

Under Threat: Academics Documenting Human Rights Abuses

The Case of Argentine Professor William Sill

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Introduction

There was urgency in my friend's voice. It was July 12, 2001 in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Nestor Curbelo was excited. "William Sill is in town. This is your chance to talk to him. He will be receiving an award from the Argentine Senate. Get a taxi and be at the *Salón Azul* at the Senate Building by 18:30." I made it to the Blue Room and enjoyed a unique and vigorous celebration of Argentine and San Juan Province culture and music. The highlight of the two-hour celebration was the awarding of the Argentine Congressional Medal of Honor to William Sill, Research Professor and Curator of the Paleontology Museum at the National University of San Juan in western Argentina. In the presentation Sill was lauded for several accomplishments, particularly his monumental role in the establishment of the Ischigualasto Provincial Park (Valle de la Luna) and its subsequent naming as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. On the list of his accomplishments was one I did not understand, "a defender of human rights."

The next day I understood my friend's sense of urgency. I met with Dr. Sill at a Buenos Aires office and watched as he struggled mightily to climb a set of stairs. He used braces and two canes because both legs were nonfunctional due to muscular dystrophy. Dr. Sill wanted me to record his story and was willing to submit to a three-hour-long interview even through the experience was exhausting. My purpose was to get the story of an American who, after getting

his Ph.D. at Harvard, decided to forgo a promising academic career in the United States to take a much lower paying and less prestigious position in the Argentine province of San Juan. Even with the disadvantage of being at a small university in western Argentina, he gained an international reputation because of his work on the development of the Ichigualasto Park.

He wanted to talk to me for a different reason. He was beginning to recognize the early symptoms of what turned out to be Alzheimer's and wanted to make sure his papers were deposited in a university library. He also wanted to make sure that part of his history that had been kept private was told. Halfway through the interview he took from his briefcase a copy of a small diary written between 1976-1979. The document recounted events that occurred during a period in Argentina's history known as the "Dirty War." In it he described the kidnapping, torture, and death of some of his students and friends. He described helping students escape Argentina to save their lives. This diary was one of his most valuable possessions and the writing of this document had put his life in danger. He asked that I not do anything with it until after his death. He realized that though his diary was of limited importance in the collective history of defiance and struggle in Argentina, it should be preserved.

Academics and Documenting Human Rights Violations

Dr. Sill's story is one of many that describe the personal struggle of citizens during this period of Argentine history. It is representative of a more extensive history of how documents are created and preserved during times of political and violent oppression. Many of those documents have been kept by academics that upon finding themselves in dangerous situations, have chosen to put their lives in harm's way by doing all that is possible to document and leave for posterity a record of what was happening. One the most famous examples of this motivation to create

records during periods of human rights violations is that of Emanuel Ringelblum. Born in 1900 Ringelblum was a cultural historian of the Jewish heritage of Poland. Forced into the Warsaw Ghetto after the 1939 German invasion of Poland, Ringelblum believed it was important that records be kept and preserved which documented the story of the Ghetto. He organized and directed a group of academics and others called Oyneg Shabbath for the purpose of recording and documenting the history. Though this activity was dangerous and potentially lethal for those involved, a large number of documents were created on all aspects of life in the Ghetto. When Ringelblum realized the Ghetto was going to be closed, the documents were sealed in metal boxes and milk cans and buried at different locations in the Ghetto. After the war they were discovered and are now housed in the State Archive of Poland in Warsaw. Found in the documents was the will of one of the young participants, nineteen-year-old David Graber, which included this poignant statement. "What we were unable to cry and shriek out to the world we buried in the ground. . .I would love to see the moment in which the great treasure will be dug up and scream the truth at the world. . .We may now die in peace. We fulfilled our mission. May history attest for us." Graber was killed shortly after being removed from Warsaw.

Related to this story is the experience of one of SALALM's book dealers who was involved in the clandestine preservation of the history of the Ghetto. Joe Heydecker, founder of Atlantis Livros in São Paulo, Brazil, was a soldier in the German army assigned as a photography laboratory technician in a propaganda company in Warsaw. So effected by what he saw during his first visit, he decided to clandestinely return to the Ghetto and take pictures. He stated,

My photographic activities were my own, and were to my own danger. I was

under no orders and fortunately, without any of my superiors knowing about it. I am sorry but I am incapable to giving a picture of my own innermost being at this time. I was torn by shame, hate, and helplessness . . . My photographs were taken that the shame should not be forgotten to keep alive the shriek I wanted the world to hear. I cannot say more.

