

Argentina

6

# OUTREACH

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## STATE DEPARTMENT'S REPORT: INCOMPLETE AND ERRONEOUS

The International Security Assistance Act of 1976 in its section 502B requires the State Department to produce and to make available to the Congress a Report on the Human Rights situation in all the countries for which it requests Military Assistance. Last year the State Department produced a report on Argentina and labeled it "Classified." The document was declassified and made public officially December 31, 1976.

This report seriously understates the extent of Human Rights violations in Argentina, ignoring testimonies and documentation from internationally recognized sources. It contradicts prior State Department statements on the intended purposes of the Military Assistance Program and provides inadequate justification for the continuation of the Military Assistance Program. We will briefly point out some of the report's most obvious shortcomings.

At a time when official Argentine Government communiques admit that the "Security Forces" have killed nearly 2,000 alleged or suspected subversives in less than a year, it becomes crucial to determine whether or not the U.S. Military Assistance Program is pertinent to the "counterinsurgency" activities of the Argentine Government. Clarity on this issue is even more important when we learn that three women alleged to be subversives were thrown out of an 8th floor apartment under attack by Security Forces on December 31, and a

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## U.S. AID TO ARGENTINA— HOW IT GETS THERE

Money from the U.S. taxpayer flows to Argentina and other governments around the world through more than a dozen different government programs. Last year this aid totalled over \$5 billion dollars, some of which must be directly approved by Congress but most of which is not.

In the next month the new Carter administration will file its requests with Congress for the military and economic aid programs for Fiscal Year 1978, which begins on October 1, 1977.

To understand the requests which may be made for Argentina, it is useful to examine the different kinds of aid which have been granted in the past several years. This aid falls into three general categories: *military* aid from the U.S. government, *economic* aid from the U.S. government and loans from the international lending agencies.

### 1. U.S. Military Aid

Military aid to Argentina totalled \$49.3 million in FY77. In requesting this aid last year, the State Department said that its purpose was to "support their program of armed forces modernization, particularly their *counterinsurgency* and sea control capabilities." (emphasis added) \$48.4 million of this money was for *Foreign Military Sales* credits, meaning that the money would be used to purchase weapons and equipment from the U.S. government. Last year's aid included a high proportion of helicopters and tactical radio equip-

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week later two political prisoners, Dardo Cabo and Rufino Uriz (*La Opinion*, Jan. 9, 1977), were killed by Security Forces "while trying to escape." The State Department, however, is not clear on this matter. The recently released report says: "U.S. military credits have little or no bearing on the counter terrorist capability of the Armed Forces." Another State Department document however, the Congressional Presentation for the Security Assistance Program prepared on March 8, 1976, says: "The PMS credits being proposed for Argentina in Fiscal Year 1977 will support their program of armed forces modernization, particularly their counter-insurgency and sea control capabilities." Furthermore, the funds made available through the Military Assistance Program are being used by the Argentine Armed Forces to acquire equipment intended for counterinsurgency use. For example:

- 12 "Huey" helicopters of the type which were commonly used in Vietnam for transporting troops into combat zones. Similar helicopters equipped with high caliber machine guns and spot lights were used on December 23, 1975 in a counter insurgency operation in the outskirts of Buenos Aires in which an undisclosed number of civilians were killed. The State Department itself admits in the CFD for FY77 that such helicopters would contribute to improv-



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ing the counter-insurgency capabilities of the Armed Forces of Colombia, Nicaragua, the Philippines and Indonesia. Significantly, these helicopters would expand the helicopter fleet of the Argentine Armed Forces by 11.2% in a single year.

- Tactical Radios not available in Argentina are used primarily for communication in close range rural and urban combat. Similar model radios are used routinely to coordinate house to house searches and road checks.

Finally, Argentina is under no threat of attack by any foreign continental or extracontinental nation. The only threat to the Argentine Armed Forces results from the internal security problems they are facing.

The State Department report acknowledges that active duty and retired military and police personnel are reported members of the squads responsible for the kidnappings, the torture and the assassinations. However, the State Department attempts to disassociate the Argentine government leaders from the acts of their subordinates. The report affirms that "Argentine leaders have stated that as a matter of policy they do not condone and are seeking to curb violations of human rights, but that in the present atmosphere of terrorism they can not yet control the situation." The State Department accepts the public statements of the Argentine government leaders at face value without comparing it with the government's actual record.

Father James Weeks, an American priest who lived in Argentina for 11 years and was kidnapped on August 3, 1976 in the city of Cordoba, analyzed the testimonies of a large number of victims of kidnappings and concluded:

"... all the kidnapers were identified by their captives as police or military men. They were specifically addressed as Chief, Captain, Colonel, Lieutenant, etc."

"... all the kidnap victims were taken to pre-detention centers, police stations or military headquarters."

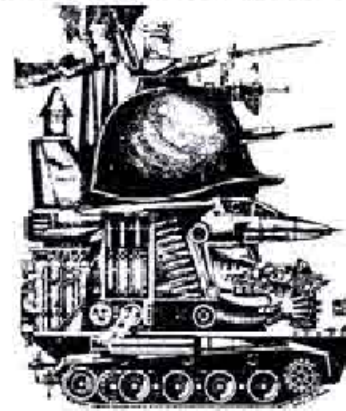
Testimony by Father Weeks before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the U.S. House of Representatives  
September 28, 1976

Furthermore, additional testimony from U.S. citizens available to the State Department indicates that the captors were in permanent communication with the highest echelons of the government. The military officers in charge of the pre-detention houses learned within hours of the inquiries being made by the U.S. Embassy and the State Department on their behalf.

It is widely accepted among observers of Argentina that the present military government's two major policies are to stabilize the economy and to wipe out sub-

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version. In the latter task, the government in fact encourages the actions of semi-clandestine, well-disciplined squads made up of and under the leadership of military and police personnel, not only because they often capture and/or assassinate suspected left-wing guerrillas, but also because they intimidate the general population, preventing it from opposing government policy in word or in deed. In summary, what the State Department does not admit in order to be able to justify continuing Military Assistance, is that the actions of the so-called "right-wing death squads" are compatible with Argentine government policies, and supplement the repressive activities of the legal security agencies. In this context, to attempt to justify the Argentine government's policies and to continue to provide it with Military Assistance is to condone the actions of the more extreme elements in the Armed Forces and in fact to support the structures which provide them with logistical support and permit them to operate with impunity.



The report estimates the number of political prisoners at the time of the coup to be 4,000, citing Amnesty International's 1975-76 report as their source. It then goes on to assert that "the figure is currently lower in all probability." For this assertion no source or authority is given. However, Amnesty International's 1976 report notes that several thousand people were arrested immediately following the coup and that some estimates put the number of those in detention as high as 20,000. Interestingly, if the figures upheld by the Argentine government and apparently accepted by the State Department were factual, they would indicate a significant improvement on the situation inherited by General Videla on March 24. It would be to the government's advantage to improve its international image to publish a complete list of the prisoners they hold and thus quiet most criticisms. However, the government refuses to do this claiming that such a list is a military secret and its publication would "help subversion."

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The report affirms that the use of torture, and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment "have not been a general practice in Argentina." Since the coup we have been receiving regularly testimonies from victims of torture and mistreatment. Reports from a dozen independent, governmental and non governmental investigative commissions have determined that in fact torture is regularly practiced on all detainees suspected of being politically active in opposition to the regime. Torture has been particularly vicious on those suspected of being associated with what security forces consider to be "subversive organizations."

Representative Drinan from Massachusetts, who met with high government officials during his recent, Amnesty International-sponsored investigative visit to Argentina, said:

"... torture goes on and these people who said they do not practice it were very familiar with the consequences of torture and knew exactly how long the marks stay from an electric shock. And the general who came to bribe me at my hotel knew exactly how long electric shock marks stayed. And if torture does not go on then how do they know so much about it. They have to prove to the world that they are not condoning torture, and torture goes on..."

