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ARGENTINE COMMISSION for HUMAN RIGHTS

COMISION ARGENTINA POR LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS (CADHU)
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Bulletin of the Argentine Commission for Human Rights, published in Argentina and available in Spanish through the CADHU Washington Information Bureau.

Bulletin #1 June 18, 1976 (27 pages)

Bulletin #2 July, 1976 (16 pages)

Bulletin #3 November 13, 1976 (12 pages)

A synopsis of the three bulletins in English is attached to this packet.

Death and Violence in Argentina, compiled by a group of priests in Argentina; translated and published by the Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1 4JL. Produced October 18, 1976. This document reports on recent acts of violence and threats of violence against church people in Argentina. Detailed information is provided on the circumstances of 13 recent assassinations of church people in particular. In the cases of Fathers Kelly, Duffau, and Leaden and seminarians Barletti and Berbetto, the information links the killers to the SIDE, the State Intelligence Service and to the Federal Police, both under direct government control. The killings of Fathers Longueville and Muriat are linked to the Federal Police and to the Argentine Army. The report also includes a partial list of priests arrested, disappeared, deported, or forced to leave the country as a result of threats of violence. (11 pages)

Human Rights in Argentina after the March 24th Military Coup, prepared by French attorney Madeleine Lafue-Veron after a visit to Argentina in June 1976 on behalf of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists; translated and published by the Argentine Information and Service Center, 339 Lafayette St., New York 10012. This report includes a detailed background to the military coup and a summary of the major legislation enacted to suppress all political activity. The document provides basic testimony on the arrests, kidnappings, torture, and assassinations of literally hundreds of journalists, trade-unionists, farm workers, intellectuals, physicians, priests, lawyers, and psychiatrists.

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Lafue-Veron report, continued

Attorney Lafue-Veron offers in this document extensive evidence of the continuity of the violation of human rights from the period before the military coup to the period after, as well as of similarities in the methods used. The document argues against the concept of "uncontrolled gangs of right wing extremists" as being responsible for these atrocities and provides ample evidence of the involvement and responsibility of high-ranking officers throughout all branches of the Argentine Armed Forces, Federal and Provincial Police and the Gendarmeria or National Guard. The report lists the major torture centers and concentration camps located in Army, Navy, and Air Force camps throughout the country which function under the direct responsibility of the Intelligence Services of the respective branches. (25 pages)

The Attack on Academic Freedom in Argentina, a report prepared by the London Office of Amnesty International, 53 Theobald's Road, London WC1X 8SP. Published in September 1976. This report describes the "systematic ideological purge of the academic community in Argentina." The report includes testimonies on the kidnapping and torture of scientists, psychiatrists, physicians, university professors and students, as well as a list of 41 academics and 100 students missing or detained. (14 pages)

Repression in Argentina: The Right of Option, a report prepared by the Argentine Information and Service Center, September, 1976. The Argentine Constitution guarantees that people arrested without formal charges under State of Siege regulations have the right to leave the country, that is to choose voluntary exile. This report outlines the legal aspects of this right and includes the texts of decrees enacted by the military Junta which have annulled it. Also available with this report is a partial list of detainees eligible to leave the country under the Right of Option clause, Article 23. (13 pages)

Argentina Today, prepared by the Argentine Information and Service Center (address above), October, 1976. This dossier provides general background material on the current situation in Argentina as well as press clippings and documents of protest concerning the violation of human rights and persecution of the churches, trade unions, cultural institutions and the media. The dossier also includes information on the rise of anti-Semitism and on the situation of Uruguayan, Chilean and other Latin American refugees in Argentina. Outreach, the regular publication of the Argentine Information and Service Center is available directly from the Editorial Office, P.O. Box 4388, Berkeley, Ca. 94704.

