



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Prime Minister.

London SW1A 2AH

You have made the point

to Mr. Lam saying.

7 November 1983

M2/11

Dear John,

Arms for Argentina

Your letter of 1 November asked whether, in our representations to the US Administration over certification of human rights in Argentina and the possible resumption of US arms sales, we might make use of the suggestions in the 'Today' programme on 25 October of a campaign against the Jewish population in Argentina.

The Foreign Secretary does not believe this tactic would be successful. We find that the suggestions broadcast in the 'Today' programme on 25 October are strikingly similar to an article in 'Newsweek' of 10 October (copy enclosed). Both rely heavily on the views of Marshall Meyer, an American Rabbi who has lived in Buenos Aires for some years. In both interviews, Rabbi Meyer makes the point that extreme right-wing elements in Argentina are instigating the anti-semitic campaign as they lose power. The appearance of these charges in 'Newsweek' will have ensured that Congressmen and others in Washington now considering the possible resumption of arms sales to Argentina have had the opportunity to reflect on the allegations.

There is no doubt that incidents of this kind do take place in Argentina. But we have no evidence that the problem is on the scale alleged by Meyer. It must remain to be seen whether the new Radical government in Argentina will, when they take over power in December or January, be effective in controlling these tendencies. With his convincing majority, Sr Alfonsin will be well placed to do so. The Radicals have already condemned violence against the Jews; and you will see that the 'Newsweek' article describes Alfonsin as 'the candidate of the Jews'.

Our latest reports from the Embassy in Washington are that the State Department is satisfied that there has been a dramatic improvement in Argentina's human rights record. Congressional opinion is already moving to the view that there is no further basis for withholding certification. The Foreign Secretary does not think that the repetition by us of allegations already made in an American magazine would

/alter

CONFIDENTIAL



alter this trend. It is also relevant that the Israeli Government have received pleas from Jews in Argentina not to pursue the matter of anti-semitism there.

Sir Geoffrey Howe thinks that it is better, in the strong representations which we are continuing to make to the Americans at a high level about the undesirability of arms sales to Argentina, to concentrate on the implications this would have in conferring respectability on a nation that has recently committed an act of unprovoked aggression. We are also leaving the Americans in no doubt of the likely public reaction here.

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL



Photos by Editorial Abril

An educator gives a fascist salute, vandalized gravestone: A 'historical precedent'

ARGENTINA

Anti-Semitism Erupts Again

For Argentina's 245,000 Jews, anti-Semitism has long been a painful fact of life. They have faced discrimination, outright harassment and the sporadic destruction of their temples for years. But in recent months the attacks have become more numerous and more daring—and many Jewish leaders are worried that the situation may soon become much worse. In the small southern Patagonian city of Comodoro Rivadavia recently, a band of hooligans swept through the streets, terrorizing Jewish families and attacking their homes and businesses. They also vandalized the local synagogue, smashing its windows and smearing its walls with anti-Semitic slogans and crudely painted swastikas. Said Rabbi Marshall Meyer, head of the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary in Buenos Aires: "This is the closest thing we've had to a pogrom in years."

Many Jewish leaders believe that the anti-Semitic campaign has been orchestrated by fascist groups seeking to sabotage Argentina's return to democracy in free elections scheduled for Oct. 30. Others contend that Jews are being used as scapegoats for Argentina's growing economic and social problems. Although there are no Jewish candidates, anti-Semitic smear tactics have infected the campaign. Fascist groups have distributed posters and leaflets denouncing Raúl Alfonsín, who is running for president on the slightly left-of-center Radical Party ticket, as "the candidate of the Jews," who has entered into a secret pact with "international Zionism."

Some Jewish leaders believe that the military government and its security forces are partly to blame for the recent incidents. They note that Argentina's feared security police were able to wipe out the Montoneros, a sophisticated, well-organized urban terrorist group, but that no one has ever been

arrested for violent attacks against Jews. In fact, Nazi and fascist ideologies have long been popular in the country's military and security forces—and Jews were often singled out for abuse during the government's "dirty war" against its political opponents in the 1970s.

