

ARGENTINA

Europeans attack bloodthirsty host of the World Cup

The Argentine regime wants to use the World Cup Games to promote an image of stability.



By Diana Johnstone

THE WORLD CUP SOCCER championship matches in Argentina this month have stimulated the biggest protest movement in Western Europe since the Vietnam war. In various European countries, where soccer is by far the most popular spectator sport, committees were formed early this year to demand that the World Cup be held elsewhere than within shouting distance of the Argentine military junta's torture centers. The movement obviously did not attain its proclaimed goal of "boycotting" Argentina, but it has focused public attention on one of the world's most alarming police states.

Left-wing political organizations that have actively denounced repression in other Latin American countries, especially Chile, have largely neglected Argentina. Whereas the Chilean junta in 1973 overthrew a regime that had aroused widespread hopes of democratic transition to socialism, and killed a President, Salvador Allende, who was known and respected around the world, the military leaders who took power in Buenos Aires on March 24, 1976, merely delivered the *coup de grace* to a notoriously incompetent regime already deeply involved in undercover repression. The deposed President, Isabel Peron, was no more than a discredited and manipulated figurehead. At first it seemed to many that things could scarcely get worse.

They got worse, all right, with the banning of all political and trade union activity, censorship, drastic purges of universities and the whole of Argentina's prestigious cultural and intellectual life, unchecked arrests, massacres and "disappearances" not only of leftists and labor militants but of respected defenders of human rights, intellectuals suspected of thinking too much, clergy people suspected of caring too much, Jews, and hapless refugees from other Latin American countries.

Boycott launched.

The idea of the boycott campaign was launched in France by painter and writer Marek Halter, who lived many years in Argentina. "I know the people who are dying there," he explained. He said he got the idea from a 72-year-old man who had tried, back in 1936, to organize a boycott of the Berlin Olympics to protest against Hitler.

Communist parties have been wary of the campaign for fear it will spur a similar effort to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics. The Montoneros and other Argentine political groups in exile opposed the initiative on the grounds that the boycott would isolate the Argentine people. But they have softened their opposition as

it became clear that the effect of the campaign was to open up the press and alert public opinion to the nature of the military regime.

In Spain, Socialist leader Felipe Gonzalez and the entire left backed the campaign. The movement also got Socialist backing and wide support in Sweden and Holland.

In France, the Collective for Boycotting the World Cup in Argentina (COBA) was formed last January by a small Argentine support committee and radical teachers, including a number of physical education teachers incensed at the political misuses of sports. For the public statements of the Argentine generals themselves left no doubt that they saw the World Cup primarily as a way to enhance the international "image" of their bloodthirsty regime. To that end they have hired the American public relations outfit Burson-Marsteller to help them persuade journalists, officials, opinion-makers and above all businessmen in eight countries—the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Japan, Britain, Belgium, Holland and France—that Argentina is "stable" and thus a good bet for investment.

On a par with Nazi sadism.

COBA has grown to 150 committees throughout France, active in collecting and diffusing information about repression in Argentina. A petition for the boycott gathered 100,000 signatures. Demonstrations have been staged in Paris and other cities.

By raising a controversy around a major world sporting event, the boycott campaign has succeeded in making Argentine repression a timely news event, opening up the European press to testimony gathered from refugees or by such organizations as Amnesty International and the Commission for Human Rights in Argentina. Accounts suggesting what has happened to many of the 15,000 people who have "disappeared" are blood-curdling and suggest an organized, technological barbarism on a par with Nazi sadism at its worst. Reports frequently cite the Escuela Mecanica de la Armada (Naval school for training non-coms, EMA) in Buenos Aires, about half a mile from the soccer stadium, whose "Task Force 3-3" made up of 314 men specialize in the notorious abductions of political suspects by "groups of unidentified armed men in civilian clothes."