The report claims that the right to legal redress and the right to a fair hearing and other guarantees of due process of law are in effect in Argentina except in cases related to subversion or resulting from violations of State of Siege regulations. The reality of the situation is that the overwhelming majority of arrest cases never reach a court of law. When they do, the prisoner is judged by a military officer or by someone appointed by the military or approved by the military. Detainees are generally interrogated, judged and sentenced by those who arrested them or kidnapped them while in the pre-detention centers. Should a case however reach a military or civilian tribunal, the prisoner would not be able to get a defense lawyer for a political case. A lawyer who would agree to defend a political prisoner would thereby become in the eyes of the security forces an accomplice and would become subject to imprisonment himself.

The list of understatements, distortions and inaccuracies could go on. The point, however, is that even those violations of Human Rights recognized by the report should suffice to justify an interruption of all Military Assistance to the Argentine military regime. Nevertheless, it is necessary that the report be exposed and criticized and the new administration be requested to produce a new report which reflects more adequately the situation in Argentina.



ment such as were used by U.S. forces in Vietnam. The other \$900,000 of last year's total aid was for the training of Argentine military personnel, specifically to train 104 officers in the U.S. and the Panama Canal Zone and 72 officers in Argentina itself. Of this training program, the State Department says "it assists in the accomplishment of the U.S.'s political purposes by providing a significant opportunity for communicating with and influencing the military leadership of other countries, especially the emerging leaders and youthful elements of developing nations."

The U.S. also sends training and equipment to the Argentine Police through the Justice Department's program, the Drug Enforcement Administration. This program is supposed to assist only in narcotics programs but a number of sources including the U.S. Government Accounting Office and columnist Jack Anderson have reported that this aid is also used for "internal security" purposes. The most recent figures available indicate that Argentina received \$81,000 in equipment in 1975 and an unspecified amount for police training in 1975, 1976 and 1977.



## 2. U.S. Economic Aid

In the past several years, only a limited amount of this aid has gone to Argentina because the nation is already more economically developed than most Third World countries. However, the U.S. Export-Import Bank loaned \$68,600,000 to Argentina in FY76 for the purpose of developing export trade for U.S. and other foreign companies located there. An August, 1976 U.S. Embassy report from Buenos Aires stated that more Export-Import Bank loans should become available because of the economic "stabilization" programs being developed by the Junta.

## 3. International Lending Agencies

These agencies, which receive funding from the U.S. government, have dramatically increased their lending program to Argentina in the period just prior to and since the coup. The World Bank, which had granted no sizeable loans to Argentina for the past several years, approved on September 23 a \$115 Million loan for a privately owned electricity transmission project in Buenos Aires. Four more loans for Argentina are awaiting approval by the Bank.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) began to step up its lending program in 1976, and has approved two loans totalling \$150 million since the coup, and has five others now under consideration.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also stepped up its program to help Argentina's balance of payments problem in the past year. IMF aid is measured in "Special Drawing Rights," a category of paper money created in the 1960's to help stabilize the world economy. The total amount of SDR's made available to Argentina increased from 64 million as of September 1975 to more than 700 million at present.

While these aid programs are usually justified in terms of helping Argentina protect itself against other countries and of assisting poor people, it is clear that their main purpose is to prop up military governments such as the Argentine Junta and to protect that government against internal opposition. If more such aid is extended in the coming year, it will stand as a mark of approval by the U.S. government for the practices of the Videla regime.

## REP. KOCH ASKS FOR END OF INTERNAL SECURITY AID

According to the Foreign Assistance Act, the U.S. Defense Department is not allowed to provide police or military aid to foreign police forces. However, a report issued by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) in February, 1976, stated that the Defense Department foreign aid has gone to units that perform police functions because of the inter-related nature of military and police work and because part of the Defense Department role in its aid is to enhance the internal security of countries being assisted.

In practice, the application of these regulations has led to a serious problem: the U.S. has no ultimate control over how its aid is used by the benefited countries.

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# EDITORIAL

## WHAT CAN BE DONE

The existing legislation regulating U.S. Security Assistance requires that the State Department produce every year a report on the Human Rights situation in countries for which Security Assistance is being requested. The recently released report on Argentina concludes that whatever violations of Human Rights may be taking place there, they do not constitute sufficient cause for the U.S. government to discontinue Security Assistance to the Argentine Military regime. It further states that "it is in the national interest of the United States to provide continued assistance to Argentina."

The report significantly understates the extent of Human Rights violations taking place, ignoring important testimony and documentation available from highly reputable international sources. The report, for example, does not take into consideration the well-documented kidnapping, killing and deportation of political refugees in Argentina; understates the number of political prisoners, ignoring Amnesty International's estimates; attempts to disassociate the Argentine government from responsibility for the majority of the violence taking place; acknowledges that some torture takes place but rejects the notion of a widespread pattern of such practices; does not make any references to the inhuman conditions prevailing in prisons and concentration camps in Argentina, again ignoring the testimony of eyewitnesses. The report also suggests that human rights violations such as attacks against Jews, persecution of journalists, professionals and general and indiscriminate repression have subsided in recent months, ignoring daily press reports documenting an increase in such activities. The State Department report even contradicts the Department's own position when it states that U.S. Military Assistance has "little or no bearing on the counter terrorist capability of the (Argentine) Armed Forces." On March 8, 1976 the State Department said that the Military Assistance program for Argentina would "support the program of Armed Forces modernization, particularly their counter-insurgency and sea control capabilities."

The report was widely covered in the Argentine press and was interpreted as reaffirming the long range commitment of the U.S. government to the overall policies of the Argentine military. We may assume that the report has been greatly reassuring to the Argentine military leaders who were worried as a result of months of "quiet diplomatic efforts" and "repeated statements of concern" about Human Rights from the State Department, and intense criticism in the international press.

What can we do to counteract the effect of this report and its implications for U.S. policy towards the Argentine military regime?

First of all we must pressure the new Carter administration to reject this report and its policy implications. The State Department will be required to produce a new report on Human Rights in Argentina to justify or deny Military Assistance for Fiscal Year 1978. The State Department is also responsible for requesting such assistance. Therefore it is important that the new administration be urged 1) to see that the FY78 report is more in depth and more comprehensive and takes into consideration a broader spectrum of sources on the violations of human rights in Argentina, and 2) to not request any Military Assistance for Argentina for FY78.

Secondly, Representative Edward Koch is currently circulating a "dear colleague" letter in Congress to obtain co-sponsorship for an amendment to delete "internal security" as a purpose for which military assistance may be provided. We believe that this amendment is a positive step towards avoiding unjustified U.S. support to regimes which consistently violate human rights. We urge you to contact your local congresspeople to encourage them to join Rep. Koch in sponsoring and supporting this amendment.

Finally, it is crucially important at this time that we redouble our efforts to inform U.S. public opinion about the situation in Argentina and about U.S. government policy towards the Argentine military regime.

We believe that an interruption of U.S. Military Assistance is one of the few initiatives on the part of the U.S. government which could significantly influence the current attitude of the Argentine military with respect to human rights and democratic liberties.



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Also, since the assistance is not monitored on a country by country basis, there is no guarantee that, as in the case of Argentina, the military assistance, far from enhancing internal security will help the development of a dictatorship's repressive techniques.

In a letter sent to all House members, Representative Edward Koch expressed that "such aid contravenes our oft-stated policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of another country." He also warned that "the ambiguity of the present law" may particularly affect Latin America "where there is often no differentiation between the military and the police and where many countries are ruled by repressive military dictatorships."

Representative Koch requested in that letter that his colleagues support his initiative in Congress by co-sponsoring the amendment to delete "internal security" as a purpose for which military aid may be furnished.

