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NEWSFLASH: CARLOS NORIEGA, THE FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE ARGENTINE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS will not be attending the International Statistical Institute Conference this December; he "disappeared" following his arrest in Argentina in 1977. Five or ten British statisticians will, however, attend the Conference, to be held in Buenos Aires.

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Argentine Generals, the ISI, and Particular Statisticians

The military seized power in Argentina, yet again, in 1976. This time, in addition to the suspension of democratic institutions and civil rights, they have brought about a change in the Spanish language. The word desaparecer no longer means only "to disappear" (intransitive), but also "to make (someone) disappear". Disappearance is now a method used by the military, and by paramilitary right-wing groups, to suppress political dissent.

The work of the soldiers and the gangs has so far disappeared. Twenty to thirty thousand people*; about half* are known or fairly certain to be dead, for the other half there is still hope. Of these 400 to 800* are children; 81 dossiers on disappeared children from the Buenos Aires area alone are held by the Committee for Human Rights in Argentina. (*All other estimates in this paragraph are made by a spokesperson for CHRA).

As to whether British statisticians should attend, or be supported by the RSS travel fund, there has been some debate (reported in September's News and Notes). At this stage, I would argue that a boycott by the British delegation would have little effect - even if it were possible to bring about.

Instead, those attending should be encouraged to give expression to their beliefs in freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and habeas corpus, based on their relatively privileged possession of these freedoms. That is, British delegates should (be asked to) resolve to join with other delegates to speak out against the Argentine military's abrogation of human rights, including the widespread disappearing of people such as Carlos Noriega, and to openly express their solidarity with the disappeared and their families. Acts such as the following could be undertaken:

1. requesting one minute of silence for the disappeared prisoners, to be held in a plenary session at the Conference;
2. proposing a motion asking the military to state (i) the numbers of people held in detention without charge, without the knowledge of their families and friends, and without access to the law, (ii) their names, and (iii) their whereabouts;
3. supporting the relatives of the disappeared as they wait, by attending the congregation of the relatives at the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires every Thursday, 2-3 p.m.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Find out who is going to the ISI from your place of work, or your area, and urge them to consider acts in support of the disappeared, such as those mentioned above.
2. Support a demonstration of the nature (statistical and otherwise) of the problem in London around the beginning of the ISI Conference (30th November). Your help for a few hours would be appreciated; for further details ring Jeff Evans (01-348-5514 - evenings).
3. Help keep up the pressure on the Argentine authorities after the ISI by "adopting" one of the disappeared - yourself, with a group of friends, or in your T.U. or party branch. For further details contact CHRA, c/o Carila, 29 Islington Park St., London, N.1 9QB.

Jeff Evans

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STATISTICS DEPARTMENT

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April 1981.



Tel. 772941

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you as a fellow-delegate at the 13th European Meeting of Statisticians in Brighton last September. You will recall that the delegates unanimously expressed their concern at the disappearance of the eminent Argentine statistician Carlos Noriega in the context of the forthcoming ISI Conference in Buenos Aires. I am now enclosing further information about the case of Dr. Noriega which reveals notably that he may well have been arrested because of his activities as a professional statistician.

This case has sparked off a great groundswell of concern among statisticians and workers in related fields in the United States, Europe and Australia. In France a petition has been launched by a group of eminent statisticians and probabilists. I am enclosing copies of the petition, the covering letter sent with it and also of letters which have appeared on this subject in the Royal Statistical Society's 'News and Notes' and the American Statistical Association's 'Amstat News'.

