

CADHU mailing to selected Congressmen with Jewish constituencies regarding
anti-Semitism in Argentina -- 2/22/77

Florida: Senator Richard Stone 358 Russell
Rep. J Herbert Burke 2242 Rayburn
Rep. Claude Pepper 2239 Rayburn
Rep. Dante Fascell 2160 Rayburn

New York: 12

Elizabeth Holtzman 1134 Longworth
Benjamin Gilman 1226 Longworth
Matthew McHugh 1204 Longworth
Edward Koch 1134 Longworth
Norman Lent 428 Cannon
John Wydler 2234 Rayburn
Lester Wolff 2463 Rayburn
Benjamin Rosenthal 2372 Rayburn
James EdBd Scheuer 2438 Rayburn
Stephen Solarz 1228 Longworth
Frederick Richmond 1533 Longworth

Sen. Jacob Javits 321 Russell

ARGENTINE COMMISSION for HUMAN RIGHTS

COMISION ARGENTINA POR LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS (CADHU)
Washington, D. C. Information Bureau

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la Memoria

Washington DC, February 22nd, 1977

International Offices: Senator Jacob Javits
Geneva U.S. Senate Building
Rome Washington DC 20000
Paris
Mexico City

Dear Senator Javits:

We are writing to call your attention to what journalist Harry Maurer in The Nation of February 12th calls "one of the ugliest eruptions of anti-Semitism since the Holocaust" currently taking place in Argentina under the military regime of General Jorge Videla. Violations of the most elementary human rights have become a routine practice in Argentina and have been thoroughly documented by international organizations, and investigative commissions.

The growing press coverage of the dramatic situation in Argentina has resulted in a world wide repudiation of the practices of the Argentine Military. In the U.S., religious, community and trade union organizations have expressed their concern and have urged the new Administration to withdraw all Military and Economic support for the government of General Videla. The State Department however, has decided to ignore this pressure and has recommended and requested monies for Security Assistance to Argentina for FY78.

It is now up to the Congress to apply existing legislation and suspend all Security Assistance to Argentina. In the words of Representative Robert Drinan, "The U.S. gives (\$49.3 million) in Military Assistance to Argentina in this fiscal year (FY77). This aid must be cut off for the next fiscal year or even suspended during this year if it is established that Argentina is engaged in a pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights."

There are already several initiatives in the House and Senate intended to carry this out. Senator Humphrey, Rep. Koch, and Rep. Fraser, among others are already working on this issue. We urge you to contact them to express your support for their initiatives, and we encourage you to further the efforts to make human rights one of the primary criteria in the allocation of Security Assistance to repressive Military regimes such as the one in Argentina. We would like to know your opinion on this matter and hoping to hear from you soon, we remain

sincerely yours

Horacio D. Lofredo

Olga Talamante

ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA

HARRY MAURER

January 13: A building housing a Yiddish daily newspaper is daubed with inscriptions reading "Out Jewish Invaders."

March 27: Armed men claiming to be police invade the home of a Jewish doctor. After interrogating and beating his family they leave, but not before scrawling on the wall, "Jews and Leftists Tremble, We Shall Return."

August 4: More than twenty Jewish-owned shops in several Jewish neighborhoods are machine-gunned, along with a Jewish school and bank.

September 3: Bombs are found in a Jewish-owned shopping center and in the building of a major newspaper whose editor is Jewish.

Throughout the year, bookstores and kiosks are flooded with cheap editions of Nazi classics such as Hitler's *My Enemies Are Yours*, Goebbels's *Hitler or Lenin* and Gottfried Feder's *The Jews*.

Such incidents might seem to have been culled from a history of Germany in the 1930s; in fact, they occurred last year in Argentina, along with dozens of other assaults that constituted one of the ugliest eruptions of anti-Semitism since the Holocaust. For eighteen months Argentine Jews were pilloried in print and maligned on television. Jewish leftists were hunted and tortured with special gusto by terror squads. Bombings and shoot-ups of Jewish establishments rose to a peak late last summer. Then, in October—shortly after the U.S. Congress held hearings on human rights in Argentina, and after a series of meetings between American Jewish leaders and high Argentine officials—the attacks ceased. Since then, and although the most scurrilous racist literature remains on the stands, Argentine Jews have developed a nervous optimism that the worst is over. Some of them even support the same military junta that apparently controls the anti-Semitic groups—which is only one of the paradoxes spawned by the nightmarish social crisis that Argentina has suffered since 1973.