We urge you to write a letter to your local representatives requesting that they support Koch's initiative. This action will restrain the flow of tax-payers' money to military dictatorships which often use it to violate the human rights of their own citizens.

## URGENT ACTION REQUESTED

At this time it becomes doubly important to renew our efforts to influence the U.S. Government to interrupt Military Assistance to the Argentine regime on the basis of their continuing pattern of violations of human rights. We believe this would be greatly beneficial to the people of Argentina.

We ask you therefore to take on the following urgent campaigns:

1. Write a letter to the State Department regarding their report on Human Rights in Argentina, and urging them *not to request* any aid to Argentina for Fiscal Year 1978.

2. Write a letter to your local Senators and Representatives asking them to contact the State Department with the same request, and to support Representative Edward Koch's initiative (see page 1).

The following are two model letters to the State Department and to local Senators and Representatives. If you belong to an organization, please write the letters on its stationery.

### Letter to the State Department:

Undersecretary of State for  
Latin American Affairs  
U.S. State Department  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Sir:

The report prepared by the Department of State for the Committee on International Relations on the Human Rights situation in Argentina understates the extent of Human Rights violations taking place in that country.

Furthermore, the report's justifications for continuing U.S. Military Assistance to Argentina are vague and simplistic. The items that will be purchased by Argentina through our Assistance Program are clearly intended for the Argentine military's internal security problems and for counterinsurgency. It is important to note that Argentina is under no threat of attack by a foreign country.

We urge the State Department to produce a new, more in depth and comprehensive report on the Argentine military regime's continuing gross violations of human rights. This new report should take into consideration a broader spectrum of reliable sources of information on the Argentine situation.

We believe that no U.S. taxpayer's money should go to strengthen the ability of a military dictatorship to violate the Human Rights of its own people. Therefore, we urge the State Department and the Department of Defense *not to request any Military Assistance for Argentina for FY78.*

In the long run our national interests will be best protected by a U.S. Foreign Policy which sees Human Rights as one of its primary criteria for defining U.S. relations with foreign governments.

Sincerely,

### Letter to Local Senators and Representatives:

Dear Senator/Representative:

On December 31 the State Department made public its report to the Committee on International Relations of the House on the Human Rights situation in Argentina. Careful examination of the report by Human Rights groups indicates that the report understates significantly the extent of Human Rights violations taking place in that country.

Furthermore, the report's justifications for continuing U.S. Military Assistance to Argentina are vague and simplistic. The items that will be purchased by Argentina through our Assistance Program are clearly intended to help the Argentine military solve its internal security problems and for counterinsurgency purposes. It is important to note that Argentina is under no threat of attack by a foreign country.

Rep. Edward Koch is currently circulating a "Dear Colleague" letter to obtain co-sponsorship to an amendment to delete "internal security" as a purpose for which military assistance may be provided. We believe that this amendment is a positive step towards avoiding un-

justified U.S. involvement in affairs pertaining to the internal security of other countries. We encourage you to co-sponsor this amendment.

We urge you to contact the State Department requesting that they produce a new, more in depth and comprehensive report on the Argentine military regime's continuing gross violations of human rights as it pertains to Military Assistance requests for FY78. This new report should take into consideration a broader spectrum of reliable sources of information on the Argentine situation.

We believe that no U.S. taxpayer's money should go to strengthen the ability of a military dictatorship to violate the Human Rights of its own people. Therefore, we ask you to urge the State Department and the Department of Defense *not to request any Military Assistance for Argentina for FY78.*

In the long run our national interests will be best protected by a U.S. Foreign Policy which sees Human Rights as one of its primary criteria for defining U.S. relations with foreign governments.

Sincerely,

## ARGENTINE REFUGEES: AN APPEAL TO THE U.N.

Argentine citizens attempting to leave Argentina are being prevented from receiving political asylum in the United States by a bureaucratic impasse in which both the U.S. government and the United Nations Commission on Refugees share responsibility. In the U.S. Senator Kennedy and Representative Koch, among others, have expressed their support for a Parole Visa Program for Argentines wishing to leave for the United States. Mr. William Liers, deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, said however, that the United Nations would have to make an explicit appeal to member states to provide asylum to Argentines before the program could be put into effect.

Shortly after the military coup in Argentina the United Nations High Commission on Refugees made an urgent appeal to member states to provide political asylum to the Latin American refugees living in Argentina. Many countries, including the United States, responded to the call and several hundred families left Argentina for Europe and North America. Unfortunately the United Nations' appeal did not take into consideration the situation of Argentine citizens. This, it appears, has become a justification for the U.S. government's lack of initiative in the case of Argentines. Reports reaching our offices indicate that literally thousands of Argentine families are being denied visas to enter the United

States. Many of these families need political asylum and help to leave Argentina.

The problem however goes beyond bureaucratic formalities. A recent editorial in the *Washington Post* correctly remarked that the U.S. has been traditionally receptive to people who did not want to live under socialist governments, but has been equally inhospitable towards people escaping right-wing dictatorships such as the ones in Chile or Argentina. Thus the U.S. received 650,000 Cubans, and 30,000 Hungarians during the 1960's. But of the 3,600 Chilean refugees officially resettled during 1973, the U.S. took only two; of the 1,500 in 1974 the U.S. took none. And, last year, the U.S. accepted 182 Chilean heads of household, and resettled 130,000 Vietnamese. In the words of the *Washington Post*, "This imbalance is politically anachronistic and



morally unseemly," and "This cold-war bias should be ended." This process however may take months if not years. Regarding the immediate needs of people in Argentina we ask our readers to do the following:

1. Write the U.N. High Commission on Refugees at Room C301, U.N. Headquarters, New York, N.Y. 10017, urging the Commission to make an urgent appeal to member states to provide political asylum to Argentine citizens wishing to leave Argentina, with a copy to Mr. Andrew Young, Head of the U.S. Mission to the U.N.
2. Write Senator Edward Kennedy of the Senate Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees, asking that the U.S. government take the initiative on this matter to overcome the bureaucratic impasse.



## HOW TO READ THE "NEWS" FROM ARGENTINA

Perhaps the most appropriate resolution for defenders of Argentine Human Rights, political democracy and constitutional government to make, as a new year, a new congress and a new administration begin, would be to challenge firmly and consistently the red herrings which the Junta's propagandists and apologists constantly use in order to divert and confuse the efforts to assist the Argentine people in reclaiming democratic and civil rights.

Since the March 1976 coup, international public opinion has become familiar with several of the Junta's standard public relations gambits. This article will review a few of them, pointing out the fallacies involved, since they continue to be widely circulated in the media and may still affect those who lack access to the facts which contradict them. (This is not to say, of course, that the Junta will not invent new red herrings as the old ones lose their effect.)

The original gambit, with which the Junta introduced itself to the public in Argentina and especially abroad was the allegation that Argentina was in a state of civil war between leftist guerrilla "subversives" and right-extremist "death-squads," and that the military was intervening as a third party in order to suppress both these extra-legal forces and return order to the country. This allegation is false on both counts. As for the "death squads," the image propagated was one of small groups of fascist-oriented retired military men mixed with professional criminal elements. The facts established by the testimony of numerous eye-witnesses and victims of "death squad" actions, are that these actions are target-



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ed based upon complex and sophisticated information compiled and possessed by the government itself, are carried out using military and police weapons, equipment and active duty, military personnel; that torture, maltreatment and secret murders resulting from these kidnap actions take place within official military installations and public jails; and that the disposal of the corpses thus produced is also carried out through the use of active duty police in military vehicles. In short, the military government is not a third party in this so-called civil war; it is in fact the "party of the first part." The "death squads" are the military. The military are the "death squads."