The negatives were hidden and taken by Heydecker to Brazil in the 1960s when he started his book business to sell Brazilian books internationally. The photographs were published in a tri language edition in Brazil in 1981. He stated, "I publish these documents with intention. They are still testimony to the fear I had when I took them long ago; that people might not believe that all this ever happened."

William Sill

William Sill was born in Las Vegas, Nevada on July 30, 1937. Having an adventurous spirit and a passion for the outdoors, he studied geology at Brigham Young University and the National University of Mexico (UNAM). His relationship with Argentina began as an undergraduate at Brigham Young University due to his association with James A. Jensen, professor of Paleontology. Nicknamed "Dinosaur Jim," Professor Jensen participated in the 1958 Harvard-sponsored expedition to the western desert area called Ichigualasto in search of dinosaur and other fossils. Jensen mentored Sill, and eventually helped him get into Harvard where he wrote a dissertation on the origin of crocodiles, using fossils from Argentina. Jensen and Sill maintained a close professional and personal relationship until Jensen's death in December of 1998.

In 1958 Sill was sent to Argentina by the LDS Church on a religious mission where he

worked in the western Argentine city of Mendoza. It was there that he met Nelida Salinas, a native of San Juan, who eventually became his wife. He returned to the United States in 1961, graduated from BYU in 1963, and entered Harvard to study vertebrate paleontology. He participated in three of Harvard's important African paleontological expeditions under the direction of Dr. Bryan Patterson. After graduation he accepted a post graduate research and teaching position at Yale University and was in Connecticut between 1968-1970.

Though he enjoyed New Haven and was invited to remain permanently on the faculty, Nelida was homesick and they began looking for ways to return to South America. That opportunity occurred in 1970 when he received a National Science Foundation grant to spend a year at the Instituto Miguel Lillo in Tucumán examining and evaluating a collection of fossils from Ischigualasto. In 1971 the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo created a geology department in San Juan and he was given a full professorship in paleontology. He resigned his \$3,000 a month position at Yale for a salary of \$300 and Sill, his wife, and four children moved to San Juan in western Argentina.

He was happy in Argentina because of the proximity of the university to Ischigualasto. Ischigualasto is located in the dry desert area of the Province of San Juan and contains a unique deposit of fossils from the Triassic period. It is the only place in the world where nearly all of the Triassic period is represented in an undisturbed sequence of rock deposits allowing for the study of the transition between ancient mammals and dinosaurs. It includes some of the oldest known dinosaur remains in the world. It was an ideal place for someone like Dr. Sill.

Soon after arriving in San Juan Dr. Sill realized the need to protect the area and became involved in the creation of a provincial park, writing the laws and regulations to govern the area.

The Ischigualasto Provincial Park was created in 1971. The area was his passion and he spent thousands of hours exploring all parts of the Park. Even as the devastating effects of muscular dystrophy took away his ability to climb and eventually walk, he continued to explore with a four-wheeler vehicle.

The Military

Within a couple of years after moving to San Juan, political events in Argentina changed the lives of the Sills. Those events consisted of the return of former president Juan Perón, violent activities of the left, Perón's death, the presidency of Isabella his wife, the military coup in 1976, and activities of the military government to root out and destroy the left. It was a period of political unrest and violence including aggressive kidnapping, interrogation, and subsequent disappearance of many Argentine citizens.

Sill's perception of this period is illuminating. Shortly before the 1973 return of Juan Perón national universities were created in each province and the Universidad de Cuyo was divided and the Universidad de San Juan created. Sill became Professor of Paleontology and chair of the Institute of Geology in the School of Physical and Natural Sciences.

When Perón returned to power in 1973, he encouraged students and young people to become involved politically and some chose activities outside of the law. The most significant activities in the region occurred in Mendoza but there were occasional strikes instigated by the Peronist Youth in San Juan. These activities were calm in comparison to what was happening in other regions of the country. Sill stayed out of politics and maintained a positive relationship with the state government whether civilian or military.

With the military coup against Isabella in March of 1976, the climate changed

significantly. Sill was shocked at what began to happen. "Pure Nazi," was the way he described the approach of the military rulers.