The Argentine Jewish community numbers around 400,000 in a total population of 23 million—by far the largest group of Jews in Latin America. They came in three waves: during the late 19th century, when the German Baron de Hirsch bought tracts of pampa land and helped Eastern European Jews emigrate to that fertile expanse of the New World; during the years between World Wars, from various European countries, especially Nazi Germany; and after World War II. Many Jews of the second and third waves saw Argentina as a stepping-stone to the United States but never took the next step. They liked Argentina's European character, and they

assimilated well. Today, 85 per cent of them live in Buenos Aires. Although most urban Jews have worked their way into the middle class and the professions, Argentina is unusual among Latin American countries in that it harbors many poor Jews. A few Jewish families attained wealth in industry, banking, finance and agriculture.

The historical roots of anti-Semitism, like those of Judaism itself, go deep in Argentine society. The traditional ruling alliance of clergy, military and native aristocracy (the great landowners of Spanish descent) never looked kindly on the Jews, but did not often molest them. Children of wealthy Jews who attended school with the young blue-bloods suffered social ostracism, but over the years were increasingly accepted. The Jewish community was never confined to a ghetto or widely hated.

The Jews did live through bad times during World War II because Argentina, while officially neutral, openly favored the Axis and was governed by a junta whose extreme nationalism and authoritarianism were modeled after Mussolini's Italy. Juan Domingo Perón, who seized power in 1945, had Fascist leanings, and may have opened the way to more violent anti-Semitism by welcoming a horde of Nazis after the war. But Perón, paradoxically, also was remarkably hospitable to Jews fleeing the wreckage of Europe. And his overt Fascist tendencies waned during his ten years in power, since his regime was based on his pose as the man who would lead the Argentine working class to power and prosperity.

Following Perón's fall in 1955 a series of civilian and military governments staggered across Argentina's stage, none of them able to solve economic problems that bred fierce political conflict. Civilian regimes could not contain within a stable democracy the demands of the country's highly organized (and solidly Peronist) workers; and the armed forces, who ousted civilian Presidents whenever the Peronists appeared to be making a comeback, could impose only momentary order before abdicating in the face of intractable economic dilemmas. A chronic, steadily deepening crisis thus afflicted the country for more than two decades, with the social fabric from time to time threatening to unravel altogether.

It was at those times that anti-Semitism tended to become overt. The worst outbreak before the most recent one came in 1966, when the military under Gen. Juan Carlos Onganía took power and savagely suppressed Peronists and leftists. The flurry of anti-Semitic incidents that accompanied the repression soon ended, but strong racist currents remained. In 1969 a publishing house in Bariloche, the Andean resort where many Nazis took refuge, began circulating neo-Nazi books by one Juan Maler, in German and Spanish editions. In 1971 appeared an anonymous pamphlet that purported to describe a secret Jewish plan to bring chaos to Argentina and then carve off the southern portion of the country for a Jewish state to be called "Andinia." The pamphlet was mailed to

Harry Maurer, assistant editor of *The Nation*, has lived in Buenos Aires and writes frequently on Latin American subjects.

military officers and university students, and caused a minor furor.

But it was not until Perón returned in 1973 that Argentina's socioeconomic crisis and its reflection, anti-Semitism, began building to a climax. Perón was eagerly awaited after seven years of repressive military rule that had seen inflation and political terrorism rise while the general standard of living fell. But Perón had long since lost his ability to please all factions of his absurdly heterogeneous movement. When his rightist outlook became obvious, left-wing Peronists, mostly young, flocked into the Montoneros and the People's Revolutionary Army, which had succeeded the Tupamaros as the most effective guerrilla organizations on the continent. Bombings, assassinations and attacks on army bases increased. The economy, after a brief improvement, again spiraled downward. Perón countered with repression. And as the political polarization grew more extreme, so did the tendency to blame the trouble on the Jews.

