

The British Empire Retaliates Against Argentine Lawyer

by Cynthia R. Rush

On Aug. 6 at Rome's Leonardo da Vinci airport, Italian authorities arrested Argentine lawyer and retired Army Maj. Jorge Olivera, as he prepared to board an Aerolíneas Argentinas flight back to Buenos Aires. Olivera and his wife were told that he was being detained on orders of French Judge Roger LeLoire, who is seeking Olivera's extradition to France on charges of involvement in the 1976 disappearance of French-Argentine citizen Marie Anne Erize in the Argentine province of San Juan. As a first lieutenant, Olivera had served in the 22nd Army Regiment in San Juan in 1976, during the terrorist offensive which shook Argentina throughout much of the 1970s and early 1980s.

A bewildered and surprised Olivera told Italian police that he had no knowledge of the case against him, and denied the charges. His wife stated after her return to Buenos Aires that the arrest had nothing to do with human rights violations, but rather with the fact that her husband had just spent a month in France, where he brought before the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg, the case against former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, for ordering the May 1982 sinking of the Argentine Navy vessel *General Belgrano*, as it moved away from the British-created exclusion zone around the Malvinas Islands.

Representing some of the families of the 323 sailors who died as a result of that torpedo attack, Olivera and his law partner, Jorge Appiani, also a retired Army officer, demanded indemnization from the British government, as well as Thatcher's extradition to Argentina to stand trial for war crimes.

The European Court refused to hear the case, arguing that the statute of limitations had expired. But London wanted more—who are the upstart Argentines to question Britain's globalist designs? “This is a case orchestrated by Great Britain,” Rabassi de Olivera told media in Buenos Aires. “[My husband] dared to present a case against Thatcher, which is like stepping on the tail of the Empire.” But, of course, she added with a note of sarcasm, “we are only a peripheral country, and this is a set-up: They won't let us touch Margaret Thatcher.”

No One Is Safe

Inside Argentina, news of Olivera's detention provoked a national furor, among both political and military circles angered over the way the arrest was carried out, and at the

despicable response of President Fernando de la Rúa's government, which has decided to throw Olivera to the wolves, alleging that sovereignty, and “extraterritoriality” are not an issue. Justice Minister Ricardo Gil Lavedra unabashedly told the daily *La Nación* that “there is no principle which determines that Argentina should adopt any other attitude” than the slavish course it is currently following.

Descriptions of Olivera's arrest as an “ambush,” “kidnaping,” and “hostage taking,” were heard from numerous military and political figures, newspaper editorials, and even from individuals not particularly known for their defense of national interests, so enraged were they at the circumstances surrounding the arrest. A lawyer representing French families whose relatives disappeared in Argentina in the 1970s, revealed that police had had Olivera under surveillance for a month, mostly when he was in France, but waited until “the right moment” to arrest him in Italy. Why not in France, where he made many public appearances and statements? After all, Olivera's case is considered important because he is on a list of 140 Argentine military officers wanted for “genocide” by Spanish magistrate Baltazar Garzón, an agent of Transparency International's anti-nation-state apparatus. Yet, the arrest warrant and extradition request were reportedly only issued on July 21, *after* Olivera had left France.

A manic human rights mob and media associated with Fidel Castro's São Paulo Forum, hailed Olivera's arrest as a great victory, calling it a “Pinochet II,” referring to the precedent set by the October 1998 arrest in London of former Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet, also at the request of Spain's Garzón. Most media filled their pages daily with long lists of accusations and numerous “eyewitness reports,” portraying Olivera as a sadistic rapist, torturer, and murderer. Pro-terrorist media also reported as proven fact, that Olivera had served as defense lawyer for Erich Priebke, the octogenarian Nazi who was extradited to Italy from Argentina in 1995, to stand trial on charges that he massacred Jews in Italy during World War II. *EIR* has no independent knowledge of Olivera's Army background, including the Erize case for which he was detained, but it has confirmed from Olivera's law firm that he was never Priebke's lawyer.

The assertion that this case is a “Pinochet II” also bears careful examination. In reality, it goes far *beyond* the terrible precedent set in the Pinochet case. True, London's intent is the same—to impose its global doctrine of “universal juris-

diction,” whose only purpose is to destroy the institutions of the sovereign nation-state, under the guise of defending “human rights.” Ibero-America’s military institution also remains a primary target. To the degree that it is still a repository for nationalist sentiment, its destruction is a prerequisite for limiting these nations’ sovereignty.

