



# **A Cover-Up Exposed: The 1994 AMIA Bombing Case Hits the Wall**

Sergio Kiernan

*The American Jewish Committee protects the rights and freedoms of Jews the world over; combats bigotry and anti-Semitism and promotes human rights for all; works for the security of Israel and deepened understanding between Americans and Israelis; advocates public policy positions rooted in American democratic values and the perspectives of the Jewish heritage; and enhances the creative vitality of the Jewish people. Founded in 1906, it is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States.*

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The AMIA case is dead. It died, and a new one was born, on September 2, 2004, when, after three years of proceedings, the three-judge tribunal hearing it essentially threw out the investigation put together by Judge Juan José Galeano. The court released all the defendants, dismissed most of the evidence collected against them, seriously criticized the Argentine government in office at the time of the bombing, and filed charges against several judges and high-ranking former officials. What the court said was that there had been no real investigation; rather officials had conspired to construct a case “serving obscure political interests,” and the official in charge of investigating the bombing, Federal Judge Galeano, should therefore be prosecuted for obstructing justice.

The ruling stunned the country and sent shockwaves to many other countries that were expecting it instead to shed light on what happened on July 18, 1994, when a powerful bomb leveled the six-story building of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Aid Association, AMIA, in downtown Buenos Aires. The decade between the horror that left eighty-five dead and the court’s ruling saw plenty of false starts, leads apparently but not truly pursued, high-sounding declarations, and many, many contradictions.

The American Jewish Committee’s series of reports on the bombing in Buenos Aires exposed these doubts and criticized what was perceived as hesitation and self-serving grand gestures by then President Carlos Menem’s administration. The court’s ruling has confirmed those criticisms and, in fact, has gone far beyond them, charging that most, if not everything, in the investigation was a deliberate sham.

The crucial moment in the trial was reached late last year, when current President Nestor Kirchner waived the protection of the Government Secrets

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Act and ordered several intelligence agents to take the stand and be interrogated by the court. By 2003 it had become clear that the whole case revolved around a statement by one of the defendants, Carlos Telleldin, who had testified that he had given a stolen Renault Trafic van with a new identity to a group of Buenos Aires policemen. According to the investigation, remains of that particular van had been found in the rubble of the AMIA building after the explosion.

There was not a shred of evidence that the van had gone from Telleldin's illegal workshop to the policemen and then on to the terrorists—only Telleldin's testimony, which he promptly qualified and recanted the minute he was out of Judge Galeano's custody and under the three-judge court's jurisdiction. Moreover, Telleldin claimed he had testified against the policemen solely in exchange for money and in hopes of getting a better deal from Judge Galeano.

The judge never explained where the money had come from and only grudgingly admitted that the State Intelligence Agency, SIDE, had paid it when this became public knowledge through the press. The court wanted to know the details; the defendants wanted them aired. But all subpoenas were rejected under the terms of the Secrets Act.

Then President Kirchner intervened. He ordered the officials involved in the payment to take the stand and talk. He even waived the Secrets Act's protection for the former intelligence director during Menem's government, Hugo Anzorreguy. Thus it was discovered that Telleldin had received \$400,000 for his testimony. That day the AMIA case was mortally wounded.

Today Galeano and Anzorreguy stand charged with obstruction of justice. Everyone originally charged with culpability in the AMIA bombing is free and reportedly considering suing the federal government for unlawful arrest. The main suspects, Telleldin and former police inspector Juan José Ribelli, are becoming familiar faces on TV, airing their grievances against Galeano, and parading their innocence.

The pain and confusion felt by Argentines after these results are hard to describe. Now there are two AMIA investigations: One is picking up the debris of the first investigation and starting from square one to try to find the thread of the conspiracy. The second investigation will look into the cover-up and try to punish the formerly powerful for their lies.

Perhaps more important, this latter investigation will try to answer a painful and urgent question: *Why? Why obstruct justice in a case like this?*

Why cover for a group of barbaric terrorists who carried out the worst anti-Semitic attack outside of Israel since the end of World War Two? Was it just to save face? Or is there a darker side to the case still hidden?