The torturers at the EMA and other such centers reportedly amuse themselves by practicing various ways of mutilating the human body. The ghastly disfigurements—limbs sawed off without anesthesia, castration, rapes that amount to excavations—explain why so many bodies have been found incinerated and "unrecognizable." Others are dumped out at sea from helicopters, occasionally washing ashore in neighboring Uruguay.

It is almost comforting to learn that several torturers reportedly asked to be assigned to different work after tearing the skin off the face of Peronist revolutionary Jorge Lizaso while he was still alive. Or that in late 1976, eight of a group of 60 EMA death squad members were relieved of duty when it was discovered that they were suffering from hallucinations and beginning to torture their own wives and children.

But many apparently stick to the job without flinching. This corps of specialists, already enriched by the experience of French and American interrogation and "Phoenix program" methods in Algeria and Vietnam, is an on-going threat not only to Argentines but to the whole Western world to which the Argentine



Wearing an executioners' hood, two COBA members carry a banner reading, "For each goal scored, how many assassinations and tortures?"

military establishment belongs.

Nuns were "transferred."

A Christian Peronist bank employees union delegate, Horacio Domingo Maggio, who managed to escape during a transfer from the Escuela Mecanica last March, has written a document in which he recounts having seen the two missing French nuns, Alicia Doman and Leonie Duquet, at the EMA shortly after they were abducted last December. He said he spoke briefly with Sister Alicia, who told him that she and Sister Leonie had been tortured with electric shocks all over their bodies. Word went around the prison that the two women were tortured incessantly for the next ten days and then "transferred"—which everyone took to mean that they had been killed.

The Swedish press has reported that the women's maimed bodies washed ashore near Buenos Aires a short time later.

Mother Superior Marie-Joséphé Cateau of the French Order of Foreign Missions to which the nuns belonged spent several weeks in Argentina vainly seeking information about them. She told French journalists on May 17 that she believed they were dead, but that Argentine authorities did not dare say so. She mentioned that Gen. Jorge Videla himself knew the two Sisters personally, since his daughter had taken part in a camp organized by the Order. But he was no help. She added that last Easter Sunday, 12 more people had been abducted as they came out of mass in Buenos Aires.

The Mother Superior said she doubted that journalists who went to cover the games could find out what was going on in Argentina, since "a few words out of place are enough to land a person in prison, and the mere fact of associating with the underprivileged is considered a subversive act."

Since every country is most concerned about its own people, part of the COBA campaign centered on urging the 22 mem-

bers of the French soccer team to seek information about 22 French citizens, including the nuns, among the thousands of "disappeared." Although resentful of suggestions that they should give up their chances to play in Buenos Aires, several of the French players were touched by the campaign, especially after meeting with relatives of the missing 22. The team's manager, Michel Hidalgo, promised to appeal to Argentine authorities on their behalf, and even told French television that a defeat on this score would be worse than losing the soccer matches.

Two porters hired.

In response to this "campaign mounted abroad by agents of subversion," the General in charge of organizing the World Cup, Antonio Merlo, warned ominously that guerillas would "try to jolt public opinion by some sensational event, such as the kidnapping of a foreign journalist, arranged ahead of time between the terrorists and the journalist." This gave any reporter unduly curious about "disappearances" an inkling of how his own would be explained away.

The foreign press was closely supervised. *Le Monde's* special correspondent, Jean-Pierre Clerc, was searched and interrogated for several hours and sent out of the country. Nevertheless, *Le Monde* and most French newspapers balanced their coverage of the World Cup with detailed articles on the Argentine political situation.

The boycott campaign was slightly marred on May 23 when a couple of individuals with an unloaded gun momentarily tried to "kidnap" Michel Hidalgo, supposedly to persuade him not to go to Buenos Aires. The Anarchist Federation expressed the general reaction when it said the action, immediately condemned by COBA, "seemed more like a provocation than a useful act of solidarity with the Argentine people."

Less attention was attracted a short

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JAPAN

Narita airport may never be finished

By Charles Douglas Lummis

T O K Y O

IN A TREMENDOUS DISPLAY OF state power, and with a chilling disregard for the safety of passengers, the Japanese government on May 20 managed to pry open the New Tokyo International Airport at Narita.