They would raid the university and carry people away. People would be screaming. They would come in un-marked Ford Falcons with no license plates and dressed as civilians. They would pull guns and take people off the streets and they would never be heard from again . . . At night the military trucks would go loaded with soldiers and stop at a home, take the people out, and leave little children laying on the floor. They would raid the house and steal anything they wanted out of the house. Sometimes they would actually take the furniture as well as the food out of the refrigerator. Those people would never be heard from again.

Sill suggests that the general public had greater knowledge of what was happening than is often believed. He personally knew of the torture tactics used by the military because some of his students were tortured, released, and talked to him about what happened. Some after being tortured would be placed in "open imprisonment where they could actually be visited by relatives." Others, however, were taken out of the Province and never heard from again.

Many in the military were opposed to what was happening.

I had a number of friends in the military and some of them would come to me with tears in their eyes and ashamed, terribly ashamed of what they had witnessed. Some of them actually left the military. They resigned, they just refused. Others were disciplined because they refused to torture. So they were put in confinement. Their salary was taken away and they were locked up for thirty days because they refused to torture.

It was a frustrating time. Sill knew what was happening could do nothing. “You were completely helpless. There is just a sense of complete helplessness.” He was also frustrated with groups in society whose reaction was to support the military. He was particularly distressed over the lack of opposition by certain components of the Catholic Church. Some priests he knew justified the actions of the military by suggesting that what the military was doing was similar to operating on cancer. Cancer surgery requires cutting away some unaffected flesh along with the cancer. Some priests suggested it was the same with what was happening in Argentina. Innocent victims were tortured and killed in order to guarantee that the subversives were eliminated. “So that would soften the conscience. In effect that would authorize them to torture and murder.” He was equally angry at the U.S. government which essentially ignored and condoned what was happening.

The effect on the University of San Juan was devastating. At one time the University was led by a young Second Lieutenant who had no educational training or background. The University with a student population of 3,000 had sixty-five students who disappeared. Numerous faculty members were dismissed but none were killed. Sill stated, “It was really nasty, It was virtually the destruction of the Argentine university system. It has never recovered from that period.”

Though Sill was careful it wasn't long before the military suspected him because of friendship with so many students who were apprehended. As a professor he knew students who were involved in the leftist groups, the initial target of the military, as well as others who were only involved in charitable activities connected to a group called the “Monteaneros,” who were also arrested and tortured. Many came to him to tell their stories.

Sill realized he was in danger. His own brother-in-law disappeared for almost a year before being found in La Plata. "I had nothing to hide. I kept on going. I said, 'Okay, if they want me I'm here. They know where I am.'" Eventually the military did attempt to apprehend him. The Sill's primary residence was a house near the university. They also owned a small farm outside of San Juan. In 1976 they moved to the house on the farm without changing their address at the University. Consequently when the military decided to arrest him they had the address of the home in town which was vacant. A few days later they raided his farm. Luckily the family had traveled to Buenos Aires three days earlier so they were not at home. He had been offered a position in Buenos Aires teaching in the Mormon educational system and was finalizing the move. A friend who worked for Sill on the farm confronted the officers and told them the family had returned to the United States. The military broke into the local Mormon Church and among other things stole the membership records. They kept going back to his homes hoping to catch him. Though he returned to San Juan several times during the next two years he was never recognized by the military.

He did not want to leave Argentina and believed he would be safe in the largest city in the country.

One of the great contradictions of this mass-murder project of theirs was that they did not coordinate between provinces. Each province was a separate mission in it self . . . and I was not on the list in Buenos Aires. They didn't even know where I was.

He eventually realized he had to leave Argentina for his own protection. He remained in Buenos Aires for almost two years before receiving a transfer from the Church to the United

States. "I really regretted having to leave Argentina and San Juan during the military dictatorship. But that was necessary to stay alive." He left Argentina in July of 1978. To avoid calling attention to themselves they purchased round trip tickets to Paraguay making it appear they were taking a vacation trip. They were accompanied by a policeman who was Mormon and consequently were able to go to Paraguay without being detected. Once there they flew to Austin, Texas where they remained for ten years, teaching for the Mormon Church and in the Department of Geological Studies at the University of Texas. Sill retired from his position in the Church in 1992 and returned to San Juan to work as Curator of Paleontology at the University of San Juan Museum and resumed his activities related to the Park. His last few years were focused on research and a project to get the Park named by the United Nations as a World Heritage Site. During this time he struggled with muscular dystrophy. In 2002 he moved to Las Vegas to be near two of his children. His papers were donated to Brigham Young University in 2003. He became bedridden in 2004 and passed away at the age of 70 on March 15, 2008. One of the sad and cruel consequences of Alzheimer's was that he lost his ability to speak Spanish, his primary language for most of his adult life. At his request the remains of his heart were put in an urn and placed within a monument to him at Ischigualasto Provincial Park.