This report, the ninth in a series published by the American Jewish Committee on the bombing, will concentrate on the findings of the court and explore the directions the investigation may follow in the near future.

## **The Findings**

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On September 2, 2004, after three years of work, the three judges of Oral Tribunal Number Three, Federal Court of Buenos Aires, summoned the twenty-two suspects charged in the AMIA bombing to hear their findings. It was a tense afternoon in the refurbished old basement of the Federal Building in Retiro, in downtown Buenos Aires. Relatives of the accused and the press were packed behind the bulletproof glass wall that separated them from the defendants, their lawyers, and the judges. Cameras were ready; the proceedings were to be aired live on television. There was a sense of history in the making.

That afternoon was the culmination of the longest criminal case in Argentine judicial history, one probing the nation's worst-ever terrorist attack. The judges—Gerardo Larrambebere, Miguel Pons, and Guillermo Gordo—had interrogated 1,284 witnesses and experts, and ordered many new investigations. Their secrecy notwithstanding, their orders had made it clear that they were deeply unhappy with the work of the investigating magistrate, Judge Juan José Galeano.<sup>1</sup> Late in August, rumors were rife that the case that Galeano had forwarded after seven years of work was collapsing. In fact, that September 2, the relatives of the victims were absent from the court because they suspected and feared that the twenty-two charged might walk free that evening and they didn't want to be present.

The proceedings that day started early in the morning, beginning with the last statements by some of the defense attorneys. After a long break, the court reconvened early in the evening. The three judges sat before their long, black bench, the national flag behind them and their laptop computers on the desk. Judge Pons took out a fat folder and started reading the ruling, with his colleagues looking on. The legalese notwithstanding, the meaning of the ruling was perfectly clear: Citing paragraph and article of every relevant law and code, Pons cleared of all charges every single defendant. He also ordered the

release of all except Telleldin and Ribelli, who were to be held in prison because of charges being heard by other courts.<sup>2</sup> It took only a few minutes for Judge Pons to stun everybody present into silence and to leave aghast the many watching on TV. But worse was yet to come.

After wiping away the charges against all defendants, Pons started reading measures his tribunal wanted carried out and charges they wanted investigated. First, the judges scrapped Galeano's investigation of the policemen that had been tried. The charges were dismissed, and the Oral Tribunal declared null and void Galeano's order to pursue that aspect of the investigation.

Next they dismissed a fantastic claim they had found in Galeano's case, contained in a writ dated July 25, 1994—a week after the explosion—stating that the engine of the Renault Trafic van had been found at the site of the explosion by Argentine police forces. The writ included the signature of a fireman who claimed to have been present at the site and witnessed the discovery of the engine block. Years later, testifying before the Oral Tribunal, the fireman explained that he had not actually seen the engine block being unearthed from the rubble, but had been asked to sign as a witness and agreed. In fact, the fireman—who is now under investigation for criminal charges of bearing false witness—said that he thought the engine block had been found by Israeli army rescue personnel working at the site and that the local police had just wanted to take credit for the important finding. The judges, however, gave no credence to the allegations that the bomb had been placed inside the AMIA building and considered proven that a car bomb was used.

Then, Judge Pons dropped the tribunal's largest bombshell. He started reading charges against the investigating judge in the case, Juan José Galeano, including destruction of evidence, illegal arrests of suspects, roughing up others—Pons used a legal expression that can be construed as both "torture" and "mistreatment"—and extortion of a lawyer. But the worst charge was that of having purchased the testimony of Carlos Alberto Telleldin, a petty criminal with a record of fencing stolen goods, selling stolen cars, pimping, extortion, and passing bad checks, who was instructed to identify the policemen Galeano wanted to indict in exchange for \$400,000. As Galeano's accomplices in this crime, the judges named a long list of officials: Galeano's aides in his court; attorneys Juan José Barbacchia and Eamon Mullen; former Intelligence Secretary Hugo Anzorreguy; former Interior Minister Carlos Vladmiro Corach. The judges leveled other charges against judges, senators, representatives, and even against the former president of the DAIA Jewish organization,

Ruben Beraja.<sup>3</sup> In a separate item, the tribunal accused the State Intelligence Agency of engaging in illegal phone tapping.