The Videla Junta has sought to perpetuate the idea that it is entirely separate from these actions through the simple expedient of denying any knowledge of them. The mask does occasionally slip, however, as in the case of Mario Abdel Amaya and Hipolito Solari Yrigoyen, respected deputies in the mainstream democratic Radical Party, who were kidnaped by "mysterious forces" on August 18, 1976. Protests by the party leadership to President Videla resulted in the two men turning up within 10 days in the custody of the "official" military and placed in Villa Devoto civil prison, where the aged Amaya died as a result of severe maltreatment and where Yrigoyen is still held. Such cases, in which the veil of official "ignorance" of the right extremists disappears momentarily, have not seemed to faze the Junta's propagandists in their headlong pursuit of deniability.

The Amaya case also throws light on the weakness of the other side of the Junta's public assessment of the Argentine situation, the equation of "subversives" with leftist guerrillas. For Amaya and Yrigoyen, like so many other lawyers, politicians, priests, teachers, psychiatrists, labor leaders, etc., while "subversive" enough to be officially detained and persecuted, even to the point of death, by the military, were and are clearly not guerrillas.

The Junta, however, has been resourceful in dealing with the logical inconsistencies and irreality of their original image-making effort. Two corollaries have been developed to provide a certain flexibility on the public relations front.

The first is the publicizing of a supposed "moderate" vs. "hard-line" dichotomy within the Junta itself. (The "hard-liners" being the Navy and Air Force leadership plus certain Army field commanders; the "moderates" being Videla and the Army General Staff.) Exactly where the difference lies, in concrete terms, between these two lines is difficult to specify, except insofar as the "hard-liners" may serve as scape-goats for particularly embarrassing right-extremist activities which cannot be classified as "un-official," as, for example, the house-arrest of ex-military president Lanusse, which resulted in the transfer of the "hard-line" Army Corps

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commander responsible. Substantiation of this dichotomy in fact must rest largely on rhetorical evidence. Videla, representing the "moderates," is credited with wanting civilian democracy restored "in the near future," while the "hard-liners" have declined to discuss this prospect. It must be added, however, that in his year-end press conference, Videla stated that it was impossible to set a date for the return of civilian government (an identical statement was made by General Pinochet of Chile in his December interview on CBS-TV.) Beyond this point, we are offered such semantic diversions as the prospect of "dialogue" (moderates) or "plural democracy" (hardliners) within the context of "unity with the process" (continuity of the military dictatorship).



Secondly, justification is being offered for the extension of human rights violations of the most flagrant nature (detention and maltreatment, including torture, officially sanctioned or unofficial) to individuals who are neither armed or leftist in any generally recognized sense of those words. Speaking of the defeats recently inflicted upon the leftist guerrillas in the military sphere, General Videla called for similar "adequate responses" to subversion in the "political, social, economic and cultural fields." (In the same press conference on December 13, Videla opened the possibility that democracy, as well as subversion, may soon receive a new definition at the hands of the Argentine military: "The democratic system may take on new forms better suited to the political, social and economic reality," he said.) Such measures are to be understood, according to Videla, as "fighting for the right of the individual."

By keeping in mind the general who destroyed Hue in order to save it (and in the end did not save it), and recognizing the elements of double-talk and double-think in the Junta's official and un-official statements public opinion may be more adequately prepared to face the next public relations barrage from Buenos Aires.

## VIDELA ADMITS PARA-POLICE IMPUNITY

A few days before the end of 1976, President Videla stated at a national press conference that his government "still does not have complete control of para-police groups which hunt down and kill suspected leftists." He added that, in spite of his government's will to concentrate "all force in the hands of the government, I confess we have not been able to do this 100 percent. There are forces that escape our control."

This statement brought immediate international reaction: Laurence Birns, director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), issued a declaration soon after its release. The following is a transcription of that document:

"President Videla's admission yesterday that right-wing 'Death Squads' freely operate in Argentina is a small but encouraging sign to us that the authorities may be moving to a less hypocritical position on this phenomena. To our knowledge, this may be the first time that a high Argentine official has unequivocally admitted that this form of terrorism exists in his country.

"However, there still exists the fact that the present government has detained on the flimsiest of pretexts, if any at all, upwards of 20,000 political prisoners without even having the decency of issuing a formal list of those it has apprehended. Other thousands of victims have been abducted and 'disappeared,' and still other thousands have been murdered, tortured and brutalized by right-wing terrorists or government forces. Still, the Videla government hasn't charged, arrested, indicted or brought to trial a single right-wing terrorist.

"The Argentine authorities should be aware that the killings and other atrocities now taking place in their country has given it the reputation of being the most dangerous nation for human life in all of Latin America.

"They should also realize that because of this ongoing reign of terror there is absolutely no prospect that Argentina will be the recipient of the \$32 million in military assistance that it has been scheduled to receive from the U.S.

"In our minds and presumably in those of the U.S. Congress, Argentina has joined Chile as a pariah nation that must be tightly surrounded by a cordon sanitaire."



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE RISE

In August, the Jewish community in Buenos Aires experienced a wave of bombings, kidnappings and general harassment (see *Outreach* #4). Widespread international protest decried the government supported terrorism and, for several months, little has been heard of anti-semitic violence. According to the Mexican daily *El Dia* new acts of violence against the Jewish groups have started again, beginning with the bombing of the Argentine Hebrew Society, a cultural center in the capital. *El Dia* reported that "it is again possible to purchase in kiosks and bookstores a variety of anti-semitic pamphlets, which are theoretically prohibited by the authorities. The only visible change is that now those bulletins are printed by a different publishing firm." *Odal*, a new publishing company, replaces the banned extreme right *Milicia* in the printing of Nazi literature. Last September *Milicia* was prohibited by the Argentine Executive power. The pamphlet *El Mito del Siglo XX* (The Myth of the 20th Century), written by Alfred Rosenberg, the official "philosopher" of Hitlerism and used to justify the anti-semitic campaign in Germany four decades ago, circulates widely. According to *La Opinion*, pre-Nazi sectors seem to have an inexhaustible supply of money with which to continue large-scale publication of this kind of material.

*El Dia* also reported the disappearance of a young Jewish lawyer in Argentina, 28 year old Victor Jacobo Noe. Noe, a relative of the president of the DIALA (Delegation of Israeli-Argentine Associations), had received telephone threats from an anti-semitic group prior to his abduction. Another Jewish attorney, Mario Gerardo Yacub, known for his work in defense of political prisoners, also disappeared. Both abductions were denounced by the Argentine Commission for Human Rights (CADHU).

### NEW WAVE OF VIOLENCE

Professionals and union leaders continue to be the target of police harassment. The Argentine Press Association recently called on the government to investigate the cases of journalists held in detention or missing. Two journalists reported missing are Alfredo Arturo Koelliker Frers, editor of the German community magazine *La Plata Ruf*, and Luis Fessatti, a contributor to the magazines *La Semana* and *Panorama*. Ricardo Bach Cano, director of the morning newspaper *Prensa Libre*, is believed to be held by security forces.

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### ON DEFINING 'SUBVERSIVE'

As of November 29, the administration of justice to individuals suspected of government opposition is being handled exclusively by the Argentine Armed Forces. According to a new regulation, they will cover all duties related to this matter, from the collection of evidence to prosecution and sentencing by military tribunals. The new law establishes that a "subversive" is now anyone who wishes to achieve his ideological end "by means other than those contained in the rules governing the country's political, economic and social life . . . which in this case means the institutional acts decreed (by the military regime) in June of this year (1976). In theory, even proposing elections would become a subversive act by this definition." (*Latin America*, Dec. 3, 1976)

### NEW POLICE EQUIPMENT

The Argentine Federal Police Department has attempted to modernize its equipment in order to "apprehend efficiently lawbreakers and other delinquents." Police Chief Edmundo Rene Ojeda discussed the nature of the new equipment in a press conference in late December. According to his report, the Police Department has adopted a digital data processing computer system to complement radio communication in patrol cars. This would allow immediate access by police to information about any registered citizen. The police force also purchased nine explosive systems which are computerized and controlled by television programmers. Identification cards, mandatory for all citizens, will be changed and new, more sophisticated ones will be issued in order to prevent falsification of documents. These technological innovations are but another step in the advancement of Argentina's repressive machinery.