At first the venom was confined to print. As Ted Cordova-Claure noted recently in *Atlas World Press Review*, "During the Peronist period magazines such as *Primicia Argentina* (Argentina First) and *El Caudillo* (The Leader) defended Franco, Mussolini and Hitler and attacked Masons, leftists and Jews." By early 1975, with Perón dead and his widow, Isabel, stranded in power like a shipwrecked sailor on a raft, *El Caudillo* had reached the point of printing a poem calling for a pogrom: "Nine at night is a good hour for this. . . . The place you already know: The Quarter of Usury. Wave a thousand truncheons, bloody a thousand heads . . . that all will be devastated."

On March 3, 1975 a synagogue was bombed. In April, the director of a government TV station was fired for showing the film *QB VII* (about a Nazi war criminal), which the newspaper *Ultima Hora* termed objectionable because it was "decidedly pro-Zionist and anti-Nazi." Later that month, government news agencies circulated a report from Spain that seriously discussed the "Andinia Plan." The walls of Mendoza were painted with swastikas and slogans such as "Be a patriot, kill a Jew." With the campaign now in full swing, at least forty-four other major attacks on the Jews—bombings, pamphlets, slanders on TV, inflammatory magazine articles—marked the next eighteen months.

Most disturbing was the appearance of anti-Semitic, Nazi and neo-Nazi books. A new edition of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* included the "Andinia Plan" pamphlet. *Jewish Argentina*, by Horacio Calderón, former press secretary of the University of Buenos Aires, and *Argentine Inflation 1946-1975*, by Walter Beveraggi Aliende, contained the usual fantasies about the Jewish menace to the fatherland. Worst of all was the series published by the firm of Editorial Milicia, beginning in June 1975. Heavily advertised ("For the first time in Spanish!"), the Milicia books were mostly translations of classics from the Third Reich. *Francomasonry* by Dieter Schwarz, *The European SS*, by Untersturmführer Eric Arnold, and *We, the Racists* by G.A. Amaudruz, were



Tachydromos (Greene)

three of the nineteen titles in the "Library of Doctrinal Formation." Milicia's hardback series and their "Beyond Lies Collection" offered such jewels as *The Talmud Unmasked*, *Who is Behind Kissinger?* and *The SS in Action*.

Anti-Semitism was bad enough under Perón, but matters grew rapidly worse after the military coup led by Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla on March 24, 1976. As repression attained a rigor never before felt in Argentina—thousands of political prisoners seized, hundreds murdered, political parties and trade union activity banned, purges in professional institutions, etc.—anti-Semitic incidents proliferated and Jews who fell afoul of the police became the objects of special brutality. Jewish leaders report that political prisoners were treated much more harshly if they were Jewish. That is confirmed by eyewitnesses, including one woman who was tortured in a Buenos Aires safe house—one of the unofficial prisons maintained by security forces—and now lives in the United States. Anti-Semitism, she says, was like a disease among the military officers who ran the prison. She remembers in particular one couple who were tortured together, with the guards shouting at his wife, "Why did you marry this Jewish pig?"

How can one account for such a paroxysm of barbarity? The wellsprings of anti-Semitism are too complex to analyze here, but history has demonstrated that in countries with a large Jewish population, when economic and political struggle rises to the point of crisis, anti-Semitism

inevitably mushrooms on the Right. Fascism without anti-Semitism would be inconceivable in Argentina. The tradition runs too deep, and the need for a scapegoat is too great.

One disturbing aspect of current anti-Semitism in Argentina is the possibility of Arab involvement. While the million Argentines of Arab descent have historically enjoyed warm relations with their Jewish compatriots, both Argentine and American Jews have recently suggested that Arab money is behind the mysteriously well-financed Nazi publishing houses, and that Arab propaganda has helped to foster an anti-Semitic atmosphere. There seems to be no evidence for the former assertion, but the latter may well be true. Argentina depends on Arab oil, and has politically favored the Arabs since the OPEC price hikes. As a result, official statements on the Middle East tend to have pro-Arab shadings. In 1975, for example, the government TV network broadcast two shows on Libya and Syria, during which the participants (who included the ambassadors of those countries) made several dubious statements, among them the claim that Israel was created by an international conspiracy that "uses Judaism as a screen" for its goal of "economically dominating the world." Such a remark may fall into the gray area between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, but various articles published in *Asuntos Arabes* (Arab Affairs), a glossy propaganda magazine circulated widely in Argentina, stray far into the realm of classic Jew-baiting.

