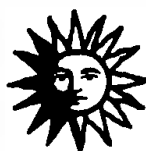


# VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN URUGUAY



**COSUR** COMITE DE  
SOLIDARIDAD  
CON URUGUAY

ADDRESS : APARTADO POSTAL 70-565  
DELEGACION COYOACAN  
04510 - MEXICO, D.F.  
MEXICO

November 1983 No. 9

## POLITICAL BAN ON NATIONAL PARTY LEADER

Eladio Fernández Menéndez, one of the National Party's most important leaders, was politically proscribed for two years after having been arrested and accused of making propaganda for the Day of Protest called by the political parties on 25 September. The ban was decided by the Executive Power and the General Officers' Junta for "infractions of Institutional Law No. 14".

Fernández Menéndez was second man on the ACF list, which had the biggest vote in the country in the internal party elections of November 1982, and is now on the Directorate of his party. He was arrested in the city of San José on 23 September, and charged with distributing leaflets which called for participation in the second National Day of Protest.

In response to this action by the military government the three permitted political parties (National, Colorado and Civic Union) decided to discontinue their informal talks with the Armed Forces looking toward a renewal of political dialogue.

## JOURNALIST ELSA ALTUNA FREED

After six years of detention, Elsa Altuna, ex-president of the Uruguayan Press Association, has been freed, her family reports. She had been arrested in Buenos Aires, Argentina and delivered to the Uruguayan military authorities without any extradition arrangement. She was held in the Punta Rieles women's prison 14 kms. from Montevideo.

From the time of her kidnapping in Buenos Aires to her liberation, many organizations connected with the press were active in her behalf. Her release is another tribute to the effectiveness of international solidarity. With similar efforts for all victims of the dictatorship, Uruguay's jails would soon be empty of political prisoners.

## ATTORNEYS' COLLEGE SEEKS DATA ON DETAINEES

The College of Advocates of Uruguay has asked the country's authorities for a report on the situation of students arrested last June. The request is based on reports in various publications and by the Service of Peace and Justice (SERPAJ) that the students have been tortured and mistreated.

The students were accused of organizing a demonstration of protest on the tenth anniversary of the coup d'état which installed the present government. Most of them were tried and sentenced to up to 18 years in prison, their families say. [See Bulletin No. 8].

## NEW ASSAULT ON PRESS FREEDOM

On 17 September the opposition weeklies *Aquí* and *Opinar* were closed down for four issues.

The ban followed publication of news concerning trade union mobilizations and the possible release of General Liber Seregni, Presidential candidate in the last elections who has been imprisoned since 1973.

## BAN ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Faced with growing opposition on all levels in the country, the Uruguayan dictatorship published over the signature of the President, Lieut. General Gregorio Alvarez, Institutional Law No. 14 and a decree suspending all public political activity and prohibiting any information about it.

Published on 2 August, the decree states:

"Art. 1: The activity of organs of the recognized political parties may only be developed with the object of elaborating and approving party rules and regulations, the regulation of functions and other internal organizational aspects of the groups, such as joint participation with the Armed Forces in structuring future constitutional texts.

"Art. 2: All political activity of a public character is temporarily suspended. The publication by any communications medium of any kind of news, comment or recording that directly or indirectly refers to the orders under this decree is also prohibited, with the exception of the convocation of party organs envisaged by Fundamental Law No. 2"

Institutional Law No. 14 revives the machinery of the prescriptions referring to Institutional Law No. 4 of 1976. It was precisely for "infractions of Institutional Law No. 14" that Eladio Fernández Menéndez, one of the National Party's top leaders, was politically proscribed at the end of last September.

## NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION FORMED IN URUGUAY

Early in September the Montevideo press reported that a group of prominent citizens was concluding the work of forming a National Human Rights Commission.

The Commission, designed to promote respect for human rights in the country, will act independently of political parties with "total objectivity" and "independent criteria", the organizers announced.

Among those involved in this initiative are Rodolfo Canabal, president of the College of Advocates, and former legislators Luis Hierro Gambardela and Manuel Flores Mora of the Colo-

rado Party, Arturo González Vidart and Gervasio Posadas Belgrano of the National Party, and Horacio Terra Arocena of the Civic Union.

### UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CONDEMNS URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT

At its meeting last July, the United Nations Human Rights Committee passed five resolutions condemning the Uruguayan military regime for violations of international agreements on civil and political rights, it was learned in Geneva. The violations were said to have been confirmed in the cases of bank trade unionist Adolfo Drescher, journalist Varela Nuñez, engineer Juan Almiratti, Luis Estradet Cabrera and teacher María Elena Quinteros.

The Committee is a specialized organ of the UN which analyzes individual cases of human rights violations.

On the case of María Elena Quinteros, the resolution states: "Uruguay violated articles 7, 9 and 10 (par. 1) of the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights. . . On 28 June 1976 Elena Quinteros was arrested on territory of the Venezuelan embassy by at least one member of the Uruguayan police, and in August 1976 was confined in a military detention center, where she was submitted to torture."

On 31 August the Human Rights Committee sent a telegram to the Uruguayan government asking release of José Luis Massera, signed by committee chairman Olanna Otuna of Uganda. The message: "The Subcommittee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, gravely concerned by reports concerning the health of the eminent mathematician José Luis Massera, respectfully asks the government of Uruguay to show clemency in favor of Professor Massera and put an end to his detention for humanitarian reasons."

It was also learned in Geneva that the Subcommittee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, chief organ of Human Rights Committee experts, resolved on the basis of new evidence to ratify the decision already taken

by the Committee to the effect that the human rights situation in Uruguay should continue under analysis.

### RAUL SENDIC: 10 YEARS A HOSTAGE

September 9 marked ten years since nine leaders of the MLN-Tupamaros were confined in barracks in the interior of Uruguay as hostages of the military regime. These nine political prisoners

Raúl Sendic, Henry Engler, Eleuterio Fernández, Jorge Manera, Julio Marenales, José Mujica, Mauricio Rosencoff, Adolfo Wassen y Jorge Zabalza— have suffered exceptionally severe conditions through the ten years: recurring torture, total isolation, constant harassment, disappearance over long periods of time and lack of any medical attention. Their families, in

one of many appeals to the military authorities, stated in a petition to Lieut. Gen. Boscan Hontou, Commander-in-Chief of the Army: "Year after year we have seen and suffered the physical deterioration of our relatives, due to the conditions in which they are compelled to endure their imprisonment. . . if they are kept under this prison regime, in a short time each of them will be physically or psychically finished."

We repeat here our urgent plea for international solidarity for these nine extreme victims of the dictatorship, in the form of a new wave of petitions to the military authorities to halt the policy of hostages and respect the inalienable right to health and survival.

### ARRESTES FOLLOW DEMONSTRATIONS

The police announced that 173 persons were arrested following the August 24 demonstration in support of three nuns who were hunger-striking in the headquarters of SERPAJ (Service for Peace and Justice) [see Bulletin No. 8]. They were booked and subsequently released. Among them were many priests and nuns and a U.S. and a British journalist.

The National Day of Protest on 25 August led to 225 arrests, with 48 remaining in detention at the disposition of the Executive Power under the Uruguayan version of the State of Siege known as "Prompt Security Measures".

Montevideo Police Headquarters announced that a police agent shot at and wounded an inhabitant of the predominantly working class barrio "El Cerro" during a raid on his home to force him to turn on the lights.

### PEACE AND JUSTICE ACTIVITIES BANNED

As of 31 August authorities banned as "typically political", although sometimes taking religious forms, the activities of the Uruguayan affiliate of SERPAJ (Service for Peace and Justice). The organization's headquarters were raided on September 1, documents seized and three hunger-striking nuns interrogated. The nuns were supporting the Day of National Reflection of August 25.

### STUDENT STRIKE SPARKS REPRESSION

The first student strike since the military government intervened Uruguayan universities took place on 12 September. The strike commemorated the Organic Law of the University's 25th anniversary and the 10th anniversary of the last university elections.

Immediately before this, parents of secondary school students had to sign a document to the effect that expulsion and other serious penalties would be imposed on students not attending classes on the 12th. Principals and teachers of high schools in which the strike was successful were threatened in a subsequent circular.