### DEMOCRATIC DENUNCIATION

On December 9, former legislator of the Radical Civic Union, or Radical Party, and former ambassador to Israel, Adolfo Gass, declared in the Venezuelan Parliament that there were more than 20,000 political prisoners in Argentina and called on the Argentine government to publish the names of those detained. The Junta admits to approximately 1,000 prisoners and has recently stated it has released, or will do so, some 500.

Gass, who left Argentina after his house was blown up and is presently living in Venezuela, denounced the recess of the General Workers' Confederation (CGT) which represents over 3 million Argentine workers, and the dissolution of other unions and civilian organizations. Gass called on all democratic forces "to take up

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the denunciation of the atrocities committed by the Argentine dictatorship."

### NEW AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S.

Jurist Jorge Aja Espil was appointed to replace Arnaldo Musich as Argentine ambassador to the U.S. Until the time of his appointment, Espil served as vice-president of the Inter-American Juridical Committee, an organization which has its seat in Rio de Janeiro. From 1962 to 1963, he worked as under-secretary of Foreign Relations and, from 1971 to 1973 he headed the Argentine diplomat mission in Colombia.

### NAZI FREED OF MURDER CHARGES

Enrique Jacobo Muerk, pilot in the German Air Force during World War II and close associate of Adolf Eichman, was released in late December after having been arrested for abduction, rape and murder of a five year old child. Police investigations established evidence for the arrest based on identification of Muerk by neighbors. Muerk admitted that he had kidnapped and abused the child but refused to respond to questions about the murder. Local papers speculated that the influential Nazi-controlled Ocesa organization had secured his release.

### SOCIALIST LEADERS DENOUNCE DICTATORSHIP

The 13th Socialist International, which convened in Geneva in late November, issued a statement denouncing terrorism in Latin America. The resolution referred specifically to Argentina stating that, "In the Argentine Republic tens of thousands have been detained without trial and more have disappeared into concentration camps. The names of most are unknown. Yet more have been murdered by death squads and the killings were later attributed to guerrilla skirmishes. One case is that of Hipolito Solari Yrigoyen, who was kidnapped and later turned up in prison. The Socialist International demands his release." The organization urged economic sanctions and a reappraisal of aid programs and financial transactions for those repressive regimes which violate human rights. The meeting was attended by prominent government leaders of various countries such as Olaf Palme, Willy Brandt, Yitzhak Rabin, Mario Soares and Francois Mitterand.

### MORE KIDNAPINGS

In Mid-December, an ex-congressman and Peronist union leader was killed by security forces in the city of Concordia, 400 kilometers north of Buenos Aires. Pedro Villarreal, former secretary of the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) during the first Peronist government, was assassinated while driving in his car with his grandson. Police claimed that Villarreal refused to heed police orders to stop.

Two Argentine women whose testimonies were requested by representatives of Amnesty International in Argentina, were abducted. Olga Cortes de Salamanca, wife of autoworkers' union leader Rene Salamanca, who is currently detained in Cordoba, and Josefa Martinez, were kidnaped. Ms. Martinez had met with the Amnesty International delegation and Ms. Salamanca was in route to an appointment with one of the delegates at the time of their abductions.

Argentine officials responded to the charges of terrorism levelled against the government. According to an interview published in the *Washington Post*, when questioned about the absence of political freedom for individuals detained, a military official told reporters that it was unfortunate that many of those arrested were innocent victims. The official explained that marginal error was unavoidable in their search for "subversives."

The military officer explained that persons arrested cannot be permitted to make telephone calls because a conversation can result in a code message to opposition forces. Families trying to learn if their relatives are held must understand that information or a list of names can be valuable intelligence tools for "subversive groups." The officer denied all allegations of torture in the prisons. However, other officials admitted to the use of "physical persuasion."

### BANNED BEARDS

Through a new regulation issued by the military regime, men are prohibited from having beards when they have their identity card photographs taken. Under the state of siege imposition, identity cards are compulsory and any one not carrying the official photo ID card can be arrested on the spot and held indefinitely without charges.

This means that thousands of Argentines will have to shave in order to comply with the new disposition. Police have not said whether bearded men will be forcibly shaven if they have not done so before renewing their documents. However, some people have reported harassment. A reporter was not allowed to cover the Argentine auto-racing Grand Prix because he was wearing a beard and his ID card showed him beardless.



## LABOR AND THE ECONOMY

In early January, more than 100 union leaders called on the Argentine government "to reform national economic policy or risk the start of a class struggle." In the strongest statement by labor since the military took power last March, union leaders demanded salary increases to meet the ever-rising cost of living. They accused the government of "restoring the sort of free enterprise system that had always led to starvation wages and widespread unemployment." The document, published in local newspapers, addressed both the government and the people, stating that "salaries which literally fail to feed a married couple with two children of school age is a generalized and dramatic phenomenon." Among the 102 union leaders who signed the statement, thirty were representatives of unions to which military officers were appointed as directors following the March 24 coup.

The document was rejected by Minister of Labor, General Horacio Tomas Liendo and received severe criticism from the pro-Junta newspaper *La Opinion*, which demanded that the military government immediately tighten its control of the unions. *La Opinion* attacked the labor leaders, stating that "they learned nothing, they understand nothing" and indicated that "labor leaders have returned to the scene forgetful of the corruption, violence, immorality and general stagnation which characterized the Peronist government." Military authorities consider that the union leaders stepped beyond their bounds by publishing a document dangerous to the image of the new government. The Videla administration, which has intervened in the functioning of the strongest unions and has arrested many vocal labor leaders, now threatens to assume total control of all unions. This step would put an end to any possible dialogue between labor and government.

The publication of this declaration follows a series of protests and strikes by workers throughout the country. In October, 36,000 workers of the light and power companies in Argentina went on strike to protest the dismissal of 208 workers and the arrest of important labor leaders (see *Outreach* #5). Automobile and dock workers had earlier in the year gone on strike and carried out slow-down actions.

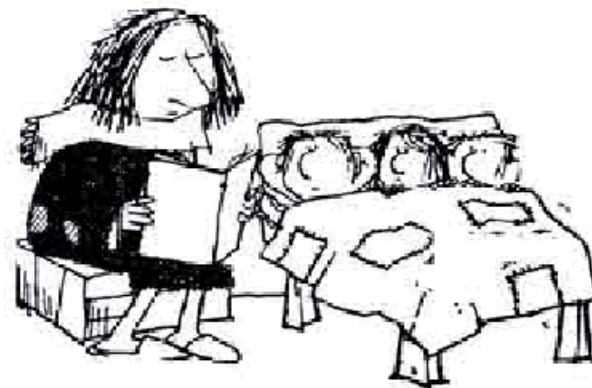
In December, a massive protest erupted when the government modified collective bargaining agreements and cancelled benefits already obtained by workers. This government measure affected gains in paid vacations, sick leave, overtime pay and compensation, while it removed the obligation of private or state enterprises to hire and promote workers on a seniority basis. Compounded by the government's enforcement of a law which allows companies to dismiss workers according

to business necessities, these new legislative steps have been evaluated as a reversal of all progress made in labor relations over the years.

### ECONOMIC PROSPECTS

The demands of labor leaders coincide with the gloomy prospects for the Argentine economy in 1977. Official statistics show that the increase in cost of living for 1976 totaled 347.5%, thus passing the 1975 figure of 335%. In December, the consumer price index rose 14.3% while the total rise in the last quarter of the year reached 23.1%. The government reluctantly conceded a 20% rise in salaries effective January 1, 1977 in order to combat higher living costs and to arrest the deterioration of real salaries, estimated to have dropped by 80% in the past year. Workers' wages increased 153.9%, less than half of the 365.6% inflation index for the year 1976. This latter figure breaks down to a 290.3% rise for clothing and 453.7% rise in the cost of housing. The average industrial wage now stands at the equivalent of US\$120.00 per month. Meanwhile, unemployment is on the rise despite denials to that effect by Minister of the Economy Martinez de Hoz. Official sources calculate unemployment at 9.5% in 1976. Other sources estimate unemployment may be as high as 15%.