The charges were so sweeping and grave that the three judges on the tribunal knew they could not keep the whole country waiting for them to explain the legal basis of their actions, which they were slated to do on October 29. After the session was over, therefore, the tribunal released a terse press release explaining the basis of their finding.

According to the judges, Galeano's purchase of Telleldin's testimony was "the culmination of irregular activities by the State directed at construing a responsible party for the attack, the facts notwithstanding." In plain English, the judges found that Galeano had paid Telleldin to frame the policemen. In order to build up that case, said the tribunal, Galeano had opened "a whole venue of investigation" they found illicit and false. "Judge Galeano left the way of finding truth and engaged in behavior contrary to the law, behavior in which he had the collaboration, by action or by omission, of several organs in the three branches of government that gave him political support and cover for his irregular and unlawful acts."

The press release then made it clear why, if the whole case against the defendants was false, they had not just dismissed the case instead of pronouncing a sentence of not guilty on each. This was because, according to Argentine law and the human rights conventions signed by Argentina, relatives of the victims have a positive right to be informed of the judges' rationale and of the facts as they can be ascertained. Thus, the tribunal stated that they considered it proven that Telleldin did hand the van to somebody, "but there is no proof whatsoever of his knowing the use it was going to be put to." As for the policemen, "in no way was it proven that the Renault Trafic van used as a car bomb passed through their hands on July 10, 1994, or at any other moment."

One further aggravation for the relatives of the victims was that the investigation and the trial had proven beyond a doubt that the policemen accused in the AMIA case were, in fact, a gang that specialized in selling and reselling stolen cars. Their leader, Ribelli, had an estate of over \$10 million on a salary of just over \$40,000 a year. Ironically, the application of the poisoned fruit doctrine, which nullifies evidence obtained by illegal means, even if true, virtually guarantees that Ribelli will be exonerated of all charges for his illegal activities. In fact, it is most likely that he and his band were framed in the AMIA case precisely because they were involved in that kind of "business."

## The Aftermath of the Ruling

Reactions to the court's ruling were swift, pained, and contradictory. That very day, September 2, AJC said in a press release that "today's verdict must be especially painful for the families of the victims, who have waited more than ten years for justice to be served. Despite a three-year trial, not one person connected to the bombing has been convicted of any crime."

The day after, Argentina's two major Jewish organizations, AMIA and DAIA, organized a demonstration at Congress Square for September 8. The venue was chosen explicitly to recall the massive demonstration that had taken place on July 21, 1994, three days after the bombing, remembered as the Day of the Umbrellas: It had rained hard that evening, and people were impressed by the spectacle of almost 200,000 protesters standing for hours out in the rain to show their outrage. This year's demonstration was a far cry from the one ten years ago, and the reason was the confusing message of its organizers.

For starters, the call for the demonstration stated it was both "against the ruling of Oral Tribunal 3 and against impunity in Argentina." AMIA's president, Abraham Kaul, said that "the judges were unfair, because there was enough evidence to incriminate all the defendants." Kaul also said that the judges had been "partial, because they did not dare say that former President Carlos Menem should also be investigated."

During the following days, however, Kaul was to qualify and moderate his criticism of the court, concentrating on asking for an investigation of those who organized the cover-up and the obstruction of justice. "We blame the state for failing to find the culprits in the case after ten years," he said, but "we do not blame the court. It is a most serious charge to say that the state was involved in a cover-up. But we differ with their releasing Carlos Telleldin, a man who was proven to have had the van used in the bombing in his hands." For Kaul, "it was Judge Galeano who destroyed the case."

DAIA's acting president, Jorge Kirszenbaum,<sup>4</sup> was to stay the course in his criticism of a judicial outcome "that was far worse than we ever expected." He said he had found the ruling "shocking," but at the same time that his institution "had said all along that there was a cover-up along the lines the judges have said." For DAIA, the problem was that "the trial of the defendants has turned into the trial of the investigating judge, his attorneys, and even DAIA's former president." Kirszenbaum declined to comment on the charges leveled by the judges against DAIA's lawyer, Martha Nercellas.

