

# Argentine political prisoner Seineldín must be freed

by Cynthia R. Rush

The July 18, 1994 bombing of the Argentine-Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires “was not an isolated terrorist act, but rather an act of war against the Republic of Argentina. This act of war finds the country physically, juridically, and politically defenseless due to the existence over the past ten years of the doctrine of national insecurity which dismantled the Armed Forces, making it legally impossible for them to act inside their own country.”

These words of Capt. Gustavo Breide Obeid, an Argentine Army nationalist who is jailed, together with Malvinas War hero Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín, at the Magdalena Prison in Buenos Aires, get to the heart of the turmoil unleashed in Argentina following the terrorist bombing, in which close to 100 people were killed. Aside from the Jewish social welfare agency, the building also housed offices of the DAIA, which speaks for the Jewish community.

Breide, like Seineldín unjustly imprisoned on charges of rebellion stemming from the Dec. 3, 1990 nationalist uprising against the Army high command, made these remarks in a mid-August statement to denounce charges by leftist media and other British intelligence assets, that he and the officers jailed with him were involved in the July 18 bombing.

While international analysis of the bombing has focused on the role of “Islamic fundamentalists,” and an Argentine judge has charged four Iranian diplomats with planning it, such local dailies as the leftist *Página 12*, allied politically with the Cuban-led narco-terrorist coalition, the São Paulo Forum, began to publish a series of articles soon after July 18 implicating the military nationalists (or *carapintadas*, as they are called) in the bombing. The articles alleged that at precisely the time the terrorist act occurred, the Magdalena prisoners were permitted to enter and leave the facility whenever they pleased, implying that dangerous “convicted criminals” were on the loose. *Página 12* and others of the same ilk demanded that Seineldín and his collaborators be investigated. *Página 12* targeted Captain Breide by lying that he is related to Hezbollah leader Sheikh Karim Obeid, currently jailed in Israel, and claiming that Breide’s political activities were financed by “a Middle Eastern embassy, not Iran’s.” Several analysts have named the Hezbollah as the likely perpetrator of the bombing.

## A foreign plot

As Breide asserts, these lies are the work of the “enemy intelligence services” which stand behind *Página 12*, whose goal is to destroy the institution of the Armed Forces as the core defender of the nation-state. These mouthpieces are railing against the *carapintadas*, not because they are concerned about the nation’s security, but because they know that Colonel Seineldín, even from jail, is still the only visible resistance to the destruction of the Armed Forces and national sovereignty. As Breide notes, it was Seineldín who in 1989 signed an agreement with President Carlos Menem “to reverse the situation of defenselessness he had inherited” as President. But due to “national and international pressures,” Breide adds, Menem failed to keep his side of the agreement.

What really worries both the national and international proponents of United Nations-led one-worldism is the knowledge that Seineldín is highly respected among sectors of the Argentine population, and the possibility that he might go free to rally a moral resistance to these nation-wrecking policies. In fact, the true reason he was jailed was because of his warnings about the international plot to destroy the Armed Forces and the nations of Ibero-America, and his refusal to submit to such designs.

Despite Seineldín’s jailing, there is still significant resistance in Argentina to one-worldist policies, as seen most recently in the congressional and other political opposition which forced Menem to abandon plans to have Argentine troops participate in a multinational invasion of Haiti. If Seineldín were allowed to freely organize in the current environment, the results could be unpredictable.

Thus in an article Aug. 2, *Página 12* lamented that “Seineldín’s support among his ‘bases’ continues to be high,” and in a state of panic reported that “groups of *carapintada* non-commissioned officers had leafletted some Army barracks demanding Seineldín’s freedom.” The leaflet in question was headlined “For a Free Fatherland, Freedom for Mohamed Alí Seineldín.”

## Revival of Aristotle

In its panic over Seineldín’s real importance, *Página 12* has tried to portray him as a nut case who “says he speaks

with the Virgin.” Mariano Grondona, a friend of former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger who shares the latter’s slavish loyalty to the British crown, authored a more sophisticated attack in his weekly column in the Aug. 14 *La Nación*, getting down to the true philosophical issues behind the “act of war” against Argentina referenced by Breide.