These figures are not the only bad signs that the government has to report. At the financial level, it was learned that the domestic money supply, a key factor in the battle against inflation, continues to grow. In 1976, it rose 248% bringing the total amount of money in circulation to 562,494 million pesos, about US\$1,874,986. In three days during the third week of December, monetary circulation increased by 19,297 million pesos. One news source concludes that the average rate



"ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS  
TEA, SUGAR, FLOUR, RICE,  
POTATOES, MEAT, COFFEE..."

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of increase of money in circulation for the year 1976 was 2.9 million pesos per minute. The extreme inflation rate has necessitated the printing of a new 10,000 peso note (US\$40.00). The Argentine peso continues to drop in value on the foreign exchange market. The dollar was exchanged at the official rate for 300 Argentine pesos, a rise in 30 pesos from the previous citation.

### GOVERNMENT ACTION

In late December, government officials held plenary sessions to discuss plans for economic recovery of the nation. This was the first time that representatives of all divisions of the armed forces met with civilian officials to discuss a decisive problem in future national reorganization. In this meeting, Minister of the Economy Martinez de Hoz spoke of the necessity to reduce public spending in order to allow for a greater rate of investment and an increase in productivity. The first cut in public spending will come in the form of a reduction of state personnel since, at present, there are 130 state employees for every 1000 citizens. The government plans to dismiss 300,000 state workers in the coming months. Many state enterprises will also be transferred to private companies. State enterprises require an additional 265 000 million pesos to finance production costs which have increased by 1300%.

Minister of planning, General Ramon Diaz Bessone, affirmed that the future "national project of Argentina, to be completed by the year 2000, will rely on the positive experience of some capitalist countries." The United States, West Germany and France will be models for imitation.

Argentine officials are also trying to acquire credit loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which, until now, has been reluctant to extend credit to any nation which cannot control its deficits beyond a 3.5% of the gross national product. Private sources say that the deficit reaches 7% of the gross national product. The IMF sent a mission to Argentina in December to evaluate the Argentine economic situation. Members of the IMF committee expressed concern for the \$1.5 billion deficit, which exceeds the limits imposed by the IMF when it originally granted emergency loans to Argentina several months ago. At that time, the IMF and other financial sources gave more than \$2 billion in credit to help Argentina pay off its foreign debt.

Meanwhile, the Argentine government is moving to liberalize rigid import restrictions imposed by the former administration. Starting in January, importers will no longer have to submit a six-month program of imports but will be able to import as their needs dictate. In addition, the system for issuing import certificates will be modified to avoid unnecessary delays.

### THE WHEAT HARVEST

Argentina's efforts to achieve economic recovery will be hampered severely by the unexpected fall in wheat demand. The government had banked on high export prices for the record wheat harvest which totalled between 12 and 13 million tons in 1976.

Good harvests in other parts of the world and a consequent fall in international prices have upset the government's calculations. "The fall in the price of wheat has proven once again that the belief that 'with one good crop all our problems will be solved' is totally false," said the *Buenos Aires Herald*.

To aid wheat producers, the government suspended its 10% export duty on wheat, a figure that would have brought an estimated revenue of more than \$70 million for the government. Nonetheless, this relief attracted no buyers on the international market. The government would like farmers to hold on to their crop as long as possible until the wheat price rises. However, farmers are skeptical, and they lack the space to store 8 to 10 million tons of wheat. (*Latin America Commodities Report*, Dec. 3, 1976).

If the government is called upon to buy the bulk of the harvest which is the largest since before the Second World War, additional strains will be placed on an already growing government deficit. 500 cargo trucks filled with wheat are waiting in the metropolitan port to unload the grain. The National Grain Commission recommended that wheat producers not send additional cargo to the port until further notice. The Grain Commission reported that the cause for congestion at the port was due to poor coordination between truckers and

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### REBELLION IN PATAGONIA

New Argentine Film

"If you can imagine the passion of a restrained Costa-Gavras (Z) combined with the luminous cinematography of Barry Lyndon on a subject like *The Grapes of Wrath*, it would provide some idea of the sweep and power of *Rebellion in Patagonia*."

*San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 11, 1976

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shippers and a lack of silos for storage. Argentina had hoped to relieve its economic misery by a successful grain sale abroad. With hopes for that project diminished, it remains to be seen what course of action the government will follow next.

## SUMMARY EXECUTIONS CONTINUE

On January 4, Argentine official military sources reported the death of two political prisoners, Dardo Cabo and Rufino Uriz, both members of the Peronist Youth. The military claim the two were killed during an attack by the Montoneros on a prison convoy which was taking prisoners from one prison to another. The reports stated that Cabo and Uriz were struck by bullets exchanged during the attack.

It is well known in Argentina that prisoners are only transported in heavily armored vehicles which contain individual cells. The prisoners are chained by their hands and feet in an upright position. Given this fact, the military's account of the incident leads us to believe that the death of Cabo and Uriz is another case, among many, of the murder of political prisoners by the Argentine security forces.

From May, 1976 up to the present time, documents and testimonies from Argentina and international organizations have reported the murder of 23 political prisoners in the Cordoba Penitentiary. The following is a list of those killed:

Miguel Angel Mosse  
Jose Alberto Svagusa  
Luis Ricardo Veron  
Eduardo Alberto Hernandez  
Luis Alberto Young  
Diana Beatriz Fidelman

These prisoners were murdered during the month of May. The military claimed that they were killed during an "escape attempt." After their murder, the political prisoners in the Cordoba penitentiary sent a letter to Cardinal Raul Primatesta, Archbishop of Cordoba, denouncing the murder of the six prisoners listed above and the death of another prisoner, Bartoli. According to the letter, the prisoners were removed from the prison cell-block and told they were being taken to the infirmary. "In reality they were shot. At the same time, another prisoner, Carlos Alberto Sgandarra, was beaten and tortured and suffered severe fractures and hematomas."

On May 29 the military reported that Sgandarra was killed in an "escape attempt," together with another prisoner, Jose Angel Pucheta.

In another case, Marta del Carmen Rossetti de Arqueola, the wife of a prisoner detained in Rawson pris-

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on, was detained and tortured in the Information Division in Cordoba. In the room where she was tortured, she saw a message scratched on the wall: "Jorge Chabrol—they are going to kill me." Maria Rossetti de Arqueola denounced what she had seen. Chabrol never appeared and Rossetti de Arqueola was murdered on June 30.

Fifteen more prisoners were killed between then and October 11. The names of 12 of them are:

Raul Augusto Bauducco, Hugo Vaca Narvaja, Gustavo Adolfo de Breuil, Higinio Toranzo, Daniel Tramontini, Liliana Rinaldi de Paez.

On January 7, *Le Monde* reported that the following four prisoners were murdered in October in the Cordoba penitentiary: Miguel Ceballos, Pablo Balustra, Marta Gonzales, Jose Garcia, as well as three other prisoners. The January 4 murders of Dardo Cabo and Rufino Uriz are a tragic proof of the continuation of military summary executions of political prisoners.

## THE KILLING MACHINE

The January 7 edition of the respected French daily *Le Monde* carried an investigative report by a correspondent of that paper on the current situation in Argentina.

"The methods of the armed forces never cease to surprise. They do not arrest people; they take them away. Those detained are not prisoners, but kidnap victims. Sometimes they reappear one, two or three months later in a prison and sometimes they disappear forever.