What is very different about Olivera’s case, however, was underscored by Argentine Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ricardo Brinzoni, when he was asked by the pro-terrorist daily *Página 12* whether Olivera’s arrest were like the Pinochet case. No, he said, the difference lies in the fact that, in Chile, “Pinochet was not tried.” “Here there was justice and there were laws applied,” such as the “Due Obedience” and “End Point” laws. Olivera’s case had already gone through the Argentine court system, and was dismissed under the Due Obedience law, approved by the national legislature in June 1987. Together with the End Point legislation, it exempted military personnel from prosecution for human rights charges stemming from the anti-terrorist war of the 1970s, and was intended to foster reconciliation after the long and difficult period of national upheaval and bloodshed.

But the globalizers in London and their collaborators in U.S. Secretary of State “Mad” Madeleine Albright’s State Department could care less about Argentina’s sovereign institutions. From their standpoint, *anyone* is fair game, even if he has been tried, and convicted or acquitted by his national judicial system. In an article in *La Nueva Provincia* on Aug. 9, Olivera’s law partner Appiani warned that “Olivera is a magnificent, insuperable leading case for continuing world judicial domination. It begins with military officers, in the name of sacred values,” but will end up “with those senators and deputies who would dare to review the eventual monopoly of the [multinational] telephone companies” which have moved into several Ibero-American countries.

Is anyone safe? Not according to French Judge LeLoire, who ordered Olivera’s arrest. He has asked Argentina’s Foreign Ministry for permission to travel to Buenos Aires to interrogate the 140 officers on Garzón’s list. This, despite the fact that most of these 140 individuals, some of them still on active duty, also had cases against them dismissed by the Due Obedience and End Point legislation. Although some of the names of the 140 officers have been made public, French lawyer Sophie Thonon said that she won’t release all of them, so as not to “alert” them. Should any of them travel outside of Argentina, she warned, they will be arrested, just as Olivera was.

Mad Madeleine: The Military Is the Problem

Barely a week after Olivera’s arrest, Albright embarked on a tour of five Ibero-American countries, to promote London’s policy. During an Aug. 17 meeting with representatives of Argentina’s human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs), she stated that “the role of the military has been the major problem in Latin America. We work with governments

to affirm the idea of civilian control. . . . That is *the center* of our foreign policy.” Then, on Aug. 18, in neighboring Chile, she did something similar. With tensions within that country’s Armed Forces running extremely high, as a result of the Supreme Court’s Aug. 9 ruling to strip Pinochet of his parliamentary immunity so that he may stand trial, Albright praised the court’s action, and asserted that the Chilean model of “democracy” requires prosecution of the military.

Stating that “it is possible for a country to have a stable democratic transition without *sacrificing the principles of accountability*,” Albright implied it were better to overturn the amnesties and similar legislation, which many South American governments approved in the 1970s and 1980s, as a means of reducing societal tensions associated with the 1970s war against terrorism, and moving on with the task of stabilizing these nations politically and economically.

Albright’s Aug. 17 meeting with NGOs in Buenos Aires included the hard-core leadership of the legal apparatus of Argentina’s still-intact terrorist networks, among them the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, and people such as *Página 12*’s Horacio Verbitsky, the former intelligence director of the terrorist Montoneros who now sits on the board of George Soros’s Human Rights Watch/Americas. These Argentine “Rigoberta Menchús” demanded that Albright do more to help them prosecute the military, putting particular emphasis on getting classified U.S. documentation on Operation Condor, the intelligence-sharing program by which the Chilean, Argentine, Paraguayan, Uruguayan, and Brazilian governments coordinated anti-terrorist activities throughout the 1970s.

The Aug. 18 arrest for insubordination of Navy Adm. Alfredo Fernández (ret.), president of the Armed Forces Officers Center (COFA), makes clear that London and Washington will brook no resistance to their policy. Fernández, a staunch nationalist, was placed under arrest for 20 days, after an Aug. 17 speech before 400 active-duty and retired military officers, in which he denounced in the harshest terms, President de la Rúa’s slavish obedience to Albright’s pro-terrorist “democracy” agenda. The Admiral blasted the government for “explicitly recognizing foreign penal jurisdiction over acts which took place in our country,” a reference to Olivera, and also for acting as apologists for the crimes committed by terrorists during the 1970s. Today, he said, “Argentina faces the greatest challenge to its existence: Either it will consolidate as a nation, or resign itself to . . . even its geographical partition or dissolution, due to the . . . plundering by the dominant interests which assault us.” When “those who occupy public posts, unabashedly and deliberately place themselves at the services of the alleged human rights of one part of society, to the detriment of the rest, . . . it is because anarchy is installing itself in the Argentine Republic.” Without grandstanding, Fernández said, “We affirm that to assault the Armed Forces, whatever the method, procedures, or intention, is an assault against the nation itself.”