partidos Blanco, not just in Mendoza.

ASG: Yes, in Jujuy and elsewhere. But here it had some relevance. It was created in Godoy Cruz, in a house lent by Italo Cremasqui (?). The one who ran the party was Rafael César Tabanera, Faustino Ficallo, Enrique Querubini. After the meeting we went to pay our respects to Pérez Jiménez, a fat guy, a friend of the Peronists, and we heard anti-aircraft fire -- the revolution had broken out. They were shooting and we were all cheering. Then I went to Europe with Jorge Antonio, to the Vatican, to the department of state, because there had been an order to excommunicate the General. When we came back to Chile, in February, two days before the elections, we were going to go back to Argentina and there was a big accident near the border town of Cuevas, which was originally called Eva Perón. I broke my leg, and they took me to Cueva, but instead of taking me to a hospital in Mendoza they left me in Cueva all day, because the Radicals wanted to plant in my suitcase a supposed order from Perón ordering blank ballots, because the order to vote for Frondizi had already been made public. The accident was at 10 AM in Caracól (Chile), and they took me to Cueva around 11:30 AM. I came in with my luggage all broken up. Facundo Suárez was [?]. It was about noon and after lunch he said "so Bimbo [they called me Bimbo because I was born in Italy; my father was in the diplomatic service] had an accident in Cueva [he was a good friend of mine]. It seems he brought an order from Perón ordering blank ballots. In fact, they had put in my luggage a false order from Perón ordering blank ballots. So they put me in jail for a few months, until a judge said that the order must have been planted after the accident, because it was on clean paper whereas all the clothing was dirty and the ink smelled like it was fresh. So they let me out. But later, after the vote for Frondizi, we didn't continue to vote for the UCRI but returned to blank ballots. Frondizi started with the policy of Integracíon, which was to invite the Peronists to join his party. Some Peronists did, and got a few city council seats, and they were faced with a choice, either vote for Integración or continue with blank ballots -- and the people wanted to vote positivo. We saw we could be the majority, and we wanted to vote positively. This is true, all of us wanted this. But the orders from Perón, and from the delegates of Perón who arrived, sometimes it was hard to say which were Perón's true orders, because he was in Europe, the delegates brought the order to cast blank ballots. So it occurred to me to found a party here, like Bramuglia's UP and like Saadi's party, and like (another party) but which had never participated in elections, so that Peronism could participate here, which was the Partido Tres Banderas. In the last election [1960?] we worked hard for the voto en blanco, but with the knowledge that it would be the last time we would vote blank ballots.

JM: Tres Banderas: Where did this name come from?

ASG: These are the well-known three banners of Peronism, social justice, economic independence, and political sovereignty. This party was an important difference -- as I have said on other occasions, including once with Bordón, when he reproached me for not agreeing with the renewal sector, because it was doing the same thing you [Serú] did at that time. I said no it is not the same, because the renovación includes a doctrinal, if not ideological, revision of Peronism, whereas we in Tres Banderas strictly adhered to every one of the doctrinal or ideological principles of Peronism. There was not the slightest discrepancy with Perón in this sense. The differences with Perón were purely tactical: should we participate in election with our own candidates, or not? That was the difference. Moreover, for political reasons, I don't mind saying this now, we never wanted a confrontation with Perón. We fought against Perón's delegates; we blame the delegates for the blank ballotting orders. Nor did Perón ever polemicize against us or sanction us -- the delegates yes, but never Perón. Some did get sanctioned -- Bittel, Albrieu, Saadi. But never against me. So the only goal of our party was to participate in elections, there was no other difference with Perón. The confrontation was solely with Perón's delegates. And who were they at that time? They kept changing them. But since you've brought his name up a few times, one of those who came to campaign in the name of Perón against Tres Banderas was Vandor. Vandor came here and campaigned, together with Delia Parodi, to mention another big name, and organized big acts against the Partido Tres Banderas. Because they supported the Partido Blanco, which was the official Peronist party. But since Partido Tres Banderas won in this interna, there came a moment in which Vandor wrote a letter to Perón saying that they had lost three elections against Perón.

JM: What year was this?