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Human Rights in Argentina, hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on International Relations of the U.S. House of Representatives held September 28th and 29th, 1976 in Washington DC. The transcripts include the testimony of Father James Weeks, an American born priest who lived in Argentina for 11 years, was kidnapped in the city of Cordoba on August 3rd, 1976 and eventually released due to U.S. public and governmental pressure on the Argentine military. Father Weeks synthesized his experience and that of other victims of kidnappings in the following way:

"First of all, all the kidnappers were identified by their captives as police or military men. They were specifically addressed as "Chief", "Captain", "Colonel", "Lieutenant", etcetera.

Second, although at times they identified themselves as police or military, they presented neither official identification nor search warrants.

Third, all the kidnap victims were taken to predetention centers, police stations or military headquarters.

Fourth, the kidnappers presented themselves as defenders of democracy and Catholicism.

Fifth, anyone who could think for him or herself or who had a university education was considered a threat.

Six, the conversations and behavior of the kidnappers betrayed their antisemitic and Nazi-type mentality.

Seven, all the kidnapped were accused of having leftist or Marxist leanings.

Eight, no formal legal charges were brought against the victims, all activity was extra-legal.

Nine, physical and mental torture.

Ten, use of psychiatrists and medical observers.

Eleven, the kidnappers often tried to make their activities appear to be actions of leftist organizations.

Most of these facts, as I say, are common to practically all documented cases and seem to point to a definite pattern or plan."

Referring to the matter of U.S. military assistance Father Weeks added: " I can see no reason why the American people should be put in the position of having to pay for the horrible abuses committed by the military and police of these repressive governments." Mr. Burton S. Levinson, Chairman of the Latin American Affairs Committee of the anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith also testified in the hearings, describing the situation of Jews in Argentina. He said:

"A marked increase in anti-Semitic activity began about 18 months ago and it has remained at an unusually high level since. A report on anti-Semitism, published in Argentina in May 1975, said that the escalation of such activity in the preceding 2 month period had "exceeded all that previously known." In recent months it escalated again, as the cities were flooded with Nazi literature and the number of bombings and shootings directed against Jews grew more menacing."

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Mr. Levinson introduced two important documents on anti-Semitism in Argentina, one by the Anti-Defamation League and another by Rabbi Rosenthal. Attorney Gustavo Roca, a founding member of the Argentine Commission for Human Rights, provided the subcommittee with a detailed description of the persecution, kidnapping and assassination of lawyers. He said, "Our only crime has been for many years to carry out the task of defending human rights in Argentina and to have expressed our right as lawyers in the courts of our country to defend citizens persecuted for political, social or ideological reasons," and he added, "we are not speaking only of suppressing human rights, but also of making sure they cannot be defended."

Other testimonies included in the transcripts: Rev. J. Bryan Hehier, Associate Secretary for the U.S. Catholic Conference, Attorney Lucio Garzon Maceda, representative of the Argentine Commission for Human Rights, Mr. Thomas Quigley, Latin American Affairs Advisor of the U.S. Catholic Conference, and Mr. Leonard Chapman Jr., Commissioner, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Argentine Bulletin, published by the Committee of Solidarity with the Argentine People in Mexico City. This monthly publication in Spanish includes testimonies from Argentine exiles on various aspects of the human rights situation there, such as conditions in the prisons, methods of torture, persecution of journalists, etc.

Argentina: The Trade Union Struggle, published by the Argentine Support Movement, an independent organization backed by the International Committee of the Labour Party in London. This document publishes the resolution adopted in September, 1976 by the British Trade Union Conference condemning the deprivation of trade union rights in Argentina by the military. It includes a brief background on the situation of the economy in Argentina and lists the methods of intervention used by the military to control the unions.

One Gigantic Prison, a report by a fact-finding team of three Members of the Canadian Parliament to Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina from September 30 to October 10, 1976. This investigative team was sponsored by the Inter-Church Committee on Chile, 40 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Canada M4T 1N1. This report concludes that "a grave situation exists in regard to human rights" in these three countries. Regarding Argentina, the report reprints several documents, including letters from prisoners and a letter from the Episcopal Assembly of Argentina to President Jorge Videla. The three Members of Parliament argue that "Canada, in co-operation with other like-minded countries, should make it clear to the government of Argentina and other governments that positive action towards the restoration of human rights would be a pre-condition for the granting of loans and capital," including "vigorous action to restrain the death squads" and the "publication of lists of people detained as political prisoners."