If you are interested in helping to secure the liberation of our colleague the following activities would be useful:

- (1) Sign the enclosed petition and have it signed by colleagues in your organisation.
- (2) Make copies of the petition and send them to colleagues in other institutions.
- (3) Write to Dr. E. Malinvaud, President, ISI, P.O. Box 950, 2270 AZ (Voorburg) Netherlands.
- (4) Write to
 - (a) the Argentine ambassador in your country;
 - (b) Exmo. General Roberto Viola, Presidente de la Republica Argentina, Casa Rosada, Buenos Aires, Argentina;
 - (c) Sr. Lorenzo Sigaut, Minister of Economics, Yrigoyen 250, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- (5) Raise the matter in any professional organisations of which you are a member, asking them to pass an official motion and to communicate it to the ISI, the Argentine Authorities, and the media in your country.
- (6) Write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of your country asking him to take up the matter with the Argentine government.
- (7) Ask members of your national Parliament to raise the matter officially.
- (8) Write to your national and local press.

Copies of the petition may be returned either to me or the address on the bottom.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'AERaftery'.

Adrian E. Raftery

American Association for the Advancement of Science
Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility

Case: Carlos Noriega
Country: Argentina
Discipline: Statistician
Date: October 1980

*(The following information is based on reports
from Amnesty International and colleagues of
Carlos Noriega.)*

In early February 1977 Carlos Noriega, an Argentine statistician, was arrested in the presence of his family, wife and three small children, whilst on vacation near Mar del Plata. To date the Argentine authorities have not acknowledged his whereabouts.

During his career Sr. Noriega served for 3 years as Regional Adviser on National Accounts to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America in Santiago. He left that post to become Director General of the Instituto Nacional de Estadistic y Censos in Argentina. He is a member of the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth and in that capacity participated in meetings of the Association in recent years. He has served as a member of several United Nations Expert Groups and Seminars. In 1976, the United Nations Statistical Office asked him to apply for a post of senior adviser in that office. He declined, but did accept a short term assignment as consultant to UNICEF and the UN during August and September 1976 on a project for the Statistical Institute of Peru. After the completion of this assignment the UN Statistical Office had an understanding with him that he would be available from time to time for short term assignments in connexion with UN sponsored projects on statistical development, particularly in Peru, Central America and Mexico.

In a letter dated 10 January 1977 to an American colleague, Carlos Noriega writes, "I believe next year I will follow up the assistance to Peru by UNICEF. At present I am engaged in independent professional activities on my own, in connection with which I am considering the feasibility of doing some research work on the brain drain in Argnetina." He then returned to Mexico for a short time. Upon his arrival in Argentina he was abducted.

In April and September 1977, colleagues of Carlos Noriega - Simon A. Goldberg, Cesar Molestina and Roque Garcia-Frias - addressed letters to the Minister of Planning and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, respectively, on the occasion of their visits to the United States, requesting them to use their good offices to inform them about the whereabouts of Sr. Noriega. On 19 September 1977, a reply was received from the Argentine Ambassador to the United Nations, stating that the Federal Police and Buenos Aires Province Police had no information on the

arrest of Carlos Noriega.

In August 1979 the AAAS Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility and the Human Rights Committee of the National Academy of Sciences issued a joint appeal to the Argentine authorities "to account for scientists, engineers and students who have disappeared or been subjected to torture, inhumane prison conditions, or the suspension of legal rights since the military government seized power in March 1976." Carlos Noriega was one of 14 cases cited in the joint AAAS - NAS appeal. The joint statement went on to point out that:

Argentina cannot have a respected place in the world of international science until the respect for human rights of all citizens permits honest inquiry and freedom of discussion without fear for personal safety... the systematic repression of scientists--or systematic denial of fundamental human rights--in any society ultimately threatens scientists and scientific freedom everywhere.

A report issued in April 1980 by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States following a two-week mission to Argentina in September 1979 called on the Government of Argentina to provide "detailed information on the status of the disappeared persons... and that relevant measures be adopted to discontinue the procedures that have led to the disappearance of persons." The OAS Commission report concludes that "due to the actions or the failure to act on the part of the governmental authorities and their agents, numerous serious violations of fundamental human rights were committed in the Republic of Argentina during the period covered by this report - 1975 to 1979."