Another factor quickly became public: Memoria Activa, the influential group of relatives and friends of the victims,<sup>5</sup> refused to attend the September 8 rally. Diana Malamud, one of Memoria Activa's founders and the group's secretary, explained in a long interview<sup>6</sup> that her group was "surprised and pained" by the ruling, but basically in agreement. "The judges were enormously courageous," she said. "They broke ranks with the judiciary here and dared point their finger to a judge and to officials. Until now, nobody from the state had dared say that the state was responsible for what happened."

"There is much confusion now," added Malamud. "Some repudiate the verdict and say that with this verdict the state is covering for the culprits. But what these judges said is precisely that the state was responsible for the cover-up. To leave the defendants in jail would have been deplorable and useless. And what the Argentine state has done until now was deliberately wrong. The courage of the judges consists of their accusing the state they serve. They could have said that two or three of the defendants were guilty and gotten rid of the case. Many people called me from abroad to say they were sorry about the ruling. I told them not to be, that phony justice is far worse than knowing that we will not ever know who is guilty in the bombing."

On September 8, the numbers at the rally showed that many people shared Malamud's position or at least were doubtful that the ruling was unfair. Fewer than 5,000 people showed up. That evening, Luis Cyczewsky, speaking from the dais for Familiares de las Víctimas—another group of relatives and friends of those killed in the bombing—asked the government to create a special commission to solve the case.

## The Two Investigations

As a result of the court's ruling, there are now two AMIA investigations. One will try to pick up the thread of the case and shed light on who carried out the bombing and how. The second will probe the cover-up, seeking to mete out punishment to those who obstructed justice.

Federal Judge Rodolfo Canicoba Corral is the official now in charge of investigating the AMIA bombing. He was given the responsibility last year, when Oral Tribunal 3 "fired" Judge Galeano from the case. Reportedly, Canicoba has spent the past months reading the investigation he received—the main dossier alone amounts to tens of thousands of interrogations and proceedings—and trying to sort out what might be useful. In June, Canicoba

approved a work plan prepared by the Special Investigative Unit (SII) created in 2000 by the Ministry of Justice to work on the case. Another special group, the Attack Investigative Unit (AII) created by the attorney general by a presidential order, joined the SII in September. The AII is headed by attorneys Alberto Nisman and Marcelo Martínez Burgos.

Both the judge and the special units are expected to read the foundations of the ruling, made public on October 29, to find out more details. In short, they wish to use the judges' writ as a guide to know what to discard of Galeano's case, as a map to the lies and falsities in the investigation. Sources have told the author that there are some leads being revisited at this time.

Judge Galeano, charged the judges, framed a group of corrupt policemen and accused them of handing over to the terrorists the Traffic Renault van used in the bombing. The accusation was dismissed, but there is evidence showing involvement of one of the policemen, Alejandro Monjo, with obscure characters such as Alberto Kanoore Edul, a Syrian-Argentine businessman. Monjo is the policeman who gave Telleldin the van to chop up and resell. On July 10, 1994, the day that the van left Telleldin's garage, Kanoore Edul called both Telleldin and Monjo. The policeman and the Syrian-Argentine businessman were arrested and interrogated, and the latter released for lack of evidence. Amazingly, the recent release of intelligence files ordered by President Kirchner, which has yielded 1,700 boxes of documents so far, allowed investigators to find proof of Monjo's paying off policemen to divert the investigation from him. According to the SIDE intelligence agency, Monjo gave \$250,000 to the police raiding his car dealership to disregard his files and take only the papers related to the Renault van. This startling allegation was not disclosed by the SIDE to the judges.