'Gas Chambers': The latest rash of anti-Semitic violence began roughly six months ago. Since then at least four synagogues have been vandalized. In May, a popular kosher restaurant in Buenos Aires was strafed with machine-gun fire as 30 people sat dining inside. In August a bomb was defused outside a Jewish school. Sales of anti-Semitic propaganda have mushroomed. And last month 25 Jewish schoolchildren undergoing routine checkups at a Buenos Aires Physio-Psychological Examining Board were allegedly abused by mem-

bers of the board's staff, who told the children, "You should be sent to the gas chambers."

Argentina's Jewish community remains divided over how to fight back. Some religious leaders have long favored a quiet, diplomatic approach. "We don't want to minimize the acts," says Moises Camji, vice president of DAIA, the political arm of Argentina's Jewish organizations. "But we don't want to exaggerate them, either." Others, however, insist that the country's Jews should be more aggressive in battling anti-Semitism. "There is a negative tendency in the Jewish community to deny what is happening so as not to alarm people," says Herman Schiller, director of the Jewish weekly *Nueva Presencia*. "But the more this is left to itself, the more it will grow."

There are some encouraging signs. In the past, government officials and other political leaders had persistently denied that anti-Semitism even existed in the country. But almost every major candidate in the upcoming national elections has condemned the recent wave of violence against Jews. Last week the popular news magazine *Siete Días* ran a cover story titled "Dangerous to be Jewish in Argentina?"—a sign of growing public concern over anti-Semitism.

Many government officials are quick to point out that the country has no laws that discriminate against Jews. That is cold comfort to some members of the Jewish community who see frightening parallels between the social and economic chaos now gripping Argentina and the situation in Germany before the rise of the Third Reich. "There is the historical precedent," says Camji. "What happens here doesn't have to occur in exactly the same way." Those fears are probably exaggerated. But to Argentina's Jews, any outbreak of anti-Semitism is reason enough for concern.

MARC FRONS with MARTIN ANDERSEN
in Buenos Aires

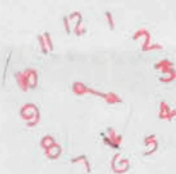
Swastikas in Buenos Aires: Scapegoats

La Penna—ILA—Gamma—Liaison



Arizona
Rehs. B3J

17 NOV 1983



CONFIDENTIAL

FCR 84



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 November, 1983

Arms for Argentina

The Prime Minister has noted the contents of your letter of 7 November, concerning the reports of a campaign against the Jewish population in Argentina and the use that might be made of this to bring pressure on the US Government over certification of human rights in Argentina and the possible resumption of US arms sales.

A. J. COLES

P. F. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

(2)



PRIME MINISTER

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 November 1983

Prime Minister

The transcript is
attached.

Arms for Argentina

I enclose an extract from a transcript of a BBC Radio 4 'Today' programme on 25 October which describes a campaign against the Jewish population in Argentina.

The Prime Minister has asked whether we can make use of this material to bring pressure on the US Government not to resume arms sales to Argentina. I should be grateful for very early advice and any comment you may have on the facts presented on the radio programme concerned.

Peter Ricketts Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

Handley - cc [unclear] [unclear]
Cru

W.C.

TRANSCRIPT FROM BBC RADIO 4 TODAY PROGRAMME, 25 OCTOBER 1983

CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE JEWISH POPULATION IN ARGENTINA

COMMENTATOR:an utterly discredited military regime, and one of the less savoury aspects of the campaign which has come to the fore, is the growing emphasis on anti-semitism. Martin Leeburn reports.

MARTIN LEEBURN: That was a crowd of thousands of Jews in the centre of Buenos Aires last night, celebrating the forthcoming end of military rule, but also protesting at an upsurge in violence and provocations against Argentina's court of a million-strong Jewish community. In recent months there has been a serious anti-Jewish riot in the Southern city of Comodoro Rivadavia, several attacks on synagogues and even violence against Jewish school children. No-one's been arrested in any of these incidents. Some Jews here say that there's been no period like it since the Israeli secret service kidnapped Nazi war criminal Adolph Eichmann on the street of Buenos Aires in 1962 and a series of far right reprisals ensued. One of the organisers of last night's demonstration is an American Rabbi Marshall Meyer who's lived here for 26 years, and told me how seriously he took the situation.

