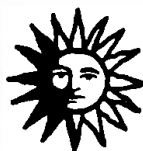


VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN URUGUAY



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MEXICO

No. 7

June 1983

Labor Day in Uruguay

For the first time in ten years the Uruguayan working class could publicly celebrate its day with a mass meeting authorized by the government as a result of constant pressure from workers, students, social and political groups and the people in general who have united in an unprecedented convergence against the present dictatorship since the very first day of the coup, when a heroic two-week strike began.

More than 150 thousand people gathered around the legislative palace—former seat of parliament—and demanded amnesty, freedom, salary and jobs as well as the return to democracy as well as union and university autonomy. The people's opposition to the economic model informe was underlined also.

Two years ago, the government passed a Professionals' Association law through which the dictatorship tried to set stiff control over the reorganization of unions after having outlawed the National Workers' Convention (CNT), Uruguay's array of democratic unions.

Nevertheless, the CNT has struggled clandestinely, showing itself at this year's labor day celebration with its well-known prestige. As symbol of this, CNT Chairman Jose D'Elia, was hailed upon arrival at the meeting together with leaders of the 53 Union Groups which organized the rally.

A manifesto read by the speakers underlined "the working class is the only force capable of guaranteeing an authentically democratic and popular solution" to the country's crisis.

As the main part of the political platform included in the manifesto, a slogan stood out: "Immediate amnesty for all", meaning the release of all political and union prisoners, lifting the ban against political parties, unions and citizens and the return of all exiles.

Gen. Licandro freed

Former Uruguayan Army Chief of Staff Gen. Victor Licandro was released last April after almost ten years in prison.

Gen. Licandro, 64 voluntarily retired in 1969 and together with Gen. Liber Seregni, among others, was a key figure in the founding of the Frente Amplio coalition.

He was arrested in July 1973, after having taken part in a mass demonstration against that year's military coup. The authorities then claimed the protest had been a "riot".

Many humanitarian organizations, cultural and political figures, democratic military, members of parliament in several countries pressed through these years for Gen. Licandro's release.

Gen. Licandro's freeing, April 12, means a victory for international solidarity and for the Uruguayan people's struggle.

Omar Rodriguez in delicate condition

Uruguayan youth leader Omar Rodriguez has been jailed at the Libertad Prison for the last five years. He suffers from asthma and epilepsy and has developed an anal swelling the last several

months. The origin of this swelling has not been determined yet. This means serious neglect by the authorities since the condition could mean a tumor.

The swelling could also have stemmed from long, frequent torture session the prisoner had to go through, including "the colt". This consists of keeping the prisoner naked, sitting for many hours with his legs on each side of a pole and his hands tied behind his back. This could cause an anal hematoma.

Prison authorities have said Rodriguez would soon be taken to Military Hospital and submitted to a medical checkup and treatment.

The interest humanitarian organizations could show in this prisoner's condition could help guarantee an operation and avoid his death because of "medical neglect" as was former congressman and union leader Gerardo Cuesta's case.

Double prison terms for two air force officers

The Supreme Military Court re-tried two air force pilots May 20, 1982 after both had served their prison terms the previous month.

Col. Humberto Sosa and Cap. Felipe Rosales were charged this time with "espionage" and "supplying information to the enemy" and their prison terms were raised from six to twelve years.

Both officers were members of the Frente Amplio coalition which was declared illegal after having taken part in the last general elections held in Uruguay in 1971.

Court also decided since late 1982 to cut off all pensions the officers' relatives were being paid, in an inhuman step added to the arbitrary re-trial.

Union Leader abducted

Juan Acuña, Union Leader of the state-owned fishing company, has been kidnapped in Montevideo.

Acuña, 67, a former member of parliament and of the election board, was arrested March 20 by armed soldiers along with his mother-in-law, Irene Corrales de Perez, 91, and his sister-in-law, Isolina Perez, 70.

The Union Leader had served a prison term from June 1977 through May 1980. He had been tortured recently although he had undergone an operation for the extirpation of a lung. After his arrest he underwent heart surgery for the setting of a pacemaker.

Acuña's lawyer submitted a habeas corpus appeal and began still unsuccessful steps to ascertain the whereabouts of the Union Leader. Military and police officials have not admitted so far Acuña was arrested.

After several days' abduction Mrs. Perez and her daughter Isolina were freed. Both women said they had no knowledge of the place where they were confined.

Acuña is still missing.

Pino Garin's death in prison

The Inter America Human Rights Committee was reported on

June 23, 1982, of the death of yet another political prisoner in Uruguay — Juan Pino Garin.

The deceased, a 43-year old Uruguayan, had been arrested on April 23, 1972. After torture, Pino Garin had been handed over to a military court which tried and sentenced him — a year later — to 10 years in prison.

Shortly after having served his term at the Libertad Penitentiary the prisoner was transferred to the Florida Battalion barracks in Montevideo where he was visited by relatives on June 13, 1982. His visitors found him to be in good health and spirits. Three days after the visit, Pino Garin's relatives received notice to pick up the prisoners body.