The Renault Traffic van that was in Telleldin's possession on July 10, 1994, was used in the bombing. The judges' ruling reaffirmed that fact. The mystery that remains concerns what became of the van between July 10 and July 18, the date of the bombing. The special units will try to find out who was the buyer described by Telleldin as a dark-complexioned man with an accent. One item in the case is a sales receipt signed by Telleldin turning the van over to a Ramón Martínez. Both the ID number and the address that figure in the receipt as Martínez's were false.

One lead to identify the bombers could be a set of telephone calls made in early July 1994 from Buenos Aires to a cell phone registered in the Triple Border area.<sup>7</sup> The calls, virtually ignored by Galeano, started on July 1, 1994,

from Ezeiza Airport, the main port of entry to the region. Several calls were made to the cell phone from pay phones in the vicinity of the AMIA building in the days prior to the bombing. The last was made two and a half hours prior to the attack from a pay phone at Aeroparque, the local airport at Buenos Aires. The cell phone, registered under the name of André Marques,<sup>8</sup> was used to make one call to Lebanon, one to Iran, one to New York City, one to Germany, and several to Sao Paulo, Brazil. Those calls were made both from the Brazilian and the Paraguayan sides of the Triple Border, but not from the Argentine side. The cell phone was never again active after July 18, 1994. The Argentine judge now in charge of the investigation is awaiting information from Brazil regarding the identity of André Marques. A part of the "local connection" (those already residing in Argentina who helped the terrorists) could be a Colombian-born convert to Islam, Samuel El Reda, who lived in Buenos Aires from 1989 until shortly after the bombing and is or was married to Karina Saín. Saín had a most peculiar job; she was the secretary to the Iranian embassy's cultural secretary. Sources have told the author that El Reda and Saín received a call from Lebanon shortly before the bombing and that the call was made from a line identified as belonging to Hizballah.<sup>9</sup> However, as with most information collected by the Argentine intelligence service, this information is being checked and rechecked.

As if to dispel any excitement over these leads, investigators confided to journalists that very little in them is truly new and that Judge Galeano was aware of many of these leads, but dismissed them because they didn't fit into the script he had already approved and paid for.

The second AMIA investigation is just starting. The first of the officials involved in the cover-up, Federal Judge Juan José Galeano, is already feeling the pressure. Judge Galeano is now under indictment before the Magistrates Council, a legislative, executive, and judicial group that hears charges of malfeasance against judges and attorneys. After the ruling by the Oral Tribunal, the case against Galeano gained momentum. Basically, there are ten charges against him, the gravest being that he paid Telleldin \$400,000 to falsely accuse the policemen. Former Judge Andrés D'Alessio, Galeano's lawyer in the case, said that he will prove that, although there was a payment, the judge did not make it. He will have a much harder time trying to prove that Galeano, even if he did not order the payment, did not know about it.

Galeano himself does not appear to be so confident. On September 13, 2004, he sent a letter to the president resigning his position as federal

judge—judges at this level are appointed by the president with approval of Congress, and although they cannot be fired by the head of the executive, they have to address the president to resign their posts. Galeano's aim was to avoid a trial. If a judge quits, the case against him is dropped and he is eligible to collect his pension, even while facing criminal charges before a court of justice. President Kirchner refused to play along with Galeano's game and did not accept the letter. Galeano held out only a few days and withdrew it. The judge was to face the council on the last day of September. A shrewd lawyer, he got a postponement until October 21. On that date, Galeano just missed the appointment and sent a note asking for more time to prepare his defense. The new date was set for November. In a public statement, the judge said that "there were no irregularities in my handling of the case." Finally, he had to face his accusers at the Magistrates Council. In the three sessions that took place before this report went to press, Galeano started to reveal his defense strategy: total denial of any wrongdoing and confirmation of his payment to Telleldin as legal. (He claims that there was a reward offered for information and he simply used it, disregarding that the reward was for informers, not detainees facing charges, and was to be paid by the Ministry of Justice, not the state's Intelligence Bureau.) All observers agree that the judge's approach has not very favorably impressed the council.