Although Grondona didn’t mention the colonel directly, he attacked the principles of Augustinian Christianity to which Seineldín is deeply committed, and argued that St. Augustine himself spawned “fundamentalism” when he wrote *The City of God*, by defining it as the only type of human existence which must prevail over the degradation and pagan hedonism of the Roman emperors. The problem with Augustine’s political followers, Grondona complained, was that they defended the thesis that “only those kingdoms blessed by the church were legitimate. Others, because they resided outside the City of God or Christianity, were illegitimate, lands of infidels.”

Since Seineldín’s attackers identify him as a fanatical Catholic fundamentalist, no knowledgeable reader of Grondona’s column could see in his ranting against “ultraconservative Catholicism . . . which sought a New Middle Age,” anything other than an attack on Seineldín. Grondona is virtually pinning the AMIA bombing on Seineldín; most revealing is the former’s embrace of Samuel Huntington’s geopolitical rantings, reflected in his “clash of civilizations” thesis, in which recalcitrant “Islamic fundamentalism” will supposedly be the crucial element in future conflicts.

Huntington’s thesis is merely a cover for the “splendid little wars” the British seek to unleash in their pursuit of a one world dictatorship. In the end, Grondona’s promotion of British philosophical radicalism as an alternative tells all: “an Aristotelian Thomism which recognized the legitimacy of all regimes which protected the common good, even when they weren’t Christian. The Thomist-Aristotelian conception announced ‘the advent of pluralism.’ ” It is this Aristotelian pluralism, Grondona asserts, that will protect people from “a new Crusade” of Augustinian Christianity.

## **Intelligence warfare**

Grondona may try to convince Argentines that they are experiencing a clash of civilizations. The reality is that since the July 18 bombing, the country has been subject to intense intelligence warfare in which the hand of British intelligence is particularly evident. The March 1994 agreement between Britain’s MI-5 and MI-6 and Argentina’s state intelligence agency SIDE, by which the British will train SIDE agents in “intelligence analysis,” is especially noteworthy. Similarly, the June 6-8 conference co-sponsored in Buenos Aires by Geopol, the British intelligence-linked think tank from Geneva, Switzerland, and its local representative Rosendo Fraga of the Union Center of Studies for a New Majority, should not be overlooked.

What makes Colonel Seineldín’s release from jail abso-

lutely imperative at this time is that the nation and its institutions have been significantly weakened as a result of this warfare and the accompanying campaign of psychological terror. In the aftermath of the July 18 bombing, a gaggle of British intelligence-linked individuals, representing agencies purporting to defend the Jewish community, descended on the country, including World Jewish Congress President Edgar Bronfman, Kent Schiner of B’nai B’rith International, New York Rabbi Avi Weiss—heir apparent to the late Jewish terrorist Meir Kahane—and Rabbi Leon Klenicki of the U.S. Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

Along with local assets of British intelligence such as Guillermo Patricio Kelly and Luis Sobrino Aranda, all delivered virtually the same message designed to cover up the controlling hand of foreign intelligence behind the bombing and its aftermath. Argentina is rampant with anti-Semitism, they said, and President Menem was at fault in failing to provide adequate security. Several international press outlets claimed that Menem was harboring Nazis and anti-Semites within his own government, and constantly repeated that Peronism had protected Nazis who fled Germany after World War II. Weiss called for closing down the Buenos Aires international airport and warned American citizens not to travel to Argentina because “it is not safe.”

The fact that the AMIA building housed declassified government files of former military and government officers who had protected Nazis in Argentina, was also used to blame “local fundamentalists” for involvement in the bombing. From Washington, the director of B’nai B’rith’s international board, Warren Eisenberg, complained to *Página 12* that the investigators of the AMIA bombing were making a mistake in only blaming Iran and discounting the role of “local neo-Nazis.” The Latin American Affairs director of the American Jewish Committee charged that Seineldín was to blame for the bombing.

The deployment of the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad into Argentina immediately following July 18, has been especially ominous. Clearly under intense international pressure, Menem granted Mossad agents and Israeli security forces total control over AMIA rescue efforts, excluding any involvement by Argentine military personnel. Army Gen. Cándido Díaz, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had met with Menem two hours after the bombing to advise him that the Army was prepared to begin relief operations immediately, but Menem rejected the offer, on the grounds that military participation would have required the declaration of a state of siege.

