

LATIN AMERICA

Peru Government Threatens Arrest of Entire NSIPS Staff, Frame-up of Vasquez Prepared

Dec. 3 (NSIPS) — The Director of National Security of Peru, acting through Superior Commissary Ruiz, yesterday threatened to arrest staff members of New Solidarity International Press Service in Lima and to illegally shut the NSIPS Lima post office box.

At the same time, a preliminary report on the jailing of Luis Vasquez, NSIPS Director in Peru, who has been held illegally without charges for 48 days, prepared by National Security officials and seen by NSIPS representatives recommended that Vasquez be accused of "violation of the national symbols and the institution of the Armed Forces." Mr. Vasquez' wife reported that, after six weeks of "investigation," Mr. Vasquez' passport had recently disappeared from their house. Reliable sources informed NSIPS that National Security now has the passport in its possession, suggesting possible preparations for deportation.

Mrs. Vasquez, also an NSIPS correspondent in Peru, sent an open letter to Peruvian President Morales Bermudez two weeks ago protesting the closing of the Lima NSIPS office, the detention of her husband, and police harassment of NSIPS staff. Mrs. Vasquez received a reply from the Secretary General of the Republic several days ago, stating that the presidency could not take any action, and had turned the case over to the Central Office of Information (OCI). OCI is directed by the Ministry of the Interior, presently directing the repression of NSIPS and its representatives in Lima.

Earlier this week, Peruvian government sources report that the Interior Ministry planned to charge Vasquez with disseminating "subversive literature," with having connections to the Fishermen's Federation of Peru and the union's "subversive strike," and with "carrying arms."

Yesterday, stating that he was acting on instructions from National Security Director Pena Salcedo, Superior Commissary Ruiz "requested" of an NSIPS correspondent that the news service immediately turn over the key to its post office box and warned that anyone opening it would be detained by the Peruvian political police. Ruiz then grilled the correspondent about the activities of several other NSIPS staff members. When the correspondent informed him that she had no further information, Ruiz ominously warned, "Well, then, we'll look into that,"—with the clear implication that further detentions are being considered.

These new threats and the charging of Vasquez on obvious trumped up charges, mark an escalation in the repression of NSIPS as part of a U.S. State Department-coordinated effort through the Peruvian Interior Ministry to eliminate political opposition in Peru, to the right-wing military's program of

murder and austerity.

A Labor Party spokesman denounced the repression against NSIPS, and hundreds of other unionists, journalists and leftists in Peru, as an outrage against basic human rights and civil liberties, and a violation of the very tenets of the "humanist and Christian" Peruvian Revolution. The Labor Party is urging its supporters, and any concerned citizens in the U.S., Europe, and Mexico to support the Commission of Inquiry formed by NSIPS to investigate the matter, and to take whatever independent action is possible to force the immediate release of Luis Vasquez and the reopening of the news service in Lima.

Though physically unharmed, Vasquez has been subject to continual psychological warfare and pressure, and held in the most inhuman jail conditions. The Interior Ministry police have repeatedly threatened Vasquez with deportation to Spain, immediate trial by a military court, or claimed that he would be released "at the end of the week." Vasquez has been held in a 12-by-12 foot jail cell designed for two or three inmates with 30 other political prisoners. There are no chairs or beds in the cell, which is so crowded that the prisoners must take turns sleeping or sitting on the bare floor.

Hundreds of unionists, journalists and other militants have been arrested by political police over the past three months on various unproven accusations of "subversion," in an attempt by the right-wing military faction in Peru to eliminate any opposition to a Chilean-style coup. Not one political prisoner has been tried to date, and the State Security police jails are filled to overflowing. Legal aid is useless, as long as no official charges are brought, and under the present worsening political conditions in Peru, habeas corpus is simply thrown out the window.

The Peruvian Interior Ministry has consistently refused to respond to official inquiries by NSIPS directors in the news service's New York headquarters, and has flagrantly disregarded documents from the NSIPS headquarters declaring that Vasquez, as the Lima branch director, is not responsible for the content of either the weekly newspaper Nueva Solidaridad, or press releases, reports, etc. published by NSIPS.

The NSIPS call for the formation of an independent international Commission of Inquiry to investigate the circumstances of the repression and secure the release of Vasquez has been endorsed by 15 leading religious and political figures in Mexico, the U.S., Italy and West Germany. A delegation from the U.S. Labor Party notified officials of the Peruvian Embassy in Washington, D.C. in a meeting Wednesday that the Labor Party, the recognized third major party in the U.S., is mobilizing forces across the country to demand the immediate release of Luis Vasquez.