Introduction

This report is based upon readings and a series of interviews with experts on various aspects of Argentine affairs in Washington, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Dallas, Texas. The interviews were with the United States government officials in the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Commerce, United States Embassy in Buenos Aires; with government officials of both Argentina and Brazil, Argentine military officers, United States and Argentine newspaper and television correspondents, representatives of Jewish communities in Brazil, Argentina and Mexico and with present and former residents of Buenos Aires.

In considering this problem there are two cautionary observations that should be made initially: First, that the problem is highly complex and very difficult; over-simplification is dangerous and conducive to misconception and erroneous conclusion. Second, that this is a problem which cannot be considered in a vacuum, but must be viewed against the whole background of political and economic instability and the high degree of social ferment existing throughout Argentina and particularly in Buenos Aires.

Political, Economic and Social Background

The present government in Argentina is a civilian government but is merely a shadow. It exists only at the sufferance of the Argentine military and every decision that it makes is subject to potential review and supervision by military leaders. The moment any government official loses the confidence of the military leaders his days are certainly numbered.

In the civilian government President Guido is impotent and insignificant. Only four cabinet officers are important.
These four make the major government decisions and form a last bastion against military takeover. They are the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Secretary of the Navy (who is under the Secretary of Defense and hence not of full cabinet status), the Minister of Economy and the Minister of Interior.

The military power behind the government is disorganized and disunited. There is great rivalry between the Army and Navy and similarly between the Air Force and both the Army and Navy. Each of these armed service branches is further split into rival groups or cliques. The Army, for example, has democratic, neo-fascist, socialist and Peronist groups within it. An important group is the one supporting and surrounding General Pedro Aramburu, who is basically democratic-minded and pro-American.

Economically, Argentina is almost flat on its face. The country is far in arrears on many of its international debts; it is undergoing substantial and ever-worsening inflation. The Argentine peso continues to drop in value internationally and the government is unable to meet its payroll. Some civil servants have not been paid for months. The Minister of Economy recently returned from the United States with promises of additional help from government and private sources. However, this help may not solve their difficulties since it is not substantially greater than what had already been promised.

In addition to these problems the country is ridden with turbulent social unrest. Wages are low and prices are high. The working groups largely support Peron and are urging a change. General strikes are held from time to time to register a protest. The situation is potentially explosive.

Against this background it seems to me that Argentine anti-Semitism must be considered not as a single problem, but as two closely related problems: First is the immediate short-range problem which has caused considerable alarm here and in other countries and is characterized by organized neo-Nazi groups that engage in violent activities including bombings, machine gunnings, personal assaults and various acts of vandalism. These activities recently reached a climax with the "Sirota case" when an Argentine Jewish college girl was captured and tortured by a neo-Nazi group. Second is a less talked about, but I think much more serious problem represented by a gradually growing, deep-seated, general, non-violent anti-Semitism among the Argentine people as a whole.

The Immediate Short-Range Problem

For nearly two years there have been sporadic outbursts of barbaric behavior by neo-Nazi groups in Argentina that have grown in frequency and seriousness. These groups have painted swastikas on buildings, have put up anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi posters, have destroyed property by bombings and machine gunnings, and have
assaulted individuals by beating them up and even by carving them with knives.

These incidents have been primarily the work of Tacuara, but there are other neo-Nazi or fascistic groups including Guardia Restauradora and the Union Civica Nacionalistica. Although these groups are quite small in number -- in the last election, they succeeded in garnering only about 3,000 votes -- they are violently outspoken and potentially dangerous.

Tacuara itself is made up mostly of young men in their teens and twenties, who might be classified as serious "juvenile delinquents." Most of these young men come from prominent families with aristocratic backgrounds and have relatives who are important either in civilian government or in military circles. They are extremely nationalistic, violently anti-communist and anti-Semitic. Much of their appeal to recruits for their anti-Semitic doctrines is based upon the identification of Jews with the world communist movement in their propaganda.

Recently this group extended its activities across the River Plate into Uruguay. Significantly, most of the attacks in Uruguay have been against communists rather than Jews. It is also significant that Miss Sirota, who was brutally attacked and tortured, is not only Jewish but an admitted communist.

It has been suggested that the Argentine anti-Semitic movement is part of a worldwide neo-Nazi organization. I do not think this is so. The group is too young, immature and disorganized. Recent efforts to form such an international organization in England have proved fruitless; and there exists no solid evidence connecting Tacuara with any neo-Nazi group outside Argentina.

Is Tacuara Supported Either by Government or Military?

It has also been suggested that Tacuara is secretly being supported either with funds or supplies, or both, by the Argentine government. If by "government" one refers to the officially recognized, somewhat uneasily seated civilian government in Argentina, there are many reasons why it seems clear to me that this government qua government is not supporting Tacuara in any way. First, there is no evidence that this is so, other than conjecture that Tacuara must have some support or it would have been abolished by the government. Second, the government has no reason to engage in an anti-Semitic campaign. Third, with few exceptions, some of which will be noted later, the government has no known anti-Semites in responsible positions. Fourth, the Argentine government knows that the United States government, as well as others, would seriously frown on an officially sponsored anti-Semitic campaign and the government has too many other problems without one such as this is. And finally, the government has taken
some measures to bring a halt to this neo-Nazi terrorist campaign.