To accomplish this opening—postponed 12 times over 12 years by the fierce opposition of local farmers—the government rammed through a new law that virtually suspends the Constitution in the Narita area. It also had steel plates driven into the ground around the airport to prevent tunneling in, brought in 13,000 riot police with a rifle company and attack dogs, forbade all but actual passengers with tickets from entering the terminal, and put in a request to Interpol to watch for suspicious passengers headed for Narita from anywhere in the world.

No one was surprised that the airport could be opened under these martial law conditions. The question now is, how long can it be kept open? An airport is a public place, not a fortress, and there is no way that the public can be permanently kept out. There is no way that it can continue to operate in the midst of a bitterly hostile community. And there is no reason to expect the opposition of the farmers and their radical supporters to lessen now that the airport is open.

On the day of the opening, of the many violent attacks on the gates of the airport and on nearby radar and power facilities, one was particularly noteworthy. A secret underground coaxial cable for the Tokyo Air Control Center was out in three places, blacking out the entire air control system in the Tokyo area for nine hours and causing the cancellation of 119 flights at Haneda Airport. Police and communications officials suspect an inside job, and point out that radical groups claim 3,000 sympathizers working for government enterprises and public corporations.

Despite the virtually limitless potential for this kind of sabotage the government—which had earlier stated that the “prestige of the state” was at issue—went ahead with the opening, and at this writing, planeload after planeload of unsuspecting passengers is being brought in from all over the world.

Japan Inc.

Narita embodies a host of key issues in Japan today. In 1966, when the government suddenly announced that it had chosen Sanrizuka, in Narita, as the site for the new international airport, the farmers there angrily formed the Sanrizuka-Shibayama Opposition League, and vowed that they would never allow the airport to be built. Their initial desire was to hold on to their property, and they were angry that they had not been consulted.

When the government offered flattery and big money for their land, many took it and dropped out of the League. Those who refused found themselves standing directly in the path of an advancing juggernaut—the great economic, political and military apparatus called Japan, Inc.

Since then they have broadened their attack against the airport. Studying the airport, they claim it has deep connections with Japan-U.S. military policy: much of the initial “overcrowding” at the International Airport at Haneda was due to its use for American troop movements during the war in Vietnam; the distant Narita site was chosen because most of the airspace over Tokyo is controlled by the U.S. Air Force and Japan Air Self Defense Force. Narita itself will have military uses.

They also speak of the airport’s connections with Japan’s growing economic domination of other Asian countries: much of the air traffic will be businessmen and tourists flying to South Korea, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, as well as



May 20 demonstrator sets afire a power supply distributor for airport police.

the popular all-male tours through the brothels of poorer countries.

“Mussolini modern.”

But perhaps most important of all, some of the farmers see the airport struggles as a clash between two different modes of economic development.

They see displacing their farm village with an international airport as part of a larger strategy by Japan’s rulers virtually to do away with the agricultural sector and transform the nation into an industrial park. Between 1960 and 1975 the agricultural population was reduced from 12 to 5.9 million. In the same period 2.72 million acres of farm land were transformed into industrial parks or recreational areas for city people. By 1975 only 12 percent of all farm families lived exclusively by agriculture. Typically, the women do the farming while the men go to the city as day laborers.

During the same period Japan’s food self-sufficiency dropped from 90 percent to 74 percent, and its grain self-sufficiency from 83 percent to 43 percent.

Historically Japan has been an agricultural country; its best and most promising cultural traditions find their roots in the agricultural countryside.

Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the dreary futurism of the airport (the style Norman Mailer called Mussolini Modern) and the rich, fertile, infinitely varied environment produced through generations of labor by the farmers of the surrounding countryside. In their proud and graceful old houses, their marvellously tailored and terraced fields, their carefully trained hedges, their flower and vegetable gardens, one can see an intricate interweaving of tradition and mechanization, craft and science.

