

Argentina's future demands freedom for Colonel Seineldín

by Cynthia Rush

Dr. Arturo Frondizi, the 86-year-old former President of Argentina, wrote a letter on Oct. 19 to current President Carlos Saúl Menem, requesting that he pardon Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín and several fellow Army officers who have been jailed for almost four years on charges stemming from their role in the Dec. 3, 1990 nationalist uprising against the military high command. The respected former President urged Menem to pardon Seineldín and his colleagues "in the name of national unity and on behalf of those compatriots who are buried on Argentine soil [on the Malvinas Islands] occupied by a foreign power."

Dr. Frondizi's initiative caused an uproar in the country. On Oct. 24, the elder statesman had visited the presidential palace, the Casa Rosada, to deliver the letter to Eduardo Bauza, the general secretary to the presidency. He did not have an appointment with Carlos Menem, but the latter came out of his office to warmly greet Dr. Frondizi, a personal friend. Nor could Menem fail to respond to the letter from the highly regarded former President. Speaking to a local radio interviewer the following day, Menem said that while he held the former President in the highest esteem, he could not pardon the Army officers "as long as I am in the government." Every major Buenos Aires daily gave extensive coverage to the Frondizi letter and to Menem's response.

The former President's letter shook things up precisely because it is understood that the Seineldín case is not a local issue, but one which gets to the heart of the nation-wrecking policies applied to all of Ibero-America over the past decade. The British-run international oligarchy understands this fact, which is why it has expended so much space in print to portray Seineldín as an authoritarian "fundamentalist" coup-plotter against "democracy." There is fear that Frondizi's initiative, and the public campaign to free Seineldín launched recently by the Movement for National Identity and Ibero-American Integration (MINEII) could serve as the rallying point for opposition to the "new world order."

As Dr. Frondizi makes clear in his letter, Colonel Seineldín was jailed in 1990 simply because he told the truth and acted in a principled way to defend the nation's sovereignty and its most vital institutions, especially the Armed Forces. When he spoke in his own defense before the Buenos Aires Federal Court in August 1991, Seineldín outlined Argentina's state of total defenselessness as a result of its succumbing to foreign pressures, arguing that the Armed Forces

"today are not capable of serving as the military arm of the Fatherland as a fundamental institution of the Nation and safeguard of the highest national interests." He also stated that had he sat by and watched "my institution being demolished" without doing anything, he would have been a traitor to his country.

Unless action is taken to rectify this situation, starting with the Armed Forces itself, Seineldín warned in his testimony, the country would face "dislocation" at all levels of its national existence. Menem and his advisers did not heed this warning, which was borne out three years later with the July 18, 1994 terror bombing of the Argentine-Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires, in which 100 people were killed. Former Army Capt. Gustavo Breide Obeid, who is jailed with Colonel Seineldín, put it accurately when he said shortly after the incident that the bombing was "an act of war against the Argentine Republic," which finds the country "physically, juridically, and politically defenseless" as a result of a deliberate, decade-long policy of dismantling the Armed Forces.

In his letter, Dr. Frondizi also refers to his own efforts to seek exoneration for American economist Lyndon LaRouche, who served five years in jail as a political prisoner because his policies threatened the same international oligarchy that Seineldín opposes.

Documentation

Dr. Frondizi's letter

To His Excellency
Mr. President of the Argentine Nation
Dr. Carlos Saúl Menem

October 19, 1994
Dear Sir:

In my capacity as former President of the Argentine Nation, I write you to pose something I consider of vital importance for the consolidation of national unity, which would require closing the curtains on the past—something we have

done each time the country sought to move on to a new phase.

For your own understanding and so that Argentines may also understand why I have dared to take up your time, it is necessary to mention a few specific references to the recent past as well as to my own political life.

When the civil-military coup of September 6, 1930 overthrew then-President Hipólito Yrigoyen, I was a young man who supported that great Radical Party *caudillo* [venerated leader], and I repudiated the coup led by General José Félix Uriburu. Because of that, I spent time in the Devoto jail, and thus my political career began. As a young lawyer, one of my first cases was the defense of those jailed as a result of the revolutionary action of 1933, and I am naturally proud to still have the diploma given me, signed by all those I defended.