The Diary

Part of his collection donated to Brigham Young University was a diary written between 1976-1979. It was not a large document but included entries on days he had something to describe. He did not keep copies of the original pages written at the time. To keep hidden what he was writing he wrote on separate sheets of paper and then hid the separate sheets apart in different places in the house. A few years ago he copied the different entries into one volume.

During my 2001 interview he refused to be recorded talking about the diary or his personal activities during the “Dirty War.” He asked that the recorder be turned off and in a whispered voice stated that he did not want to talk because, “the military is still pretty strong and I’m nervous about that.” He requested I say nothing publically about his human rights activities until after his death. He told a local reporter from San Juan the same thing when asked about his activities. “*Hay otras cosas que muy pocos saben y que algún dia te contaré.*” (There are other things that very few know that someday I will tell you.) After he moved to the United States he opened up to me and talked more about his activities but never on tape.

In the diary he stated that the reason for writing was that it was important the details of the torture by the military be documented. He recognized that the act of recording these activities was risky but was willing to suffer the consequences if caught. He decided to identify the victims of the torture but not his informants. He stated in his introduction, “I knew that if captured I would be tortured and executed (probably) and decided that under no condition would I give them names of others that could then also be taken and executed. For this reason the names in this diary are in code.” The method he devised to identify people was the creation of a code connected to the Spanish translation of the Mormon scripture, *El Libro de Mormon*. He briefly explained the code to me but not in enough detail that I have been able to completely decipher the names. He never gave me the names of his informants. An example of one name in code is 2208740203084113042235020902221102130809082241021811. Errors in the code were occasionally made. “Sometimes the count may be off by one number, as the journal was written under stress. Numbers were run together to make it more difficult (sic) to decipher by testing possible names.”

The diary is thirty pages long and includes three elements. The first are descriptions of incidences of capture and torture which had been outlined to him by informants. Dr. Sill described in detail methods and techniques of torture as well as accounts of abuses of the military including rape, robbery, and destruction. His primary purpose was to catalog the tactics of the military not provide an emotional description of torture. He only included accounts of events he was absolutely sure occurred. He did not include every episode described to him but a representative of all that he knew. He suggests that the military had been practicing many of these methods before the military coup in 1976. He also included several personal and family experiences with the military and police. He discussed his family's involvement in the opposition particularly that of his wife and mother-in-law. He described his brother-in-law's arrest, disappearance, and torture. The accounts were written methodically, connecting everything he said with an informant to establish credibility to the episodes described. The way it was written I almost expected to see endnotes.

Second, he tells the story of two students he helped get out of San Juan and Argentina. In both cases he used friends of his in the Mormon Church. In this part he severely criticizes the lack of concern or even interest in the atrocities by the U.S. embassy and government.

The third part of the diary is a short essay giving his philosophical and religious views as to why it was happening. This section is different from the rest of the diary which was very matter-of-fact, descriptive, and scientific in its approach. This essay is typical, however, of his personality which was to place everything within a religious context.

The three descriptions that follow are representative of many included in the diary. They are graphic.

Torture and Murder

The diary entree for May 30, 1977 describes the torture and death of Nicolas Vargas Alvarez, a lawyer in San Juan. The informants were two friends of Sill who were with the victim in prison. The informants' names in code were

2208740203084113042235020902221102130809082241021811 and

08030611411413112235020304

Nicolas Vargas Alvarez was detained by the military for questioning because he was the son-in-law of Bustelo Grafigna who was active in the Peronist Youth. Nicolas was interrogated and tortured for several hours but did not provide the military with the information they wanted. They brought into the interrogation room his six-year-old daughter and threatened to kill her if he did not provide more information.