Galeano is not the only judge who will face the council because of his involvement in the AMIA case. Judge Gabriel Cavallo and Federal Judge Norberto Oyarbide will also face charges and probable dismissal from their posts for secondary cases. Cavallo investigated an early charge against Galeano for the payment he made to Telleldin and dismissed the charge promptly. Too promptly, according to the Oral Tribunal, who filed charges against him. Oyarbide is in trouble for the same case: Investigating a charge against one of the defendants in the AMIA case, he received a telephone tap in which a clerk in Galeano's court described in detail how Telleldin had been paid off to testify against the policemen. The Oral Tribunal charged Oyarbide with failing to denounce a crime and filed charges against him before the council.

Galeano will share other problems with former high-ranking officials in the Menem administration and with some of his closest aides, such as attorney José Barbaccia. A judge is already opening an investigation into the cover-up in the case and preparing charges against former intelligence head Hugo Anzorreguy, who would have ordered the payment to Telleldin to be carried out. Former Interior Minister Carlos Vladimiro Corach and former DAIA

president Ruben Ezra Beraja<sup>10</sup> will be investigated as accessories, since the tribunal suspects them of knowing about Galeano's plan and not stopping him, or even abetting the judge. Telleldin's former lawyer Gustavo Semorile and several other officials, former officials, and private persons are also suspected of involvement in different aspects of the cover-up.

Some of those aspects are rather bizarre. DAIA'S lawyer in the case, Martha Nercellas, received a peculiar distinction from the Oral Tribunal: The judges asked the Buenos Aires bar to look into her actions regarding the case for a potential grave breach of professional ethics. Nercellas tried to frame a suspect with a hidden recorder provided by the federal police, bargaining with him to testify against other defendants as a protected witness. That, under Argentine law, is illegal, since a person charged with crimes in a case cannot be a protected witness against others in the same case. In the recording that Nercellas made it was clear that she, an attorney for one of the aggrieved parties, was negotiating in the name of Judge Galeano.

Ever sensitive to public opinion, President Kirchner intervened in this second of the AMIA investigations. After hearing the speeches at the tenth anniversary ceremony on July 18, 2004, the president called the attorney general, Esteban Righi, and asked him to activate the prosecutions relating to the cover-up. According to Kirchner, there was a common theme to every speech from every group: the complicity of officials in the cover-up. The president felt he could do something about that aspect and gave the order for the public ministry to push as hard as possible in every investigation of former officials, judges, and private parties.

## The Future

What keeps the AMIA case alive, after ten years of no justice, no results, no information? The case is an open wound, a veritable symbol of many things that are wrong in Argentina. After the attacks in New York City and Madrid, Argentines didn't fail to notice the swiftness of the police work in those countries: In a matter of days arrests were made, charges presented, information disclosed to a distraught public. Spain became an unexpected example of police work for Argentines, destroying in less than a week a network of terrorist operatives and providing intelligence to other European Union countries to find more. In November 2004 the first suspect in the Madrid case, a teenager who transported the dynamite, received a long jail term for his

involvement in the case. The contrast could not have been starker with the murky waters of the AMIA case, in which incompetence was the rule from day one<sup>11</sup> and bad faith soon replaced any willingness to find out what happened, as the recent ruling has shown. Argentines envy Americans and Spaniards the sense of justice served that can at least allow a country to move on and heal its wounds.

In the ten years since the bombing, Argentina has changed beyond recognition. In 1994 the country seemed to be moving in the right direction, the economy was growing fast, and Argentina was looking for its place among nations. Ten years later, the country is recovering from a near-lethal economic crisis, the worst slump ever. Half of all Argentines now live below the poverty line, unemployment is rampant, and every social indicator has changed for the worse. Political stability has been at a premium since the fall, in December 2001, of President Fernando de la Rúa's government, after a popular revolt. His downfall initiated the humiliation of churning through five presidents in two weeks, of default on the country's foreign debt, inflation, devaluation, and a bank freeze that wiped out the savings of tens of thousands.

Still, the AMIA case never passed from memory. Through thick and thin, Argentines have remembered and demanded justice, truth, and information, rightly perceiving this as a stain on the nation's history, much more than a murder case or a Jewish affair.