Throughout my life, I have always tried to conduct myself inspired by the example of my parents and the selfless actions of Leandro Alem and Hipólito Yrigoyen, in the conviction that it was necessary to make "a political religion out of civic exercise." In a letter dated August 6 of this year sent to the American President William J. Clinton, in which I requested the exoneration of economist Lyndon LaRouche, leader of a philosophical political organization founded over twenty-five years ago, I said, "I believe in the morality of men who promote their ideas with a vocation of service, honesty of thought and unimpeachable conduct. . . ." I asked that he follow the example of President Kennedy, so that peace would result from the well-being of the poor.

On June 9, 1956, the so-called National Recovery Movement, led by Division Generals Juan J. Valle and Raúl Tanco, justified its rebellion citing, among other things, the collapse of national industry and the need to restructure the Armed Forces to meet the needs of national defense. When the death sentence was announced for General Valle, I asked General Aramburu for clemency, to no avail. On December 26, 1990, when the Military Prosecutor demanded the death sentence for Colonel Seineldín and other officers stemming from the events of December 3, 1990, I told a newspaper in Salta that "order will not emerge from executions; what the Nation requires is for hatred to be eliminated. . . ."

On May 1, 1958, when I had the honor of becoming President, I told the National Congress that the crucial precondition for achieving national fulfillment was the "definitive reconciliation of all Argentines and the attainment of a full and effective national peace." I then added: "We must eliminate the motives for ill will, pretexts for revenge and the last vestiges of persecution which may exist. We must extirpate at their root all hatred and fear from Argentine hearts. . . ."

What I have just presented, Mr. President, is quite similar to what you said as you assumed the Presidency on July 8, 1989, when after reaffirming that "the Argentine people have opted for the transformation of our decadence," you emphasized that they would also seek "to overcome our petty disagreements . . . that is why ours is a government of national unity . . . I wish to be the President of reconciliation."

On April 5, 1987, I addressed in a paid advertisement what I considered to be a grave national problem fed by the confrontations between civil and military powers as a result of the trials of those responsible for the anti-subversive fight and their immediate subordinates.

If I addressed the country at that time, it was because as a politician I felt authorized to express my opinion about the complicated relations which tend to develop between the political and military powers. Ibero-America is filled with examples of this which have been devastating for democracy and the well-being of its people. As my compatriots know very well, as constitutional President I suffered a historic number of military threats, which finally put an end to my government. I was imprisoned because of the actions of those accomplices who called themselves democrats, but who hurt their knuckles knocking on the barracks doors. . . .

In any case, I must point out that a new and negative issue has been added to this past of hatred and disagreements. This centers around the treatment accorded the Armed Forces in recent years, leading to the Republic's current state of defenselessness.

I remember that when on April 10, 1987 I expressed my opinion on the situation inside the Armed Forces, the government responded publicly against me, calling me a ". . . spokesman of those officers involved in Argentine politics." All I had done was to express the desires and anguish of the Armed Forces and of society in general in the face of disintegration, dependency and threats to popular sovereignty. . . .

In March of 1989, you, Mr. President, and Arturo Frondizi thought alike in terms of the negative reality experienced by our nation's military arm. I remember I said that as an inheritance for the government which followed it, the Alfonsín government had left an Armed Forces without a mission and with no operations or mobilization plans. The nation had no war contingency plans; its military and national industries were dead. Our agreement on this issue had been confirmed when the candidate Carlos Saúl Menem emphasized that the national movement and Justicialism were conscious that the Armed Forces had been reduced to "a state of extreme crisis by a nefarious and mistaken policy. . . ."

I have always laid out with great clarity my thoughts on the role of the Armed Forces in nation-building and in the necessity of their participating actively in a policy of economic development. As General Manuel Nicolás Savio said regarding foreign economic pressure, ". . . it weighs more heavily than military pressure; it is not cruel, but implacable and integral." Today, the actions of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank with regard to developing nations confirm the prophetic view of that great Argentine officer. . . .

My experience has taught me that the "Project Democracy" of Henry Kissinger and Oliver North was the launching pad for the dismantling of Ibero-America's armed forces. But I also learned that the "Inter-American Dialogue," acting as one of the agents of the so-called New World Order, works

Where are the Malvinas combatants today?

Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín is a hero of the 1982 Malvinas War, during which the Argentine military government attempted to retake the South Atlantic islands which Great Britain usurped in 1833. Throughout his career, Seineldín has fought to defend Argentine sovereignty and the dignity of the country's military institution. Yet today, he sits in a jail cell at the Magdalena military prison in Buenos Aires, for having attempted to halt the British-inspired policy of dismembering the Armed Forces in the December 1990 uprising against the Army high command.

Queen Elizabeth's second son, Prince Andrew Duke of York, was also a combatant in that 1982 war, although "the little prince," as he was derided by Argentine troops, never got too close to combat. During November 1994, Andrew is scheduled to visit Argentina to meet with the commanders of the three branches of the Armed Forces, reportedly to strengthen British ties with them. But many observers in Buenos Aires think that the prince may really be coming to survey what the queen considers to be one of her own colonies. Twelve years after the 1982 South Atlantic conflict, the British feel that Argentina is sufficiently subdued. As the Sept. 24 London *Economist* smugly remarked, "The Argentine Armed Forces are now among the most docile in South America." Nowadays, it went on, "the most popular way to serve the fatherland is to join a U.N. peacekeeping mission."—*Cynthia Rush*

Destino Histórico, I justified Colonel Seineldín's denunciation of an international conspiracy to weaken national sovereignty and his effort to "rescue the Argentine Army as the military arm of the Fatherland, as a fundamental institution of the nation and as safeguard of the highest national interests, and to break its strategic dependency on the new international order. . . ."

At that stage of the grave military crisis, I stated that national defense had ceased to be a priority for Argentina . . . and I emphasized that the military policy adopted was being defined by a foreign policy subordinate to the globalization of defense promoted by the U.S. Department of State. . . .

Through misunderstandings and vacillation, the country continued to experience confrontation between military and civilian forces, encouraged by the lack of an effective policy of national reconciliation. Thus we arrived at December 3, 1990, on which a military action was clearly defined as an act of resistance to the policy of dismantling the Armed Forces inherited by your government; an action whose meaning, in terms of strengthening sovereignty, [Army nationalists] attempted to convey to the entire nation. . . .

The cause of this action was explained by the Federal Court when it clearly established that the events of December 3, 1990 did not constitute an attempted anti-democratic coup d'état. . . .

Among the basic principles elaborated by Colonel Mohamed Alí Seineldín in his own testimony before the Federal Court were the role of international financial centers in creating the military crisis, in weakening the small and medium-sized business sector, destroying our culture and replacing our people's traditional values. . . .

My dear President Menem, at this stage of my life, I only desire to see my Fatherland on the road to progress, peace, and the permanent unity of its people. I understand that since December 3, 1990 to date, sufficient time has passed to allow all sectors to calm their spirits and carry out an honest self-criticism.

Mr. President, prior to taking office, you defined the national campaign to recover the Malvinas as an operation which "returned to the officer and non-commissioned officer corps of the Armed Forces that national mystique which characterized the Argentine military man from even before 1810."

That is why, in the name of national unity and on behalf of those compatriots who remain buried on Argentine soil occupied by a foreign power which made the [Navy ship] *General Belgrano* into a tomb, I ask that you make the decision to pardon all those men of the Armed Forces now imprisoned for the December 3, 1990 uprising. Democracy and the future of our Fatherland demand it.

May God illuminate the path of your government.

Arturo Frondizi
Former President of the Argentine Nation

toward the same ends.

Mr. President, you awoke in me many hopes when, during your electoral campaign, you stated that "the defense production system should be in the vanguard of those who would participate in the 'Productive Revolution,' transforming itself into one of the motors of our national industry. . . ." You concluded your comments saying "there is not a nation in the world today which does not possess adequate military potential. In a democratic system, that potential is based on the elaboration of a national military doctrine and also on its own national production." Alexander Hamilton maintained that it was necessary to favor those industries which would make us independent of foreign powers when it came to supplying military equipment.

For the same reasons which caused me to share your views on the role of our Armed Forces, expressed as the future President of the Argentine nation in the magazine