ASG: 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, I can't remember exactly when. It was when Vandor came to the corner of Sarmiento and San Martín...He wrote that the Partido Tres Banderas was a Peronist party, that it had Peronist principles, and in his opinion it was easy to talk to us, and he asked Perón to talk to us. So they made the JCN of Peronists, of which Cafiero was the secretary, Delia Parodi, Vandor, the leaders of the so-called neo-Peronist parties. And that's when the alliance with Vandor started. Which we maintained. Vandor and the national and provincial "62 Organizations" supported me for Governor of Mendoza. The PJ at the national level, of which Dr. Lascano was the president, also supported me, and everyone came to Mendoza, Cafiero, Lascano, Tecera del Franco, and all of the "62" came to support me, headed by Vandor. Even the MID supported me, by an advertisment published in the Diaro Los Andes signed by Frondizi and Frigerio. It said "Why we support the Serú González ticket."

JM: When was this?

ASG: 1966. In 1962, I was elected deputy, but couldn't take office. There was a new election in 1963 under President Guido, who was a nice guy, I talked to him a lot....and I was elected. [from audience: in 1963 you were elected by Tres Banderas] yes. And in 1963 the Partido Blanco also had a gubernatorial candidate: Cámpora, but the brother, Pedro, and we in the Partido Tres Banderas presented Corvalán Nanclares and Luis Villanueva. And in the elections of July Tres Banderas won about 10,000 more votes than the Partido Blanco. So that night I called the Partido Blanco leaders to invite them to a meeting and that very night we formed the Movimiento Popular Mendocino, from the Partido Blanco and Tres Banderas. The act of unity was signed on 9 July. I then travelled to Neuquén to talk to Sapag, whom I had already spoken with by telephone, because Sapag had founded the Movimento Popular Neuqueño, and he had called me on the phone to ask for the statutes, the organic charter, of the Partido Tres Banderas, and on the basis of those he had founded the Movimento Popular Neuqueño. So when we united the Partido Blanco and Partido Tres Banderas it occurred to me to call it the Movimiento Popular Mendocino. So I was with Elias Sapag, the oldest of the sons, who would later be a national senator, in Zapala. Elias was a great guy. I said I've come to ask you something. Illia is going to need or is going to want the electors to become President of the Republic. So I was going to propose, and I also spoke with the people in Salta, that we would give him the electors if and when he supported us where we needed it, like in Mendoza. But it turned out that the Radicals' bargain with the conservatives was much firmer, because the Radicals were very anti-Peronist, some of them not so much, but others yes. By contrast the Conservatives, partly because of reasons of personal relations, Jofré, Facundo Suárez, they were great friends, still are. Ultimately they concluded their alliance without us. And here's something that's true, although not very well documented. Perón was not worried about we political leaders of the interior, who were the weavers of this current [neoperonism?], but about our alliance with Vandor, who headed the "62 Organizations," who were then very powerful, not like today, it was something that worried Perón a lot -- more than necessary, in my opinion. But what happens is that he who exercises power can be very special, and sees shadows flickering where there is nothing, and doesn't trust half the world. There is no president who trusts the vice-president even if he is a saint. Practically all presidents have kicked out their vice-president, often unjustly. It was a very cautious attitude toward the labor movement. It's true that the labor movement led by Vandor couldn't be led around by the nose, but they were all Peronists and willing to follow Perón. Perón was the only one capable of formulating general strategy; the others were quite capable, or at least Vandor, because Lorenzo Miguel, who at the time was the treasurer of the UOM, he was a good guy, very loyal to Vandor, but nothing got by him. Same with Alonso and Taccone, who were very intelligent, but as Vandor himself said, they were too intellectualized, those guys read too much, he would say, and it was true. Vandor was very capable, very intelligent. But they were all Peronists, and Perón was not confident enough in them. So they sent Isabel...One day Dr. Enrique Querubini asked to talk to me, as the president of the party, we were good friends, and he invited me to eat in a boliché, and he said look, I'll put it to you straight: I'm going to ask you a big favor: I know that you should be the candidate for governor, but I would like to be the candidate. I'm much older than you, you have a lot of time left. So I told him yes, and I nominated him. But what happened? I thought he would be the only candidate, with my blessing, but another group in the party asked Corvalán Nanclares, who was already retired, and he accepted. So the campaign started, and I realized that Querubini was too weak to challenge Corvalán, so I went and asked him, just like he asked me, if I could be the candidate, because if not, we were going to lose. So that's how I became the candidate. And I beat Corvalán in this interna. So Corvalán left the party and became the candidate of Justicialismo.