Is Tacuara then supported by the real power, the Argentine military forces, either directly or indirectly through S.I.D.E., the quasi-military national counter-intelligence agency? Although one can be less sure on this question, I think the correct answer is that it is not, for these reasons:

1. The military as a whole, not just the Army alone, is so split into diverse and highly competitive cliques that it would be extremely difficult for them to unite forces to the extent that would permit them officially, or even secretly, to support any single movement.

2. My confidential United States intelligence sources tell me that S.I.D.E. is not aiding Tacuara.

3. The military, too, have problems of their own and would not want as a whole at this time to incur the risk of withdrawal of support from the United States government.

What is probably true, however, is that certain officials of the Army, Navy and Air Force who are violently anti-Semitic in philosophy are individually, secretly, and without official sanction, giving support to Tacuara and similar groups. Some of the weapons that Tacuara has been using are government-issued military weapons. Each of the military forces are known to have violently anti-Semitic groups within them. Although the leaders of some groups are known, they have not been arrested or even questioned.

Captain Horacio Enriques Green, who headed the Federal Police, the chief law enforcement agency in Buenos Aires, until he resigned on September 26, is an excellent example of the kind of individual help military officers can and do give to Tacuara. The job he held is traditionally assigned to a naval officer and is filled by nomination of the Secretary of the Navy. Green is a captain in the Argentine Navy and is notoriously anti-Semitic. The man who served as his deputy, Miguel Garcia, is also known to be an avowed anti-Semite. Until quite recently, neither of them did anything to counter the terrorist activities of Tacuara.

Causes

The causes for this resurgence of anti-Semitism in Argentina can be traced mainly to these factors:

1. The Eichmann case created a great deal of resentment against the Israelis, and against Jews in general, because of the violation of Argentine territorial integrity. Latin nationalism, sensitivity and insecurity have been stirred up on this account.
2. The current economic and political crisis requires scapegoats if those in positions of power are to escape blame. The Jews are always a convenient scapegoat.

3. The basis for this kind of savage anti-Semitism was laid during World War II, when Argentina was neutral, its Army was being trained by German officers, and it was a center of Nazi intelligence and propaganda activities. Many Germans remained after the war, when Argentina also became a haven for escaped Nazis.

4. The current government maintains some of its power through vigorous criticism of its predecessor, the Frondizi government. President Frondizi has among his close advisers and financial supporters a large number of Jewish merchants, lawyers and economists. There are, therefore, those in the military who believe that continual attacks upon Frondizi's Jewish advisers supply strength to their present position.

5. Many members of the Argentine Jewish community have been guilty of serious economic crimes, including smuggling, tax evasion, currency manipulations, etc. The two most important cases in this category received much notoriety: the loan manipulations of Jose Mazar Barnett, President of the Argentine National Bank, who fled the country and was granted political asylum in Uruguay, and the Israel Bank scandal involving the smuggling of Chevrolet automobiles into Argentina.

6. There is a substantial Arab community in Argentina, numbering several hundred thousand, many of whom settled there after World War II. Most of these Arabs are anti-Israel and anti-Semitic and give generous funds for anti-Semitic propaganda and organizations. In addition, it is believed that considerable money comes from Arab countries abroad, particularly Egypt.

What is Being Done

1. Minister of the Interior Androgue has issued strong statements opposing anti-Semitism and deploring the violent attacks. Androgue himself was once tortured by neo-Nazis and hence is personally, bitterly, anti-Nazi. It is impossible, however, for him to take positive action without great caution. Although the Federal Police is under his jurisdiction, ex-chief Captain Green was a high ranking naval officer and had the support of some of the admirals. Accordingly, he must move slowly but has succeeded in getting the police to take some action.

2. The police have begun to adopt a somewhat tougher attitude toward Tacuara. They remove Tacuara posters and paint over Tacuara signs almost as soon as they appear. They have raided Tacuara headquarters and have even arrested some of the Tacuaristas.
3. The Catholic lay press, notably the magazine Criterio, has severely criticized the anti-Semitic campaign. The church hierarchy itself issued a strong statement deploring the violent tactics of the ultra-nationalist groups, without mentioning any specific names. One of the priests who has been actively leading Tacuara was silenced by order of the Vatican for a six-month period.

4. The United States Embassy in Buenos Aires has notified the Argentine Foreign Office of its great concern in these matters. The State Department in Washington has done likewise with the Argentine Ambassador.

5. The police have posted armed guards at important Jewish centers, including the local offices of the American Jewish Committee.

All of this has had its effects; the situation is much quieter now than it was three months ago.

