

Most obscene regime since Hitler's

By ROBERT O'DONOGHUE

WHATEVER about the pros and cons of the Falklands debacle, the fact is that Argentina suffers the most obscene regime since Hitler's Germany. For over five decades the country has been existing in a nightmare of terrorism; violence, daily political assassination, imprisonments without trial, torture are the norm. Speech is controlled; the media is state manipulated, mainly in that it is the government which places seventy-five per cent of the advertising; the semantics of reportage, whether emanating from the state or the organs of the myriad ideologies are so distorted that there is little possibility of understanding them. As one writer puts it:

"Newspapers write virtually in code, resorting to euphemisms and circumlocutions, speaking in a roundabout way, as do leaders, politicians, and intellectuals". Among the 25,000,000 or so population illiteracy is high anyway, thus compounding the nonsense trotted out by the media and its covers-up.

Any attempt to breakdown, categorise, analyse the warring pseudo political ideologies, to articulate them with any preciseness has become an impossible task, even for experts within the country. As the writer quoted above puts it:

"It is essential, I suppose, to attempt some explanation of what Argentina is. Yet I find it almost impossible to do so in normal terms, applying current political principles. The problem is not merely that I find it difficult to explain Argentina in comprehensible terms to outsiders, but that I myself perhaps am unable to understand her. Or it may be that I've lived through a period of such political and social disintegration that it is hard for me to conceive that some coherent explanation would emerge from such disparate and anarchistic opposing elements".

And that writer is none other than Jacobo Timerman, one time editor of *La Opinion* in Buenos Aires, a newspaper dedicated to human rights and to exposing government corruption. For this dedication he was imprisoned for two years (1977-79) and subject to the usual torture, beatings and interrogations. He now lives in exile in Tel Aviv, from where he published his *Prisoner without a Name, Cell Without A Number*, ranking with Holocaust and Gulag as one of the finest testimonies of man's brutality against man and of the unkillable spirit of some. It is not the only testament — writers, journalists, poets, merchants, to and froing from the country, have been portraying the enormity of the obscenity that is Argentina. All countries, including our own, are absolutely aware of it — more so than we were ever made aware of the Hitler horror while it was happening.

During Timerman's time, 10,000 (probably, a conservative figure) people perished and 15,000 disappeared. His book came out in 1981 and reports from other sources since then practically double those figures, among which there are hundreds of missing journalists, fact finders who cared for the fate of their country.

Timerman asks, "can the community alone, without outside intervention, prevent either of the two facisms from winding up with Argentina's corpse? Or if it cannot accomplish this on its own, then is collaboration possible among the international community to prevent either of them from doing so and to enable Argentina's reincorporation into civilised society, into the contemporary civilisation it abandoned fifty years ago?"

If the international community, well knowing the rotten state of Argentina, had imposed the present sanctions a decade ago we would not be today witnessing the Falklands tragedy or, for that matter, the to me ambience, to say the least of it, of my own country with regard to the present EEC impositions.

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United States to "adopt a more balanced position" that would contribute "to a peaceful solution".

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Mr. Frugoli, a civilian member of Argentina's military government, told a Buenos Aires radio interviewer that if the conflict became internationalised it would be extremely serious for the world political balance and would be damaging to the West.

He declined to comment on a report in the Conservative Buenos Aires newspaper *La Nacion*, that one of Argentina's three military commanders-in-chief — was not identified — told subordinates that it was up to Argentina to keep open important military supply lines with Russia.

So far there has been no indication that Argentina has sought Russian war equipment or that Moscow has offered it.

Press reports, however, have suggested the junta seek Soviet aid if Britain was supplied by the US and other countries.

Argentina says it has launched a major ground offensive to dislodge a British force which gained a foothold on East Falkland Island last Friday.

Mr. Frugoli also said it would be very difficult for the British to consolidate and defend their position, because they have no way of re-supplying the troops.

A military spokesman quoted by the Independent News Agency Noticias Argentinas claimed Argentine forces were controlling the area around Port San Carlos, where the British Marines landed.

The privately-owned news agency DYN quoted military sources as saying that Brit-

ish troops "are surrounded on a beach and are being submitted to fire from Argentine forces who are raking the area with artillery and mortars".

Reagan will not cancel UK visit

US President Reagan said yesterday he saw no reason to cancel his planned visit to London next month because of the Falklands fighting. Unforeseen circumstances might force him to reconsider, however.

"I have seen nothing as yet that would suggest that," he said when asked if he had thought of changing his schedule or even eliminating London from his 10-day trip to Western Europe.

"Obviously if something unforeseen happens we would have to consider whether to go or not. But I don't see any reason not to go," Mr. Reagan said.

The President said later last night that any US aid to Britain in the Falklands conflict would not involve "troops or anything involved in the fighting."

He said Britain and the United States had reached no new agreements as a result of the crisis.

World in brief

● **PRESIDENT REAGAN** yesterday said he was ready to hold a summit with Russia and added that President Brezhnev was also willing. But he told reporters that a letter he had received from Brezhnev contained no reference to timing.

● **THE Russian Communist Party** yesterday appointed Yuri Andropov to a job that improved his chances of eventually succeeding President Brezhnev. Vladimir Dolgikh also was promoted, to alternate or non-voting status on the ruling Politburo.

● **HUNGARIAN** authorities have arrested two West Germans suspected of helping an East German family of four to flee from Hungary aboard a private plane.

● **SICILIAN** police yesterday raided an illegal arms factory producing submachine guns and arrested the owner whose clients are believed to include groups in Africa and the Middle East, and Sicilian criminals.

● **POPE JOHN PAUL** yesterday formally approved the canonisation of four new saints, including the Rev. Maximilian Kolbe, the Polish priest who gave his life for a prisoner at the Auschwitz concentration camp.

● **BOOING**, whistling and other forms of disrespect during the playing of national anthems at World Cup matches could land British fans in jail. This warning is contained in a leaflet called: "Amigos Espana '82", which the British Department of the Environment