"Just one case among thousands of others: Mr. Enrique Eisenschlass was arrested on July 2, in the office where he works. The company had asked the people who arrested him to identify themselves. "Anti-subversive commando No. 37 of the Navy" was the reply.

"Is he alive or dead? Thousands of Argentines ask themselves this question after a group of heavily armed men, dressed in uniforms or civilian clothes, have entered their homes and taken away their husbands, wives, brothers or children. Immediately covered with a hood they are taken off to an unknown destination. Why proceed in this way? General Harguindeguy, Minister of the Interior answered 'Did the French behave any differently in Algeria?'"

## THE MASKS HAVE FALLEN

"After having blamed such operations on extreme-right groups, for a long time, the military have finally let the mask fall. What is the point of lying when no one is fooled? The guerrillas have imposed this dirty war on us, they say. Guerrillas who they accuse of not fighting 'openly.'"

"The government has sacrificed everything to efficiency. The military tribunals have only rarely functioned, none, in any case, has dictated a death sentence, a punishment applied every day in Argentina, in fact.

"The military say that they only kill fighters who are caught armed. In fact, other people are executed. Such as: Sergio Karakachoff, a Radical lawyer in La Plata, Miguel Ceballos, Pablo Balustra, Marta Gonzales, Jorge Garcia and three other persons inside the Cordoba prison on October 11 . . .

"Frogmen discovered a strange cemetery near Cordoba—decomposed bodies caught in the stones at the bottom of San Roque lake. How many more graveyards will be discovered?"

"The Army, it is said, has ordered pits dug in the San Jeronimo and San Vicente cemeteries in Cordoba. For whom? The neighbors of the La Perla concentration



camp, near that city, have complained at the bad smells. The soldiers assured them that they have built a crematorium."

The article also stated that there were several concentration camps in Argentina: "La Perla, La Rivera, and Pampa de Olaz in Cordoba; La Atomica near the Ezeiza international airport near Buenos Aires and the Escuela de Mecanica of the Navy."

## U.S. CONGRESSMEN DEMAND RELEASE OF ARGENTINE COLLEAGUE

On August 18, 1976, Dr. Hipolito Solari Yrigoyen, former Argentine senator, was abducted by several armed men together with his colleague and friend Dr. Abdel Mario Amaya. Under special orders from the Presidency, both politicians were later released (see article on "How to Read the News" in this issue). However, soon after their reappearance, Drs. Amaya and Solari Yrigoyen were taken into custody by the government and held in a maximum security prison. A few weeks after his detention, Dr. Amaya died as a result of the notoriously poor jail conditions. Dr. Solari Yrigoyen is still a prisoner of the government and remains in the same jail without due process.

In a letter currently circulating among Representatives and Senators in the U.S. congress, Representative Robert Drinan has taken the initiative of requesting from General Videla the release of the Argentine legislator.

The letter states that "lengthy terms of imprisonment without due recourse of judicial processes violate the fundamental human rights expressed in Articles 9 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and inevitably bring into disrepute the image of the Government of the Argentine Republic abroad." The document also points out that "the regimen of maximum security, to which Dr. Solari Yrigoyen is subject at Rawson Prison, is not in keeping with the State of Siege provision for individuals held pursuant to the Executive Power, insofar as the President is specifically precluded from subjecting those held to any form of punishment."

## NOTICE

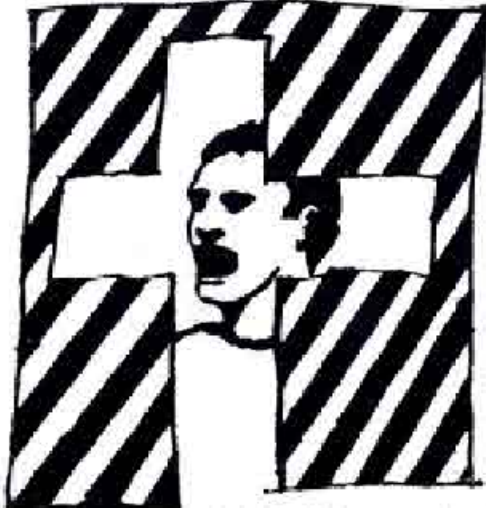
As a result of the consolidation of a national network of committees working for the restoration of human rights in Argentina, we have adopted the common name of **Argentine Information and Service Centers (A.I.S.C.)**



## CHURCH MEMBERS UNDER ATTACK

In spite of the constant denunciations issued by Argentine and international church authorities, the brutal repression and persecution of priests continues with the same intensity in Argentina.

On November 29, 100 Navy and Army troops with helicopters and armored vehicles raided the church and the school of San Miguel in the residential area of Barrio Norte. Four religious educators were arrested during the search and taken to military barracks for questioning. According to students' testimonies, the arrested priests, Fathers Haldky, Paz, Racado and Canal Fejoo, had expressed during class "that something should be done about social injustice." Official reports accused the churchmen of "feeding Marxist poison to the youth." Under this charge the priests were kept in jail for a month and released at the end of the year.



On December 2, Cardinal Raul Primatesta described the arrests as "a new escalation in the regime's harrassment techniques," while other bishops expressed their concern at the loss of civil rights by a number of priests and teachers and warned the Argentine people "not to be pressured into making unjust and premature judgments" on church members. But the Church hierarchy's denunciations seem to have had little effect on the military; that same week Father Pablo Gazzari was forced out of his parents' house by policemen and has not been heard of since.

On December 7, after two months of imprisonment, Father Patrick Rice, an Irish priest residing in Argentina since 1970, was released and deported to Ireland. At a press conference Father Rice said that police had falsely

accused him of painting subversive messages on the city walls. He claimed that the true reason for his detention was the fact that Argentine authorities do not approve of priests working with poor sectors of the population.

Accompanied by representatives of the Catholic Institute of International Relations and officials of Amnesty International, Father Rice reported that during his arrest he had been brutally tortured with water and electric current and constantly beaten by his guards. He also said that police kept his head covered with a hood and threatened to kill him if he managed to see his captors.

Before the end of the year another large raid took place in Buenos Aires. Twenty four members of the Children of God, a religious sect with Latin American headquarters in Costa Rica, were arrested. Thirteen members—ten of them U.S. citizens—were subsequently released and deported but seven Argentine nationals still remain in jail. According to police reports the youngsters were detained after a search at their temple revealed some "letters condemning the Chilean regime of General Pinochet and the U.S. role" in the coup that ousted Allende's administration.

On January 2, Professor Mauricio Lopez, former board member of the World Council of Churches and dean of the University of Mendoza, was also kidnapped from his house. A spokesman of the Methodist Church reported that Professor Lopez had been forced out of the house by five armed uniformed men.

At least 25 churchmen have been arrested since March 1976, and another 10 have been assassinated in a wave of right-wing anti-clericalism functioning under the belief that progressive sectors of the Church have "allied themselves with the Marxist left."

### DEATH AND VIOLENCE IN ARGENTINA

A report on some acts of violence and threats of violence against church people in Argentina.

Compiled by a group of priests in Argentina. Originally translated and published by the Catholic Institute for International Relations (London).

Available in the U.S. from AISC, P.O. Box 4388, Berkeley, CA 94704.

1 to 10 copies: \$1.00 each

10 to 25: 75¢ each

25 and over: 50¢ each

## LETTER FROM PRISON

For the last two months the Argentine military government has been trying to improve its image abroad by maintaining that the conditions under which political prisoners are being held in Argentina have improved. This is in part a response to international pressure.

The following letter dated December 18, 1976 from a political prisoner in Sierra Chica gives the lie to the Argentine government's allegations.

"The military government continues its strategy of 'staging' confrontations in which dozens of 'subversives' are killed. However, we know that in fact the authorities take prisoners out of the jails and execute them.