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SUMMARY:

CONTENTS OF CADHU BULLETINS #I, II, and III

BULLETIN #1, Buenos Aires, June 18, 1976 (27 pages)

Section One: A general introduction to the situation of human rights in Argentina beginning from the period of Isabel Martinez de Peron's government (1974) as reported and confirmed by the International Commission of Jurists, the International League for the Rights of Man, and the Bertrand Russell Tribunal II.

Section Two: An outline of the situation following the coup of March 24, 1976.

- 1) Structural changes: Since the coup, Congress has been dissolved and there has been a total takeover of the Judicial system by the military, either by intervention of the courts or by the replacement of judges. The military junta has explicitly stated its function to be the supreme overseer of the different powers of the State. For all purposes, the junta controls all three branches of government, the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial.
- 2) Total negation of Due Process of Law: There exist no judicial mechanisms by which persons accused of political crimes can defend themselves, since all charges of this nature of tried by military courts. It must be noted again that all judges are either military officers or civilians appointed by the military. There are also several cases of judges who were identified by the military as uncooperative and who were therefore removed, arrested, or killed. Furthermore, lawyers who have attempted to question the legality of these practices have also been arrested or killed.
- 3) Stated plan of total annihilation of the junta's enemies: Included in this definition can be anyone identified as a dissident on any level. (See statements on this point by Generals Videla, Jauregui, and Viola, pp. 20 and 21 of Bulletin #1)

Section Three: A formal accusation of violations of human rights by the military junta based on the texts of the Argentine Constitution, charters of the international organizations to which Argentina belongs, and international declarations on the issue of human rights.

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#1/Section Three, continued

This section includes:

- 1) Specific Data that supports the accusation: official legislative changes, appointments to office, etc.
- 2) Proof of the intolerance of any form of opposition to the government.
- 3) Specific testimonies on the different methods instituted to enforce the changes desired by the military government.

Testimonies on: Arrests, tortures, kidnappings, executions, persecution of lawyers, control of the media, persecution of refugees, total control of political activity and culture and education, persecution of friends and relatives of political prisoners, persecution of trade union activists, conditions in the prisons.

Conclusion: An appeal to all international organizations interested in the issue of human rights around the world and a call for the restoration of a democratic life in Argentina.

Annexes: Copies of official decrees and modifications of the legal structures from March 26 to June 9, 1976.

BULLETIN #2, Buenos Aires, July, 1976 (16 pages)

This bulletin refers specifically to the use of physical and psychological means used by the military junta to create a climate of approval among the populace for the detentions, tortures, and massive executions.

- 1) Indiscriminate prosecution and total disregard for the legal channels of investigation, due process of law, etc.
- 2) Use of the media so that the practices of the junta appear justified.
- 3) Specific cases of a clear relationship between the so-called independent death squads and official government forces.
- 4) Specific cases of total control in the cultural and educational sphere.

Annexes: Specific testimonies similar to those listed in Bulletin #1 above.

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BULLETIN #3, Buenos Aires, November 13, 1976 (12 pages)

This bulletin consists entirely of individual testimonies, including excerpts from the following:

- Kidnapping of actors
- Kidnapping of relatives of political prisoners
- Missing persons
- List of trade union political prisoners arrested as a result of a strike in March 1976 in Villa Constitucion (an important industrial sector in the province of Santa Fe)
- Letter from women political prisoners from Villa Devoto (largest prison in the city of Buenos Aires) to the Argentine Episcopal Conference
- Letter to Pope Paul VI from relatives of political prisoners
- Transfer of political prisoners
- Women political prisoners from Villa Devoto
- From the Sierra Chica prison (Buenos Aires province)
- From the penitentiary in the city of Cordoba
- A political prisoner being transferred
- Letter from prisoners in the city prison of Coronda (Santa Fe province) to Monsignor Zaspe
- The situation in the Tucuman province

Specific excerpts:

From the Argentine Actors Society: They make known the disappearance of three of their members: POLO CORTES, SILVIA SHELBY, RUEN BRAVO.