Arab involvement aside, the fundamental question about Argentina's spasm of anti-Semitism is the extent to which its ideology is shared and its cadres encouraged, sponsored, or even directed by the government. The evidence suggests that at the least there are sympathetic elements within the junta. The Argentine military has long inclined toward anti-Semitism. Julio de Meinville, the late anti-Semitic priest and author of *The Jew in the Mystery of History*, was the spiritual adviser to several high-ranking officers. Anti-Semitism is rife within the police and the terror squads linked to the regime. When the government made a gesture last September by closing Editorial Milicia and banning six of its titles, the company immediately reappeared with a new name, Odal, which continues to flood the best booksellers with Nazi works. Government ministries have placed ads in neo-Fascist magazines, and government press agencies, television and radio have circulated anti-Semitic calumnies.

Even more telling is the apparent link between external pressure on the junta and the sharp decline in attacks on Jews. During the summer of 1975, as incidents multiplied, a protest campaign gathered force in Argentina and abroad. In July and August members of the influential Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations met with the Minister of the Interior and the head of the federal police to express their concern. The officials said they also were upset and would do what they could. There was no improvement in August. In September, however, American Jewish groups took concerted action. On September 6, members of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith met with then Argentine Ambassador to the United States, Arnaldo Musitch. On September 28-29, hearings on Argentina were held by Rep. Donald

Fraser's Subcommittee on International Organizations, and Burton Levinson of the ADL presented testimony about the anti-Semitic violence. On October 7, members of the American Jewish Committee met with the Foreign Minister of Argentina and the Ambassador to the United Nations.

At these meetings the Argentines argued that the Videla government was not anti-Semitic but was helpless to stop the fringe groups who were. They also pleaded for understanding of the fact that Argentina was "at war" with internal subversion and could not afford to be dainty. Nevertheless, the meetings were followed by a change that can hardly have been coincidental. Assaults on Jews tapered off in September, and on the 13th the decree closing Editorial Milicia was published. On Rosh Hashana, September 25, one bombing was reported. On Yom Kippur, ten days later, there were only scattered bomb threats. After that no major incidents were reported for three months. The January 8th bombings of a Jewish school and a businessman's house, and a January 14th bombing of a theatre showing the film *Victory at Entebbe* appear to have been isolated events.

Ironically, then, official ties to anti-Semitic groups in Argentina were most convincingly demonstrated by the junta's ability to restrain those groups. But why did Videla tolerate rampant anti-Semitism in the first place? Some of his military cohorts were certainly anti-Semitic, and others perhaps felt that the difficult circumstances required a scapegoat. But the Argentine government has never been officially anti-Semitic—a crucial difference from the Third Reich. It seems most likely that the generals, in their war of terror against the Left, saw that the anti-Semites could be useful allies and did not want to alienate them. However, Videla also hoped to avoid the diplomatic isolation suffered by the Chilean regime as a result of its human rights violations. One can therefore guess that he tolerated anti-Semitism as long as it seemed to serve his purpose, but when it began to reflect badly on his regime, particularly in the country to the north that props him up, he saw that the price of ignoring bombed synagogues was too high.

Another, more unfortunate irony lies in the contradictory position of what might be called the Argentine Jewish establishment—the wealthy, conservative Jews in industry, trade and the professions. On one hand they face a government that has amply shown its willingness to tolerate the persecution of Jews, and that is controlled by the armed forces, within which Jews have always been prevented from rising to the highest ranks. On the other hand lies a social crisis that has fostered terrible civil strife. Thus, conservative Jews fear Videla, but know that there are other generals who are worse; and they fear intensified social struggle, which threatens their economic interests. Caught between fascism and revolution, they have adopted a position of mildly unhappy support for the junta that has persecuted them, and live in terror of any event that might rekindle anti-Jewish flames. They now hope to achieve security by unobtrusive lobbying among the generals.