JM: What kind of interna was it?

ASG: By [party] convention. The convencionales voted, and I beat Corvalán by a very narrow margin, 10 votes or something. [goes back to Isabel. Dialog with audience about López Rega.] So when Isabel came, we had a meeting that came to be known as the Congreso de Avellandeda. It was not an improvised thing but it was a bit unusual. We had invited our Peronist friends from all over the country to decide what to do about the situation that had emerged with Isabel's arrival. Somone found a clinic near Once, we were going to meet there. There was Cafiero, Dr. Lascano, the "62," most of the block of deputies (not all). I went to eat with Vandor, Cafiero, Iturbe, and another ten in a restaurant, and we asked what are we going to do in the meeting. I said I have prepareda declaration, which was later published: the declaration of Avellaneda. It's important that I drafted it because of the problems it later brought. It welcomed Isabel, expressed solidarity with Perón, but another point involved the need to organize a party democratically, but it wasn't written. It was very conciliatory, so much so that everyone was congratulating me. But when I presented it at the dinner, at the small meeting before the big one, Vandor said no, let's not make any declarations, I don't want anything like that. And Iturbe, Perón's delegate, said he didn't want any declarations either, but there were so many people coming from all over, but decided not to do anything. But then we went back to the clinic and there were too many people. That's how disorganized it was. So Izzetta invited us all to go to Avellaneda in taxis. We went to the municipal workers' union. It was about 11:30 at night. I was the secretary; the president was a senator from Rio Negro. Cavalli asked for the floor and said something pretty tough about Isabel coming without even telling the leadership of the PJ. [goes through the minutes of who spoke; see other sheet]. Cámpora was there, but he didn't say anything. Iturbe then asked for the floor and went into a long, violent diatribe saying we had to organize a party and everything. Vandor was not there. He had been there and said he was coming back later, but he wasn't there. Luco then said we should write up some sort of statement, and that's how it came out. So that shows how disorganized it was. The conference was just supposed to be to inform and seek the support of the people. And at the dinner we agreed that we didn't want war. But at the end this declaration came out. And when it did, to show you the mood of the people, Cámpora said it was great, and he was obsequieous, 100% obedient to Perón. So we thought that if he congratulated us for the declaration there must not have been anything wrong with it. But it had to come out in the papers the next day with everyone's signature on the JCN. So it looked like everyone had approved of it. And when it came out no one objected. We distributed it to all the papers in a truck that belonged to SUPE. [goes back to period before Isabel's arrival] Jorge Antonio sent me a telegram to come to Paris, so I went and met him in a hotel. And here's a condensed version of the talk. He said I sent you an urgent telegram because Isabel is going to Buenos Aires and I have proposed that you accompany her." It was a great opportunity because it meant that Perón was sending a signal to the whole union leadership, which I was friends with. And I told Jorge Antonio that I couldn't do it. It ended up that the person who accompanied Isabel was a UP leader from Buenos Aires. This was Isabel's second visit; she had come twice. It was near the time of the 17 April campaign, I think she came in the first few days of April 1966. Before the split, it looked like I would win easily. But when Isabel came, I lost votes every day.

JM: Vandor came to support you, didn't he?

ASG: Vandor came, he was there, Lorenzo Miguel brought money, Cafiero came too, Lascano, Delia Parodi, Carlos Juárez.

JM: Did they support you with money?

ASG: I got some money from the union group, which was enough. There was no televison.

JM: Did Alonso's group come to Mendoza to support Corvalán?

ASG: Alonso's group supported Corvalán. [But did they come?] No, I think.... Yes, yes, they came. But the night we lost the elections, Vandor himself said, "never mind, because... My running mate was Ventura González of the Partido Justicialista, because I was the candidate of an alliance between the MPM the Partido Justicialista de Mendoza, but before the election, with the help of the Radicals, they took personería away from the group of Tavanera (?), who was a friend of mine, and gave it to Bernal and another group. They changed the rules

JM: But what did Vandor say after the election.