**Why Has Not More Been Done?**

The reasons more has not been done are also complex, but essentially may be summed up as follows:

1. Since the ousting of Peron, the responsible "democrats" in the Argentine military and the successive civilian governments have been proud that they were able to restore much of the freedom and most of the civil liberties that Peron had abolished. Freedom of speech and of the press are considered especially important. Newspapers are now openly critical of the government and, except on rare occasions, get away with it. Thus, the government does not wish to appear to be stifling freedom of expression, even if the views expressed are unpopular. After all, some Argentines are quick to point out, we Americans have George Lincoln Rockwell, who is permitted to make speeches and hold public rallies that are strongly anti-Semitic.

2. The police and government officials are reluctant to embarrass the aristocratic families whose youngsters are members of Tacuara. Throughout Latin America, it is considered politically and socially unwise to cause trouble for members of such families.

3. Many Argentines, including government and police officials, doubt that the anti-Semitic activities of Tacuara are really serious. Some of them doubt that these events, although they are fully reported in the newspapers, actually happened. And if such things did happen, they believe that they were part of a communist plot to embarrass Tacuara and eliminate it because Tacuara is such an effective anti-communist organization.
4. Most of the Argentine people, even the "right-thinking" ones, are quite apathetic, much as the majority of the German people were during the 1930's.

5. For the reasons set forth earlier, the government is most unstable and impotent.

What Should We Do?

1. We should remain calm, avoid public statements and continue to watch the situation very closely. Angry outbursts, such as those made recently by Congressmen calling for interruption of economic aid to Argentina, do much harm and no good.

2. We should continue to exert pressure on the Argentine civilian government through the Department of State, quietly and informally, if the situation continues to warrant it.

3. We should make contact with the Department of Defense and attempt to get their help in influencing the Argentine military in this matter.

4. If the situation continues to warrant it, we should enlist the aid of our Catholic friends in urging church leaders and lay groups in Argentina to speak out more strongly against the anti-Semites.

5. If the situation does not improve and the Federal Police continue to protect Tacuara, we should do what we can to persuade the Argentine government to get rid of neo-Nazis and anti-Semites in this vital department.

6. We should continue to help the Jewish community (preferably as a whole but if not, then through the Instituto alone) to conduct a quiet, effective public relations campaign to explain the positive features of Jewish life and the contribution of the Jews to Argentina.

7. We should urge that influential Jewish organizations, including the Instituto, launch a broad educational campaign to convince the public that Judaism as a faith and a philosophy is opposed to communist ideas and practices; that the Jews could never be Communists; that Jews do not represent a threat to Argentina; and that some Jews, at least, are truly interested in Argentine nationalism.
The Serious Long-Range Problem

It is my belief that the current wave of violence by Tacuara and associated groups is a passing phase that will ultimately be eliminated with the help of right-thinking Argentine officials and citizens. I think we would be making a mistake, however, if we did not recognize that these attacks are symptomatic of a deep-rooted and pervasive anti-Semitism among the Argentine people. Currently that feeling is non-violent in character and amounts to little more than a vague feeling that Jews are different, cannot be trusted, generally violate Argentine law and are much more concerned with Israeli and general Jewish affairs than with Argentine problems. This feeling is becoming more intense as time goes on, and it would be difficult to predict where it might lead.

This deep-seated, generalized anti-Semitism has its roots in the same factors as the recent violence, plus several others, as follows:

1. Insularity. The Jewish community in Buenos Aires tends to segregate itself socially and culturally from non-Jews. Most of the contacts which do exist have been developed by the Instituto. But in general the group remains distinct and apart.

2. Zionism. Most of the Jews in Buenos Aires are not content merely to support Israel as a haven for homeless Jews, but identify themselves with that country and even look forward to settling there. The result is that Jews are accused of dual allegiance or even of being more concerned with Israeli problems and affairs than with those of Argentina. The situation is exacerbated by occasional public speeches by prominent Jews who urge that the Argentine Jewish community emigrate to Israel. Further difficulties arise from continued financial contributions to Israeli causes even during times of financial crisis, when the government urges Argentine citizens not to send money abroad because of the resulting strain on Argentine peso exchange.

3. Communist influence. Only a few years ago the governing body of the Jewish community, the Kehilla, was dominated by communists. This is no longer true, but there are still 10 to 15% in that body, a fact which has been widely publicized.

4. Economic transgressions. The Jews are essentially a mercantile class in Argentina. Some have been involved in numerous widely publicized economic scandals.

5. Graft. Many of the Jewish advisers surrounding Frondizi were guilty of graft. Their identity as Jews has been publicized widely.
The situation has worsened steadily because very little is being done about the long-range problem of anti-Semitism in Argentina. The Jewish community has become tense and fearful. Emigration to Israel has increased lately, though not to any significant degree. There has been a fairly extensive flight of capital to the United States, Israel and Switzerland. No particularly constructive action has yet been taken, partly because of a running feud between the Instituto and the DAIA which prevents any unified community response.

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