The authorities claimed he had committed suicide. The report before the Committee underlined the following facts to state the official version cannot be considered as true:

- three days before, Pino Garin was in good health and spirits;

- he had just gone through a tough 10 years and was about to be released;

- the Swedish government had authorized him to settle in this European country.

This obvious murder of a political prisoner is not the first and has entered a long list of such cases.

The Uruguayan military authorities replied the report to the Committee through a cynical note stating Pino Garin's death in a penitentiary after having served his term "does not mean the authorities should be held responsible".

This suicide stemmed from "psychological problems that usually affect a person who is about to return to ordinary social life after a period of reclusion", according to the military government's note to the Committee.

A series of comments were added to the report on January 11, 1983 underlining the gravity of the Uruguayan authorities' "explanation".

It was then stated the authorities seeked to deny their responsibility for repeated cases of political prisoners being killed in the South American country's jails.

The government has stated as the "real cause" of these incidents the "fear" felt by political prisoners upon learning of their possible release, instead of pointing to the terrible conditions they live under in Uruguayan jails.

Not a single measure to look into how or why prisoners die as well as to punish those responsible for such deaths was mentioned in the official note to the Human Rights Committee.

More Repression against women prisoners

Since late December jail conditions of political prisoners in the Military Penitentiary for Women have ostensible worsened.

Repression aims at even more incommunication among prisoners and between these and their relatives — their only contact with the outside world.

Several prisoners — mainly those serving the lengthiest terms — have had no more than three regular visits by adult relatives the last seven months.

Such harassment takes place within the framework of arbitrary punishment the prisoners are subjected to by jail authorities, and mean long isolate confinement in prison cells. The women are also subjected to a 50 per cent reduction of the food package they receive from relatives every two weeks.

As it has been explained in previous issues, although these food packages are not sufficient they provide for basic needs not covered by penitentiary meals.

However, the same criterion does not apply to the deposits prisoners' relatives must make every two weeks in especial penitentiary accounts managed by jail authorities. These funds "allow" prisoners to buy inside prison basic articles the autho-

rities forbid relatives to include in the food packages — i.e. cleaning articles, certain food and renewal of prisoners' uniforms.

Besides, the State charges political prisoners "support expenses" and a bill to such effect is presented each detainee upon release.

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All this, added to the recently-increased fortnightly deposits accounts for a difficult situation many low-income Uruguayan families must face as a consequence of having a relative in jail for political reasons.

We ask your organization to call on Uruguayan military authorities — through letters, telegrams, and petitions — to put an end to the endless outrage women political prisoners are forced to bear.

Kidnapped Children

After two children — Anatole and Victoria Julien Grisona — were accidentally found alive in the Chilean port city of Valparaiso raising hope for a positive solution to the question of Uruguayan children kidnapped in Argentina — even though just to know they are alive somewhere —, the recent statement by the military government of Argentina that there is nothing more to be said regarding "missing" persons faces us with a sad prospect if we accept the official statement as closing the case.

Missing children presently total seven — possibly another four, since their mothers were abducted during pregnancy.

All cases were brought to the attention of the Inter American Human Rights Committee, the United Nations Human Rights Committee, Amnesty International, and the Red Cross, besides other steps taken by relatives of these persons both in Uruguay and Argentina.

All these children were detained along with their still-imprisoned or —missing parents.

There are eyewitnesses to these kidnappings and the names of the officers in charge of such operations are known.

This is the list of missing children:

- Hernandez Hobbas, Andrea, born 10/30/72;
- Hernandez Hobbas, Washington Fernando; born 03/24/61;

- Hernandez Hobbas, Beatriz Lourdes; born 02/23/60; the three were captured on July 1977 with their mother, Lourdes Hobbas de Hernandez; a fourth brother witnessed the abduction; the children's father was then in jail — since February 1976 — and is presently a refugee in France; the infant's mother is also missing;

- Garcia Hernandez, Amaral; born in 1971; kidnapped 11/8/74 along with his parents — Floreal Garcia and Mirtha Hernandez — who were found dead near Montevideo 12/2/74;

- Sanz, Carmen; born during her mother's detention, four days after arrest, 12/23/77; both her mother and grandmother — Elsa Fernandez, 65 — are missing.

The other four cases of children possibly born in jail are:

- the child of Maria Islas de Zaffaroni, who disappeared with a three-month pregnancy;

- the child of Adriana Gatti, missing since 4/9/77 with a seven-month pregnancy;

- the child of Blanca Haydee Altmann Levy; abducted 7/19/77, with a month-and-a-half pregnancy, missing since then;

- the child of Yolanda Castro Ghelpi; abducted 12/22/77; eight-month pregnancy.

We know dates, names, places and organizations involved in such operations to whom steps toward allowing these children to return to their closest relatives should be directed.