

U.S. COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

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During the 1940's and 1950's the political trend in Latin America was generally away from dictatorship and repression. There were exceptions, most notably the CIA - instigated military coup in Guatemala in 1954. But with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in the closing days of 1958, it seemed reasonable to hope that a new era of basic social reform and improved living conditions for the peoples of Latin America was opening.

These hopes have not been realized. In fact, exactly the contrary has occurred: a new wave of reaction, militarism, dictatorship, repression. Whereas in 1960 only a few small countries had dictatorial regimes, today more than half the population of Latin America lives under naked dictatorial rule. And many of the seemingly constitutional governments are little better.

The reason for this reversal of trends and dashing of hopes is all too evident: the policies of the United States of America. Our government has never ceased its efforts to crush the Cuban Revolution, and so great has been the fear in Washington that other Latin American countries would follow in Cuba's footsteps that even the mildest reformers have been cold-shouldered and the most reactionary "gorillas" have been supported.

Our government therefore bears a heavy responsibility for the tragic situation in which most of Latin America now finds itself. And to the extent that we the people of the United States do not actively oppose the policies of our government and fail to support its victims, we too must share that responsibility. With this in mind, the undersigned have issued a call for the formation and active support of a United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA Justice Committee). The Committee's "Statement of Aims" is included below.

No one knows how many political prisoners there are in Latin America, but there is more than enough evidence to show that their numbers must be counted in the thousands. One of the tasks of the USLA Justice Committee will be to gather and disseminate information on this subject so that the people of the United States may become aware of the appalling consequences of the policies pursued by their elected representatives. As such awareness grows, the opportunities to bring pressure to bear for a basic change in policy toward Latin America (and other underdeveloped countries of the world) will expand.

In the meantime, we hope that the very existence of the Committee will help to convince the peoples of Latin America that there is "another North America" which sympathizes with their struggles and means to do all within its power to help them achieve their goals of genuine national independence, economic development, and social progress.

STATEMENT OF AIMS

1. **To aid** in defending victims of political persecution and injustice in the countries of Latin America, regardless of their particular beliefs, affiliations or associations, and to provide whatever assistance is possible for their families.
2. **To organize** such actions as may be possible within the United States to put pressure on reactionary Latin-American governments to stop restrictions on the rights of free speech and free association, to respect the role of law in all political cases, to ameliorate the harsh conditions under which political prisoners are held, and to work for their amnesty and release.
3. **To inform** and arouse public opinion in the United States on the repressive policies pursued by military, authoritarian and even constitutional regimes in Latin America which trample on elementary civil and political liberties, and to call attention to any complicity of the U.S. government and its open and secret agencies in aiding and abetting such violations of democratic rights.
4. **To cooperate** with organizations in Latin American and other countries which have similar purposes.

I would like more information on USLA Justice Committee.

I am contributing to the USLA Justice Committee in support of your general aims

I would like to work on such a Committee

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