"... A week ago there was a raid in one of our cell-blocks. Prison personnel and two Army officers stormed into the cells and savagely beat all the prisoners for no reason at all. As a result, several inmates were badly injured, suffering broken ribs and bruises. Two of them are under observation, their heads having been beaten against the walls. They are in danger of losing their eyesight.

"We also know that in Azul prisoners are being taken out of the cells by Army officers and tortured. Many people who have disappeared for months and of whom



government officials have denied any knowledge, have 'appeared' in the Azul prison.

"We are getting acquainted with the situation of political prisoners in Cordoba. Some of them have been transferred here and, from what they tell us, their situation is not any better than ours. They are subject to the same 'treatment as a matter of course' as we are: beatings, electric prods, total isolation, small, dark cells where it is impossible to tell whether it is day or night, no food, no medical attention.

"They reported that there have been 28 executions in Cordoba prisons alone since March. One prisoner was shot because he tried to pass on some salt to another prisoner. Two inmates were totally paralyzed as a result of severe beating to the head.

"Things like these may happen to any of us here at any time for any reason.

"Please tell people about our situation."

## JUNTA'S RESPONSE TO DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION

The Argentine Junta has launched a new offensive against those democratic sectors who oppose it and who call for the return of democratic and civilian rule. The Council on Hemispheric Affairs, whose board of directors include Senator James Abourezk, Representative Donald Fraser, Thomas Quigley of the U.S. Catholic Conference and the Rev. William Wipfler of the U.S. National Council of Churches, stated: "We react with consternation to the action of the Argentine authorities in indicting Gustavo Koca and Garzon Maceda for the alleged crime of assisting a campaign to bring economic and political sanctions against the Argentine Nation. COHA's position is that it is not the activities of Koca and Maceda which are inviting such consequences, but the provocative policies of those who now illegally rule Argentina."

The stated reason why the two Cordoba lawyers have been accused by the Argentine authorities is that they consented to appear before a subcommittee of the U.S. Congress, chaired by Representative Donald Fraser, to speak about current conditions in their country.

On December 10, *The Washington Post* reported that a Federal judge in Buenos Aires had requested the arrest and extradition of Jose Gelbard, an economy minister of President Juan Peron and Isabel Peron between 1973-1974.

The *Post* stated: "Argentina reopened a human rights issue with anti-semitic overtones this week in seeking the extradition of a former cabinet minister now living in Washington."

Gelbard's citizenship was removed by the Junta in June, 1976, which directly contravenes the Inter-Amer-

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ican Declaration of Human Rights, which Argentina signed.

The charges against Gelbard are that he advised Isabel Peron to set up a personal bank account. She has been accused of illegally placing public funds in that account.

The Council on Hemispheric Affairs charged that Argentina's action "is clearly an act of political subterfuge." The Council is not taking a position on the charges against Gelbard: "We are saying that today in Argentina the judiciary operates as a tool of military repression."

"Argentine officials have noted privately," according to the Post, "that Gelbard's being Jewish was a factor in the decision to lift his citizenship."

The story took on a new and fantastic twist recently when a judge accused Gelbard of being the founder of both the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance and the Montoneros, in an attempt to provoke a chaotic situation which would lead to a communist takeover which he supposedly favored. This ridiculous accusation may be part of the junta's continuing attempts to absolve itself of all responsibility in the current situation of violence, repression and economic deterioration.

## DEMOCRATIC DENUNCIATION

On December 19, the weekly edition of the Argentine newspaper *La Opinion* printed a declaration from the Permanent Council for Human Rights which was presented in the form of a letter to General Videla.

The declaration stated: "Day by day we are informed of threats and attempts against diverse individuals from Argentine intellectual and scientific circles . . . attempts to intimidate lawyers in the exercise of their responsibilities and a truly slanderous campaign against religious authorities. None of these actions have been attributed to the organizations declared illegal in 1973 and 1975. (The People's Revolutionary Army [ERP] and the Montoneros— it is forbidden to print the names of these organizations in Argentina). These actions clearly show that there is another terrorism threatening us seeking to prevent the democracy which the immense majority of our people desire and support."

"The words of the Argentine Council of Bishops still have value: Every day the press brings us news of new deaths; time passes and one never knows how they occurred and who is responsible. All this causes a sense of anxiety and restlessness in our people. We ask ourselves, or rather the people ask themselves, at times

only in the intimacy of their homes or in their circle of friends because the fear is growing: What does all this mean? What powerful forces are these which with total impunity operate completely arbitrarily in our society?

"These facts," as Pope Paul VI said, "still lack an adequate explanation."

"The Argentine community is paying a high price: official circles speak of as many as 1200 deaths since March 1976. Priests, politicians, businessmen, unionists, journalists, members of the Armed Forces and Security Forces," as Your Excellency (General Videla) stated, are victims of this escalation of senseless and often indiscriminate violence: women, children and casual victims are not spared. There is not a single family that has not been reach directly or indirectly by this violence. A climate of fear in which little by little no one feels secure is growing.

"We are concerned, not only at the violence of this situation, but at its future projection. How to reestablish respect, fraternity, a sense of solidarity in a population in which mistrust, fear, resentment, desire for vengeance day by day reap their bitter harvest? We are also concerned, as much for the future as for the present, that the deterioration of the economic situation is being born by the weakest sectors of our population.

"We consider it important to establish that our country is not legally at war—neither internally or externally—and that Point No. 3 of the Declaration, protecting all individuals against torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, which was approved by the United Nations in December 1975, is in effect.

"We feel it is an urgent necessity to respect the national Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states: 'Any person accused of a crime has the right to presumed innocence until guilt is proven, according to the law in a public trial in which all guarantees necessary to his defense are assured.' The following of this clause would allow those citizens who are detained without legal charges to return to their home. It is also vital that the list of detainees and their place of detention be published, or at least that this information be given to their families, which is the only way to ameliorate the prolonged agony of thousands of families who do not know the fate of their dear ones.

"We unanimously express our conviction that a republican, representative and federal Argentina which is desired by all can only be achieved on the basis of a solid foundation of Human Rights."

Signed, among others, by:

Doctor Alicia Moreau de Justo, one of the founders of the Argentine Socialist Party

Monseigneur Bishop Jaime De Nevares (Bishop of the province of Neuquen)

Bishop Carlos Gattinoni (Methodist Bishop)

Doctor Oscar Alende (Secretary of the Partido Intransigente, former governor of Buenos Aires Province)

Doctor Raul Allonsin (head of the progressive faction of the UCR)

Father Enzo Giustozzi

Pastor Aldo Echegoyen

Doctor Emilio Fermin Mignone (Minister of Education in the Lanusse Government)

Bishop Federico J. Pagura

Professor Gregorio Klimovsky (University of Buenos Aires, School of Philosophy)

Doctor Genaro L. Carrio

## CORRECTION

Late reports coming from Argentina indicate that the Right of Option, contrary to what we reported in *Outreach* #5, has not been restored. As a result of international pressure the Right of Option was partially granted to those political prisoners whom the Junta considers will not endanger national security by being exiled. But determining who is and who is not dangerous is left to the arbitrary criteria of the Junta. In addition this pseudo-restoration of the Right of Option has been ruled unconstitutional by a Federal Court. However this ruling was overturned by the Supreme Court of Argentina which upheld the total suspension of the Right of Option due to "trying" times the nation is undergoing.

The full restoration together with an effective enforcement of the Right of Option is essential to the return to liberty of thousands of people unjustly imprisoned because of their political views. At this time only massive international pressure can force the Argentine Military to restore the Right of Option.

The information in OUTREACH is compiled from the following sources: *Latin America*, *Latin America Economic Report*, *La Nacion*, *La Opinion*, *Le Monde*, wire services from Prensa Latina, Interpress, Internews, UPI, AP, and AFP. OUTREACH receives press releases, documents, and testimonies from Argentina and international solidarity organizations.

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