They not alone in their persistence. Even as the AMIA case became a standard topic for the local media,<sup>12</sup> it became a must-do story for foreign correspondents and visiting journalists. And it became a matter of activism and solidarity for many abroad. The American Jewish Committee, for example, sent a fact-finding mission within two days after the blast, and its involvement, since that time, has been steady. AJC was represented by a large mission at the tenth anniversary ceremony on July 18, 2004. Headed by AJC's president, E. Robert Goodkind, and by its executive director, David A. Harris, the mission, which included twenty-two AJC members, met with government officials, took part in a vigil by Memoria Activa the night before the anniversary ceremony, and attended the premier of a feature film on the bombing, *18-J*. Speaking for the delegation that day, weeks before the ruling by the court, Harris explained that it was "impossible to have a positive impression of the investigation. It was one scandal after the other.... It's hard to find a saint among so many sinners. We do not pretend to be experts in Argentine politics, but it is clear that so far Argentina has behaved as a country that has trouble facing the truth and doing justice."

Diana Malamud, the founder of Memoria Activa, who lost her husband, Andrés, in the bombing, thinks it very likely that the culprits will never be identified and punished. “Even if the ruling was wrong, even if Ribelli and Telleldin and the others are guilty, how could we know now?” she insists. “On the evidence that Galeano collected, that mess? Proofs were lost, ten years were lost, and we’ll never get them back. That fills me with hatred. How can we go on living feeling that we’ll never know the truth?”

Malamud’s question is one shared by most Argentines.

## Notes

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1. The Argentine judicial system, very close in its tradition to that of Spain, Italy, and France, has a two-tier system of judges. Judges in the first tier investigate cases, with district attorneys working as their assistants. When they put together a case, they send it for trial to a judge or court in the second tier. In the AMIA case, Federal Judge Juan José Galeano was charged with investigating the bombing for the simple reason that he happened to be on watch on that Monday, July 18, 1994.

2. Ribelli and Telleldin were released on bail a few days after the Oral Tribunal’s ruling. Unlike the charges in the AMIA case, which were basically for terrorism and mass murder, the charges still pending against them allow their posting bail.

3. DAIA is the acronym for Delegation of Argentine-Israelite Associations, the political umbrella organization for all Jewish institutions in the country.

4. Kirszenbaum is the executive vice president of DAIA. The institution’s president, Gilbert Lewi, is gravely ill and has been unable to carry on his duties since last year.

5. Memoria Activa was the spontaneous creation of grieving relatives, friends, and survivors who gathered to mark the first week of the bombing at a park across the street from the Supreme Court building in Buenos Aires. They have met there for over ten years now, becoming one of the most vocal critics of the investigation and gaining recognition as part of the prosecution in the trial.

6. Martin Granovsky, “Now Justice Should Change,” *Página/12*, September 5, 2004.

7. The Triple Border area is the region where Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina meet. Long a haven of smugglers, the area attracted international attention after the bombing in Buenos Aires as the home of an active Palestinian and Lebanese community with links to the PLO. For further discussion of the Triple Border, see the first AJC report on the AMIA bombing, *Atrocity in Buenos Aires: The AMIA Bombing, One Year Later*, published in July 1995.

8. “André Marques” sounds like a Portuguese name that would be the Brazilian equivalent of John Smith.

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9. Those consulted refused, however, to disclose the source of their information.

10. Ruben Beraja is currently in jail on charges relating to financial improprieties at his bank.

11. For a detailed discussion of the gross level of incompetence in the handling of the AMIA case, see the first report in this series, published by AJC in 1995 (*op.cit.*). Among the salient examples of ineptitude, body parts were lying for weeks on rooftops around the site of the explosion. After complaints by neighbors were made public by the media, policemen equipped with buckets and trash bags picked them up and took them away. There were, as well, many reports of looting by policemen in shops destroyed by the blast.

12. For example, Memoria Activa's weekly Monday morning meetings across the street from the Supreme Court building have been regularly broadcast live by the all-news cable stations—every Monday morning, week in and week out, for ten years. And as every newspaper editor in the country knows, the AMIA case is always front-page news.