He reportedly said he couldn't give them any more information because he didn't have it, so in front of him they put a pistol to his daughter's head and pulled the trigger. The death was explained as an accident, that the child was playing with a gun at the police station and shot herself. Vargas has since disappeared, he was never released so is presumed to have been secretly executed.

Sill's June 6 entry describes the final hours and death of Vargas.

He is apparently dead . . . He was very bad off after severe torture. They (Sill's informants) asked him what happened, he replied "me han abierto" (They have opened me up). I don't know if this refers to the special form of torture allegedly applied to people they think are important. This consists of surgery performed with the victim watching it, conscious, apparently accompanied by threats to

leave him open unless he talks. Or he may have been referring to injuries sustained during torture. At any rate he lapsed into total unconsciousness (according to these witnesses), was taken from the cell and never seen again. This took place in the army post at Mendoza in Sept.-Oct. 1976.

A second entry describes torture techniques in general. An army officer by the code name of 74082206080302180803-198, came to Sill and described the conditions at prison where he had been assigned. The prisons were over crowded. The prisoners were at times kept blindfolded with their arms tied behind their backs. They were not allowed to clean themselves and had very few visits to a toilet.

The officer reported the most despicable forms of torture, particularly the destruction of female genitalia and breasts by the electric torture machine, and while prisoners are bound and blindfolded, after being beaten severely, they are thrown on the floor of the interrogation cell and dogs are set on them. This produces a tremendous psychological terror. A usual part of interrogation is a "false execution". In this the prisoner is told he is to be shot, taken to a yard, the commands given, then a burst of machine gun fire is given near the prisoner, while he is struck a hard blow in the back. Another form of torment is to take 3 or 4 prisoners together into an interrogation room-blindfolded and bound—then interrogate only one of them. The others listen in darkness to the blows and screams of the person being questioned.

Each evening the officer in charge created a list of between eight and twelve prisoners to

be executed.

These people were taken out by night in cars or trucks to an isolated place and shot, one by one, then placed in a mass grave and covered over. No trace remains of them, they do not figure on any list of prisoners, no government organization will admit that they were ever even arrested. They leave behind small children, property, debts, that will create a tremendous legal mess, as there will never be proof of death. 10,000 have been killed this way. The officer who recounted this was sick and disgusted, and ashamed.

After hearing this story Sill contacted someone at the US embassy and told them the story. They were not interested. “The word came back that they had instructions from Washington not to receive any information unfavorable to the military regime. This was about Dec. 1976.”

Abuses of the Military

Beyond the torture Sill describes numerous incidences abuses committed by the military and police. Rape was common. One incident he described happened to a secretary at the university who was a friend of Sill's. The couple did not have children because the husband has been diagnosed as sterile. They had asked Sill to do some research in the medical literature to see if there were any advances that might help the husband. In 1977 he wife was arrested.

When she was arrested, she was raped continually for 3 days by all comers (this was reported by another woman prisoner, later released (14-145.7406461404). 9 months later she gave birth to a child. She filed a complaint with a judge, who rejected it because the child could have been conceived in the days before her

arrest and she could not identify any assailants (being blindfolded). She is still in prison-with a baby.

Descriptions of Escape

In the diary Dr. Sill describes helping two students leave Argentina. I realized by talking to others that he was actively involved in helping others and that the stories in his diary were two of several he could have related. He admitted as much. “There were many others, nearly all of them students who were active in the Peronist Youth movement (JUP) that we helped escape or at least tried to get them to safe places, usually farms on the outskirts of San Juan.” He was very circumspect with me and never gave me a definite figure of how many were helped by him. Sill was cautious but committed to helping his students.

Sill used a variety of methods to assist the students. Students were transported away from San Juan in the trunk of his car. He often used his connections within the LDS Church to hide the students. The close social structure within the Church combined with their international contacts made the movement of students out of Argentina easier. “Some of those we rescued are now prominent members of society; most of them don’t know who arranged their rescue, which was a protective measure for those who were helping.”

The first story in his diary was that of a young doctor in San Juan who was a vocal opponent of the military government. When his home was bombed, he asked Sill to help him get out of the country, “quietly and quickly.” Sill had a Mormon friend with a truck who was willing to help. They loaded the man and his family into the bed of the truck and covered them with logs. The driver took them to southern Patagonia where they were in less danger. They were then able to cross the border into Chile undetected.