ASG: He told me, in the manner of one giving consolation, never mind, this isn't going to last, because we're going to give the green light to General Onganía. I want to clarify something: in spite of this, and I have a lot of criticism for the Radicals because they collaborated with Perón in an effort to meddle in an internal conflict in Peronism, and this was a huge error on their part which I simply can't explain, because the Radicals who did this, and I don't know who they were but I can guess at some of them, because they assumed that they needed to help Perón in the interna! As if he was weak. So they changed the rules of the game. But in spite of this, when the coup happened, I myself and a group of legislators, more than a few but very hastily patched together, came out in defense of the constitutional government, the government of Illia. And we went to conspire in the house of General Caro. Among those who was at this meeting, and I don't know if he betrayed us, and he was probably just a big-mouth, I didn't know then but I found out years later, he was a good friend of the generals on the second floor who were compiling folders about the revolution, he revealed the conspiracy. Which nipped it in the bud. I don't know if it would have worked, but General Caro was prepared to hold out and resist in Rosario. Tecera del Franco was also there, and we said that we would guarantee that if he held out in Rosario and agreed to lift the proscriptions on Peronism and invited Peronism to participate, Peronism would come out into the streets while you resisted militarily, as long as the Peronists got 4 ministries: Interior, Economy, and others. General Castro Sánchez was also there; very intelligent. They asked me would be a good idea if we invited Leopoldo Suárez, and I said that it would be better not to, because for me, Suárez had a lot to do with the mistaken policy of [the Radicals] with respect to Peronism. It later came out in the papers. [goes on and on about the coup, nothing too verifiable or relevant]. The night of the coup all of the deputies, including I who was against the coup, went with Vandor to the Calle La Rioja, to the UOM, and we toasted the end of the government, I don't know why, because in addition to violating the principles of the consitution, it meant we couldn't collect our salaries at the end of the month.

Audience member: Did you think at first that it was a pro-Peronist coup?

ASG: I don't know. Vandor participated less than is usually believed, even though he went [to the inauguration], and things didn't work out, the interior ministry received them, but conservative sectors were running things. It was not until Levingston took office that we participated more actively in government, but that was a lot later.

JM: I understand that Alonso and Taccone influenced the coup much more than Vandor, and that Amado Olmos did not support the coup.

ASG: No, Olmos did not support the coup. But Vandor, and Paulino Niembro, did. I would characterize Olmos as a Peronist of the left, totally to the left, confronting us. [And Framini?] And Framini also was taken over by this left group.

JM: I read in Primera Plana and Confirmado that in meetings between military leaders and Vandor and Alonso the military preferred Alonso, that he was closer to them, with this perspective of factores de poder, and that Vandor supported the coup mostly because he thought it was inevitable, that there was no other choice, whereas Alonso was ideologically and doctrinally closer to the military. Is that your understanding as well?

ASG: Yes, but it's very subtle. I would say that Vandor was more pragmatic and conciliatory, and that he was much closer to the union bases who were Peronist. Alonso, who was very intelligent, a great administrator, very capable, had a very small union, insignificant, clothing. He had been a Peronist deputy in the first period, he was more political. When he became secretary of the CGT it was Vandor who put him there. When Isabel came he split off, because they were united until then. he called me to tell me that I had to break totally with Vandor. He said you are running a big risk.

JM: Can you tell me some anecdotes that illuminate Vandor's personality or style?