"It's important to stress that the Argentine Jewish community is not suffering alone," says David Geller, head of the Latin American office at the American Jewish Committee's Department of Foreign Affairs. "All Argentines are suffering. And many Jews there are saying, 'We want order. We want what other Argentines want. We just want the killing to stop.' They believe the Videla government is a moderate one and should be strengthened." But this stand is dubious, even aside from the curious view of Videla as a "moderate" (a notion his regime has done its best to propagate). For example, the argument generally advanced in Argentina and by Jewish leaders in the United States for silencing Nazi publishers is that the junta rightly stifled the extreme leftist press, and now in the interests of order should do the same to the extreme Right. This amounts to a demand for violation of human rights as long as it's done evenhandedly.

By backing the junta's war on the guerrillas as necessary to stamp out "violence" in the abstract, Argentine and American Jewish leaders have failed to appreciate the social roots of violence. Seven times since 1955 the military has violently intervened to prevent Argentina from taking a path not to the generals' liking. The guerrillas' bombings and kidnappings must be seen as a response, however inchoate and ineffective, to the unequal distribu-

tion of wealth, the contradictions of underdevelopment—and to the force employed by the government to preserve the status quo.

But not all Argentine Jews take the myopic view that social peace should be bought at any price; some know the price is always paid by the poor. While no statistics are available, sources agree that the Argentine left wing includes a disproportionate number of Jews. Jewish young people, in Argentina as elsewhere, attend university in high numbers, and the universities have been breeding grounds for guerrillas. The support of the "Jewish community" for Videla is by no means unanimous.

In short, Argentine Jews in this time of upheaval are divided along familiar age and class lines. But given the fact, as Burton Levinson remarks, that the treatment of Jews has historically served as a "moral barometer" of society, it is painful to find that any Jews, even those of the upper classes, support a neo-Fascist regime tainted with anti-Semitism. Economic interests, it would seem, cut deeper than religious identification. So it is left to the country's young and powerless, Jew and gentile, now crowded into jails and torture chambers, to struggle against the conditions which give rise to fascism—and which, unless they are radically changed, will almost certainly rouse the monster of anti-Semitism from its fitful sleep in years to come. □

THE PROLIFERATING ARMS INDUSTRY

AMERICA EXPORTS ITS KNOW-HOW

MICHAEL T. KLARE

Congress in June 1976 passed the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act. This important piece of legislation for the first time sets *conventional*—as distinct from *nuclear*—arms control as a major goal of the United States. The new law, which supplants the Foreign Military Sales Act of 1968, affirms that it shall be our policy "to exert leadership in the world community to bring about arrangements for reducing the international trade in implements of war and to lessen the danger of outbreak of regional conflict. . . ." To this end, Congress imposed new restraints on direct weapons exports and invested itself with veto power over major arms transactions. Unfortunately, however, it failed to establish any controls over the most dangerous aspect of the arms trade—the sale of military *technology* via co-production and licensing agreements.

Although America's technological "know-how" is considered a critical national resource, the dissemination of which must be tightly controlled, U.S. firms are finding more and more reasons to participate in multinational

arms schemes. Such co-production normally entails the licensed production of a U.S.-designed weapon by a foreign firm, or by several firms that agree to produce separate components of a weapons system. The giant F-16 fighter program, for instance, will involve the licensed production of Pratt & Whitney's F-100 jet engine in Belgium, and the fabrication of other major components by a consortium of eighty-five firms in Holland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium and the United States. Similar projects are underway in a dozen other countries—including some underdeveloped nations—and industry leaders believe that such arrangements will increasingly supplant unilateral production. "Multinational cooperation in defense systems," Northrop President Thomas V. Jones declared recently, "is necessary, desirable, and inevitable."

The Department of Defense defines co-production as "any program wherein the U.S. Government . . . enables an eligible foreign government, international organization or designated commercial producer to acquire the 'know-how' to manufacture . . . a specific weapon, communications or support system, or an individual military item." Depending on the technical competence of the country involved, U.S. participation in such schemes can range from the submission of blueprints all the way to the design and construction of complete factories. According to documents that I obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, the Pentagon is now engaged in some forty

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