If the farmers lose, they believe their culture will be destroyed.

Airport’s future dim.

But even if overwhelming police power manages to keep the airport operating, its future is dim. The airport itself is nowhere near completion. No dependable way has been found yet to get jet fuel in:

the pipeline was stopped by local opposition and the plan to ship it in by rail is threatened by the opposition of the local railway workers’ union. No solution has been found to the problem of transportation into Tokyo: it is predicted that during crowded periods the trip may take as much as four hours.

But most important, only one of the three runways planned is now completed, which means that whenever there are crosswinds—which there sometimes are at Narita—the airport will have to be shut down. At its present incomplete stage, pilots describe Narita as a “local airport, not an international one.”

The cost of Phase I of the construction has been tremendous: an estimated \$4 billion, 7,000 wounded, 3,000 arrested, and five killed. Phase II is still on the drawing boards; not all of the 1,272 acres needed for it has been obtained. And on that very land, cultivating their farms, are 21 families who are members of the Opposition League.

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World Cup protests

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time earlier when a group calling itself the “AAA,” after the notorious Argentine death squad, tried to prevent the Anarchist Federation from holding a meeting on Argentina in Bordeaux, attacking and wounding the Federation’s secretary in the street and breaking into his apartment and wrecking it. The ultra-right Nationalist Front used the absurd May 23 incident to demand police protection for French soccer players “against ultra-left terrorists.”

The impact of the campaign showed up in a small way when two porters at the Meurice Hotel in Paris got fired for refusing to carry the suitcases of a group of Argentine Army officers who had come to town to shop for their favorite French luxury goods—that is, weapons. The porters were praised by Francois Mitterrand and other political leaders.

The porters’ spur-of-the-moment and costly act (they lost \$14,000-a-year jobs) helped publicize the fact that France is the junta’s second-biggest arms supplier after the U.S., and apparently ready to try for first place since the U.S. cut off arms sales because of human rights violations. This fact suggests a future focus

for a COBA boycott campaign on a tougher issue than football.

But the thorniest issue of all, still largely neglected, is the enthusiastic support accorded the Videla regime by the international business community. The International Monetary Fund has lavished credits on Argentina. Chase Manhattan Bank president David Rockefeller recently extolled the regime’s economic “miracle” at a premiere showing in New York’s Metropolitan Club last November of an 80-minute film, *Images of Argentina*, largely financed by Bunge and Born, the big transnational grain dealers that dominate Argentine agriculture.

Rockefeller scarcely exaggerated in describing as a “miracle” an economic policy that sacrifices almost all of Argentina’s national interests—its domestic industry, its workers’ wages and job security, its welfare state measures—to the limited but powerful interests of the grain-exporting oligarchy and the multinational corporations and banks. Argentina is an IMF and Rockefeller favorite because it is going farthest fastest in restructuring its entire economy to suit a “new international division of labor” that virtually eliminates the nation as a decision-

making unit on major economic questions. It is a leading paradox of the ’70s that “ultra-nationalist” military dictatorships are being installed to police drastic economic overhauls determined by foreign interests.

The “miracle’s” architect, Economy Minister Jose Martinez de Hoz, forthrightly told a Business International seminar in Buenos Aires last April that only a military regime could enforce the economic policies they all love so well.

The Argentine press reported that some 100 top business leaders from “trilateral” countries were promised by Labor Minister Gen. Horacio Tomas Liendo, in the course of their ten-day hush-hush “roundtable with the Argentine government,” that “politicization of union life is a thing of the past that will be wiped out.”

The Minister of the Interior, Gen. Albano Harguindeguy, assured them that the promised “dialogue” with civilians “did not mean restoration of political activity.”

“Stability” was the watchword. Argentina is being made safe for foreign investment. A spokesman for business leaders at the forum expressed appreciation that “the military reorganization process that began on March 24, 1976, opens up investment and business opportunities for international firms that will not be wasted.”