From the relatives of missing persons: These testimonies give proof of the direct participation of government forces in these abductions:

Cordoba: MR. CHABOL: Two of his sons were arrested by military forces a year ago and they've never been heard from again. Another son is in prison. Mr. Chabol was taken from his home on 15 October by government forces and there has been no news of his whereabouts.
MR. BASTERRA, MR. ONETTI, MR. RUFFA SR. AND MR. RUFFA JR. were also abducted from their homes in the same manner.

Buenos Aires: MRS. GLADYS ESCOBAR was arrested 19 September in Hurlingham, province of Buenos Aires. There are witnesses who claim to have seen her in the Guemes School located in the Campo de Mayo, a military base in the province.

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#3/Testimonies, continued

Workers detained in March and April, 1976: There are no charges against workers from the Acindar, Marathon, and Metven factories in Buenos Aires and from the Villber plant in Villa Constitucion. They are members of the UOM (Metal Workers Union).

Women political prisoners in Villa Devoto: The women in this prison have been directly informed by the Chief of Security GALINDEZ that he offers no guarantees whatsoever for the personal safety of the prisoners, and that he intends to answer any attack on the government with "dungeon and torture." On 14 October, all the women from Level 6 were subjected to the most degrading "search" at the hands of prison personnel. All the women were stripped naked and one by one taken into the bathroom to be searched. Meanwhile, everyone was supposed to wait with their feet spread apart, their hands against the wall, not knowing exactly what was happening.

Two of the collective cells were punished for a month, which means no recreation, no visiting hours, no correspondence. Three of the women have been isolated in the dungeons indefinitely: VIVIANA BAGUAN, GRACIELA MALONI, and JOSEFA ROMANO. This is the first time that the dungeons have been used to punish female prisoners. The Villa Devoto prison includes in its plans for maximum security such measures as individual cells, glass dividers in the visiting rooms, and a vaginal body search in the near future.

The situation of political prisoners in Tucuman Province:

Raids: Carried out consistently by government forces in which children even as young as nine years old are abducted, tortured, and killed. Whole families get blown up. Small settlements have been bombed and then declared "military zones."

Concentration Camps: These are located in the Federal Police Stations, Federal Police Academy, and Department of Physical Education in the city of Tucuman. In the rest of the province they are located in Famaila, Fronterita, Santa Lucia, Las Mesadas, in addition to several constructions in the military zones.

Conditions: All prisoners are held in individual dwellings, separated into areas of origin, profession, political affiliation, and are identified with a number.

Treatment: Physical tortures include: electric shocks, burning with cigarettes, acids and boiling water poured on the testicles, pulling of nails, severe beatings with chains, the "electric submarine," being torn apart by dogs, rape of men and women. Psychological tortures include: being permanently blindfolded (some have been blindfolded over a year), being chained, not given food or water, being sprayed with disinfectants, not being allowed to sleep. Not that many are executed but many die in

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#3 Testimonies, continued

the torture chambers and then their bodies are dropped from helicopters. There are at least 3,000 prisoners in all these camps.

Villa Urquiza: Two people died from pneumonia. Another prisoner died either executed or electrocuted. There are several cases of hepatitis and there is no medical care whatsoever.

Names of Torturers: MARCOS HIDALGO, Director of Penal Institutions (before the coup he held the post of Chief of Security Measures); CORPORAL CARRIZO; MUSSA HASSAD, police officer from the province of Santiago del Estero and a high ranking member of the AAA, also with known affiliation to the SIDE (State Intelligence Service); EDUARDO DAGATO, a Federal Police officer who lives in Lules, Tucuman.