A second story is that of Oscar Jorge Comas Rodriguez from Mendoza who had been a student of Sill's in San Juan. It shows a humorous element of the horrible stories. Comas had been arrested without charges, tortured, and kept in prison for eighteen months. He was released but his passport retained by the police. He and his father come to Buenos Aires and asked Sill to help get him out of the country. Sill asked a colleague in the LDS educational system to assist.

He decided to go to Uruguay and then to Brazil where the UN had a center for political refugees. We set him up to go on the ferry-boat to Uruguay with a Uruguayan friend. Jorge would stay in the back away from the other guy and if the police started checking identity our friend would cough or sneeze. We didn't know that our friend had hay-fever, and of course had a sneezing attack in the middle of the trip. Jorge panicked and thought it was all over. But he made it out, into Brazil and thru the UN to Mexico, where he still is.

Unfortunately Sill was not always fortunate in these escape attempts. "We were not always successful and the sadness of our students who were murdered by the military never goes away." During my interview with Sill I mentioned the movie *Schindler's List*. The film told the story of German businessman Oskar Schindler, who saved the lives of more than a thousand mostly Polish Jewish refugees during the Holocaust by persuading German officials to allow him to employ them in his factories instead of being sent to extermination camps. When I described to Sill the end of the movie when Schindler expressed great remorse that he had not been able to save more, with tears in his eyes Sill expressed similar feelings. "Oh, that's exactly the way I feel. Schindler saved like a thousand people but lost six million. I saved a few, but there were sixty-five that were lost. I have guilt feelings just like Schindler over the fact that I didn't save

more.” The local San Juan paper, *El Nuevo Diario*, in an article published after his death called him, “El Schindler Sanjuanino,” the San Juan Schindler.

Near the end of the diary Sill provides this interesting statement. Sill declared that he was just an academic with limited political interest or connection beyond his activities related to the Ischigualasto Provincial Park. He considered himself politically conservative but with strong social concerns. This diary statement shows the contradictions in which he found himself.

I think it is time to close this part of my journal. What is recorded here is a representative of what is happening in the country. I have tried to record only those things that I could verify from people directly involved. There may be errors in the numbers reported, but they reflect the beliefs of the persons giving the reports. By recording the evil and injustice perpetrated principally by military and police authorities I don't want to give the impression of supporting the cause of the terrorists or allied groups—who committed great crimes also, and who would very probably treat their enemies exactly the same if they were in power. But there is a difference between the crimes committed by outlaw groups and those of legally constituted authorities who disobey the law they have sworn to uphold.

Conclusion

As a geologist Dr. Sill studied the history of the earth. His love and passion was in the ground connected to ancient alligators and dinosaurs. Because of his position as a teacher and friend of students, he was forced to leave that world of science and face the realities of a political system gone awry. As he saw his students disappear and learned of horrific abuse and murder, he joined the ranks of many academics before him who felt compelled to record and register the

abuses. That act was in itself dangerous because had it been discovered he would have joined his students. He did what he felt necessary to help students and friends escape. Those activities eventually required that he use similar methods to leave Argentina to save his life. Unlike many of his predecessors such as Emanuel Ringelblum in Warsaw Poland, he survived to tell his story. His diary also survived and leaves a small but important record of what he saw and knew. I honor his memory, actions to save others, and desire to record the abuses.

His diary contains two additional interesting items. The first is part of a description of the death of one of his friends. He felt compelled to put in code not only the identity of his informants but the names of the military torturers. Thus just as his informants were protected against possible arrest, the torturers also keep their anonymity in the historical record.

Names of torturers

030874041802053502223514042218

(141X) 09044108110222(2)64021804220274042202

0205060906084119042208353508

421408221108220274042202

130213188804082218

The last entry in his diary describes an event that occurred when he was at the University of Texas after leaving Argentina. This statement, a poignant expression of frustration, illustrates what many of us feel who lived through these events.

Later at the University of Texas, during the Malvinas War, I tried to explain Argentina's historical right to the islands at a graduate seminar. I was shouted down by reason of the terrible reputation the Argentine military had at the

international level. The response was that no one could justify people living under English democratic law being taken over by ruthless military dictators, usually referred to as the bastard sons of Hitler. I quietly shut up and sat down.”