MR MEYER: Well, there's been any number of acts in the last few months that have really created a great deal of anxiety on the part of the Jews of Argentina. The City has been painted, I would say virtually swathed with swastikas and anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist and anti-Israel inscriptions. The amount of anti-Semitic literature has suffered an extraordinary increment. They've just re-published Henry Ford's, The International Jew, they've re-published The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, there have been any number of people threatened, as well as some very violent scenes.

MARTIN LEEBURN: You say, they have re-published The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Who are "they" who are doing this?

MR MEYER: Well, I personally can't identify them, but living in a police state I can't believe that the Government can't identify them.

MARTIN LEEBURN: Well who do you think is behind it then?

MR MEYER: I think the extreme Right. But the extreme Right in Argentina is divided into any number of fragmentary atomised groups.

MARTIN LEEBURN: Is there anything co-ordinated, then, behind it? Why should it of come now?

MR MEYER: I think that it's quite clear that when you have a democratic opening in a society which is used to military dictatorship, then obviously when the Right is losing its power then they have to create destabilising elements in the society. And, we Jews, who've been around the stage of history for some 4,000 years, have our fair share of experience in these matters.

CONFIDENTIAL



Title

Sub

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 November 1983

AMERICAN ARMS FOR ARGENTINA

BF 11
I am sure that you have the point very much in mind, but the Prime Minister observed this morning how very damaging it would be if, in present circumstances, the US Government announced their willingness to resume arms sales to Argentina. She would be grateful for the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on what action, following the Grenada situation, we should now take with the US Government to bring home to them the very serious difficulties in which we would be placed if such an announcement was made (at any rate in the next few weeks).

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

A. J. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

Ry

TRANSCRIPT FROM BBC RADIO 4 TODAY PROGRAMME, 25 OCTOBER 1983

CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE JEWISH POPULATION IN ARGENTINA

COMMENTATOR:an utterly discredited military regime, and one of the less savoury aspects of the campaign which has come to the fore, is the growing emphasis on anti-semitism. Martin Leeburn reports.

MARTIN LEEBURN: That was a crowd of thousands of Jews in the centre of Buenos Aires last night, celebrating the forthcoming end of military rule, but also protesting at an upsurge in violence and provocations against Argentina's court of a million-strong Jewish community. In recent months there has been a serious anti-Jewish riot in the Southern city of Comodoro Rivadavia, several attacks on synagogues and even violence against Jewish school children. No-one's been arrested in any of these incidents. Some Jews here say that there's been no period like it since the Israeli secret service kidnapped Nazi war criminal Adolph Eichmann on the street of Buenos Aires in 1962 and a series of far right reprisals ensued. One of the organisers of last night's demonstration is an American Rabbi Marshall Meyer who's lived here for 26 years, and told me how seriously he took the situation.

MR MEYER: Well, there's been any number of acts in the last few months that have really created a great deal of anxiety on the part of the Jews of Argentina. The City has been painted, I would say virtually swathed with swastikas and anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist and anti-Israel inscriptions. The amount of anti-Semitic literature has suffered an extraordinary increment. They've just re-published Henry Ford's, The International Jew, they've re-published The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, there have been any number of people threatened, as well as some very violent scenes.

MARTIN LEEBURN: You say, they have re-published The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Who are "they" who are doing this?

MR MEYER: Well, I personally can't identify them, but living in a police state I can't believe that the Government can't identify them.

MARTIN LEEBURN: Well who do you think is behind it then?

MR MEYER: I think the extreme Right. But the extreme Right in Argentina is divided into any number of fragmentary atomised groups.

MARTIN LEEBURN: Is there anything co-ordinated, then, behind it? Why should it of come now?

MR MEYER: I think that it's quite clear that when you have a democratic opening in a society which is used to military dictatorship, then obviously when the Right is losing its power then they have to create destabilising elements in the society. And, we Jews, who've been around the stage of history for some 4,000 years, have our fair share of experience in these matters.