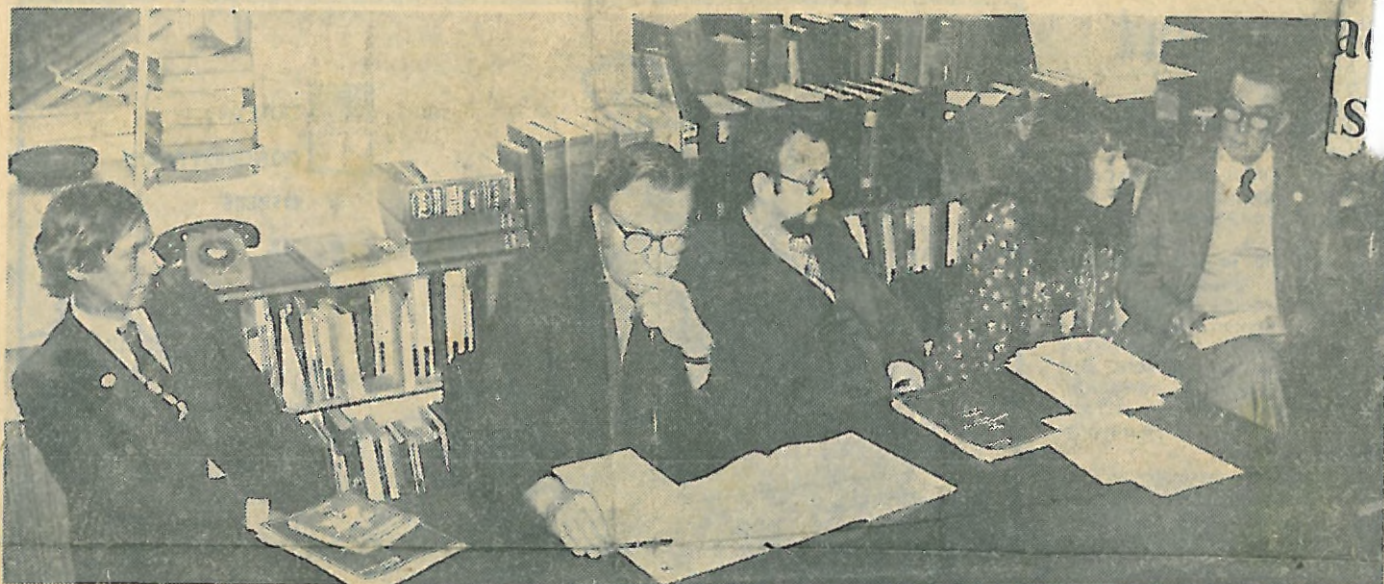


March 24/77

OVERSEAS



The Amnesty report is discussed at a press conference yesterday by Lord Avebury, left, Mr Martin Ennals, Amnesty secretary-general, Señor Maximo Pedro Victoria, a former nuclear scientist, Miss Patricia Feeney and Señor Enrique Rodríguez Larreta.

Argentine population terrorized, Amnesty says

By David Watts

Argentina has become "a brutal and oppressive police state" where the laws are systematically violated by the power of the state, according to Lord Avebury, chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee.

The population is terrorized and millions of people go in fear of their lives while institutions such as the Federation of Lawyers are powerless to remedy the situation.

Lord Avebury led an Amnesty International mission to Argentina last year to inquire into the deteriorating human rights situation and the detention, without charge or trial, of an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 political prisoners. Up to 5,000 other people are said to have disappeared since the coup which brought General Jorge Videla to power a year ago.

Presenting its 92-page report

yesterday at a press conference, Amnesty International called on the Argentine Government to invite the United Nations to send a mission to investigate its allegations; to publish a full list of its prisoners; to investigate the disappearances, including more than 300 listed by name in the report, and to see that full protection is afforded to political refugees from other Latin American countries now in Argentina.

Lord Avebury undertook the mission with Father Robert Drinan, a Democratic member of the United States' House of Representatives, and Miss Patricia Feeney, a member of the International Secretariat of Amnesty International.

The report was presented to the Argentine Government on February 22. Yesterday the Argentine embassy in London said in a statement: "Notwithstanding the lack of veracity and objectivity of the report

and in spite of the aggressive terms in which it is written, the Argentine Government, bearing in mind the humanitarian aims which Amnesty International is said to defend, has these comments:

"The report contains lengthy accusations supported by hearsay 'evidence' based on subjective representations. On the other hand, the fact that the report mentions in less than four lines the atrocities carried out by terrorist groups, a condemnation which Amnesty International does not even take up directly, causes concern.

"The Argentine Government rejects the report on account of the rash statements it contains and deplores that it facilitates co-ordinated demonstrations by activist groups and minorities that try to mould public opinion for ideological reasons."

An Amnesty spokesman denied that it had ignored the

activities of groups opposing the Government with violence, drawing attention to two pages of details of kidnappings and murders of officials during 1976.

The report gives evidence of widespread torture of detainees and supports claims that political refugees fleeing to Argentina are not safe from the attentions of the local paramilitary organizations or from pursuit and persecution from their own governments.

Evidence of this was given to the press conference by Señor Enrique Rodríguez Larreta, a Uruguayan journalist, who went to Buenos Aires in search of his son, another journalist, who had disappeared. Señor Larreta was arrested and tortured during detention at a private house in the city where he witnessed the death of at least one detainee under torture.