ASG: Vandor led a low-profile life. He almost never spoke to journalists; they had to go find him, and those he was friendly with, OK. He went to the Jockey Club, to the races. He never denied it. He was really into horse-racing (muy burrero). He lived a simple life, his house was totally simple, so was his office in the UOM, not like other union leaders who have a certain fondness for luxury; it wasn't decorated elaborately, very simple, also his dress, he always went about without a tie -- usually that is, he wasn't a...he didn't have meetings like Alonso or others, going to eat at the Jockey Club, never. In Buenos Aires there was a cantina that the whole UOM barra used to go to, there were always about twenty of them, and it was there that he ate, had lunch, and if not, we often ate in his office -- sandwiches. There was a small grocery-store on the corner, like you don't see much in Buenos Aires any more, with wood floors and hams hanging from the ceiling. Once he invited the military government's labor minister, I don't remember his name, to lunch. He took him to the grocery store to eat salami. There weren't even any seats! They found a table and were sitting there with bread, cutting salami. So he was very simple. He had some important collaborators like Paulino Niembro, who was more important than Vandor in the union, but earlier. Niembro was very tight, very friendly with Vandor; he was the president of the Peronist deputy block and I was the vice-president, when the block was big. It was very big, and they were all Vandoristas. I was the first deputy to go see Perón after the fall (1966). I went to see him when he had an operation. He was in a clinic in Madrid.

From audience: Did Vandor have personal political aspirations.

ASG: No, never. Obviously not. He never asked to be a deputy, and he was never even secretary-general of the CGT. He put in a lot of them. He put in el gordo Prado, he put in Alonso, a whole bunch of them. [gets some questions, goes on to subject of the café where Rosendo García was killed]. There's a book on it (from audience: ¿Quién mató a Rosendo?), yes, that's it, but it's almost all lies, but it passes for truth because it's the only close study of it, but I've been told things which show that it's very probable that much of what they say there is a lie. This was after the Mendoza elections, and I think that one of the reasons for the meeting was to evaluate the situation of this whole political-union group. We all met, the deputies and other friendly leaders, in a union also of the municipal workers but not the one where we had the Avellaneda Congress meeting, it was almost across the street from La Real, on a street that intersected Avenida Mitre. It was an old two-story house, and we went there to eat. The table was set, but the food was late. I remember that one of them, Paulino I think, said "Why don't we go and have a drink in La Real," but we said we had to wait, that we were about to eat, so he asked me, I said no, he asked Carlos Juárez, he said no also, but anyway, it makes me think that going to La Real was a totally unplanned thing. The real joke is that they said Vandor killed Rosendo, when there were guys there who were adversaries of Vandor.

JM: Walsh's book says Armando Cabo was there.

ASG: Oh, Armando went. He was one of the bodyguards, a veteran leader. But Vandor's relations with García were not bad. He was young. A good leader. I was good friends with him.

JM: I read in Primera Plana that at first García was friendly with Vandor, but then García was a pre-candidate for the governorship of Buenos Aires in the 1967 elections that were never held, and Vandor started feeling competition, and this problem may have distanced them.

ASG: I don't know. It seems to me that Vandor would have supported García.

Someone in audience: But you yourself said that every president is jealous of his vice-president

ASG: Well, it's a possibility. But I absolutely don't think he could have murdered him. It seems to me that the truth is it was a spontaneous fight that ended in gunshots.

Someone in audience: Who killed Vandor?

ASG: No one knows, least of all me. It could have been one of the armed groups that formed inside, on the margins, Peronism and later became the Montoneros and so on, obviously taking advantage of the internal struggles.

Someone in audience: Could it have been an expressed order of Perón?

ASG: No, I don't think Perón could ever have given such an order. But what is clear is that Perón's letters contributed to some people taking it into their own heads to kill others. Alonso once said to me, Doctor, they're going to kill you. Your life is in danger. There's going to be a desperate struggle here. This letter from Perón...it was terrible...it's the letter that was published...it said: "the enemy is not someone you can leave alive" or something like that.... Perón gave an explanation of Vandor's assassination: it was the U.S. Intelligence Services.

Someone in audience: I heard a story somewhere, I can't remember where, that before Vandor was killed, and someone went to Perón to complain about his behavior, and Perón said "never mind, he's already dead."

ASG: I don't know. Apparently, it was Perón's judgment that Vandor was playing a double game, but he never explained it to me and I never understood it. Apparently, Vandor was working for the CIA and he betrayed the CIA or something, and that he was going to pay dearly for it. But he always blamed the CIA.

[some repartee between ASG and audience members]

ASG: Perón never said a single word against me. The wife, yes. But Perón, never. Corvalán was desperate for a statement against me and it never came. The only thing he did was refuse to see me. I went at the end of March. It was the last chance. I was there for two days. They put Perón's picture on TV, but he never said anything.

[end of tape]