The trampling on sovereignty implied in the Mossad’s participation provoked outrage. When Israeli forces hoisted their flag over the AMIA site, Air Force Brig. Jesús Capellini angrily wrote to *La Nación* that “Argentina is not Israeli soil or occupied territory, it is Argentine soil.” The flag, he said, “represents the state of Israel” and there is no possible context for disregarding “the norms of respect among nations.”

## Iran the culprit?

International demands that the Menem government find the perpetrators of the AMIA bombing have resulted in Buenos Aires Judge Juan José Galeano ordering international warrants for the arrest of four Iranian diplomats whom he says planned the bombing, according to the testimony of a single individual, Iranian national and alleged diplomat Manouchehr Motamer. Motamer, who is described as a dissident, was questioned by Galeano in Caracas, where he had taken refuge after reportedly being kidnapped by Iranian government agents in Cuba.

Now under the protection of the U.N.'s High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the U.S. government, Motamer provided detailed information to Galeano, but has raised suspicions based on his erratic behavior and strange background. Several sources, including the Iranians, have charged that he is employed by the CIA.

One day after giving testimony to Galeano, he showed up in Ecuador and obtained a two-year work visa. Then two weeks later, he appeared at the Argentine embassy in Quito, Ecuador, claiming that he had more information to give, and

reportedly seeking asylum in Argentina. Even Rubén Beraja, president of the Jewish community's DAIA, commented that Motamer's testimony raised "suspicions," and didn't rule out that his reports could represent "a counterespionage maneuver to confuse us." An unnamed member of the Supreme Court, which is being asked to take up the bombing case, added, "Galeano's findings show he doesn't have much proof, but rather some pretty weak evidence."

Galeano's charges have brought Argentina's relations with Iran, its most important Mideast trading partner, to the point of diplomatic rupture, but have not brought the AMIA case any closer to real resolution. Meanwhile, the campaign of psychological terror has intensified. On Aug. 13, on the basis of warnings from the Mossad, Menem mobilized the population to brace for a repeat terrorist attack. Hospitals and civil defense teams were put on red alert, and security beefed up at all Jewish community buildings. Frightened residents are selling their homes in areas where Jewish schools or other agencies exist, and sports teams are cancelling games held at Jewish schools or other facilities, fearing attacks. All of this has encouraged continuing accusations of anti-Semitism.

## 'The bombing was an act of war against Argentina'

*What follows are excerpts from the statement issued by Capt. Gustavo Breide Obeid from the Magdalena military prison in Buenos Aires.*

The July 18, 1994 bombing on Pasteur Street is not an isolated terrorist act but an act of war against the Republic of Argentina. . . . This act of war finds the country physically, juridically, and politically defenseless, due to the existence, for more than ten years, of a doctrine of national insecurity which dismantled the Armed Forces, making it impossible for them to act legally within their own country.

In 1989, President Menem signed an agreement with Colonel Seineldín to reverse this situation of defenselessness he inherited. . . . President Menem could not rebuild the defense system as he had promised due to national and international pressures.

On Dec. 3, 1990, six units of the Argentine Army rose up . . . to seek the reversal of the aforementioned situation. The uprising was bloodily repressed, a fact caused more by the work of sharpshooters unrelated to the Armed Forces than by official forces of repression. . . .

The Federal Court absolved the defendants of all acts of bloodshed and opted for [the charge] of rebellion. . . .

The Court likewise absolved them of charges of coup plotting, determining that "the officers' conduct . . . showed no motives of personal advantage. . . ."

Following the act of war which occurred against Argentina on July 18, the President asked forgiveness for the state of defenselessness, but the *Página 12* daily continued its attack on the Armed Forces. . . .

In the exercise of its powers, the Federal Court authorized leave, under rigorous guard, for some officers [from the Magdalena prison], due to grave humanitarian problems, and *Página 12* used this fact, along with other products of its own invention, to link us to the AMIA bombing, claiming that we were not authorized or guarded. *Página 12*'s campaign continued despite Army denials.

I hope that the country can defend itself from *Página 12*'s lies and from the enemy intelligence services behind it. . . .

### A final reflection

With malicious incoherence, *Página 12* ridicules the moral and Christian principles of my family, attempting to prove a family relationship with leaders of another religion. So that the identity of their faith is clear, it should be noted that over 150,000 Christians have been killed in Lebanon alone.

The Argentine nation has a destiny far greater than inserting itself into the market. . . . We hope that it re-assumes its mission and that the Armed Forces can defend it.