

# TRADE UNION BULLETIN No. 35



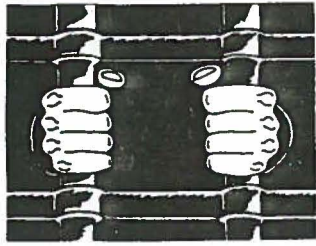
Chilean teachers' union leaders Osvaldo Verdugo and Jorge Pavez being arrested by police in Santiago on National Teachers' Day in October 1987. (photograph by Alejandro Hoppe)

## CHILE

### Persecution of Trade Unionists Continues

Three trade union leaders, Manuel Bustos, Moises Labraña and Arturo Martínez, were sent to prison on 21 October on charges for calling a strike. Their arrests followed a general strike on 7 October, the first major national protest in Chile in 1987. Organized by the Comando Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT), the National Workers' Command, the strike was part of a campaign in support of a petition of workers' demands which had been submitted to the government and resulted in several hundred short-term arrests. The imprisonment of the three CNT leaders caused widespread indignation and several international trade union confederations sent letters of protest to the Chilean Government. They were released on bail on 12 November. In January, Manuel Bustos and Arturo Martínez were sentenced to 541 days imprisonment. They have appealed against the sentences and are not likely to be sent back to prison until the appeals procedure is completed. Moises Labraña has been given a 61-day suspended sentence.





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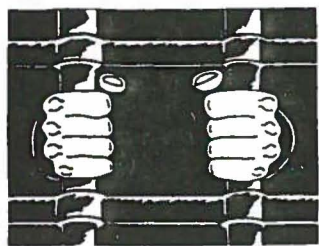


Manuel Bustos

The CNT and its members have also been among the many targets of the activities of clandestine units linked to the official security forces although the authorities deny this. The groups operate with absolute impunity and have been responsible for a persistent campaign of death threats, surveillance and short-term abductions intended to intimidate government critics. In the early hours of the morning of 30 September, for example, a bomb exploded in the CNT offices in Rancagua. In the same month, a hangman's noose was drawn on the walls of the CNT headquarters in Santiago with the message "We will come back to get you." (*Volveremos por Uds*).

CNT leader Manuel Bustos has received repeated death threats. On 7 October, the day of the strike, an hangman's noose was again drawn on the walls of the CNT headquarters with Manuel Bustos's name written underneath it. A message, signed by Acción Chilena Anticomunista (ACHA), Chile Anti-Communist Action,

one of the names under which the clandestine units operate, was sent to a journalist to the effect that the union leader had only 30 days to live. Each day Bustos' lawyer received a telephone call saying that the trade union leader had one day less to live. On 6 November however, ACHA sent a new message to the CNT headquarters indicating that it had decided to suspend the ultimatum against Manuel Bustos after an appeal by Cardinal Fresno, Archbishop of Santiago.



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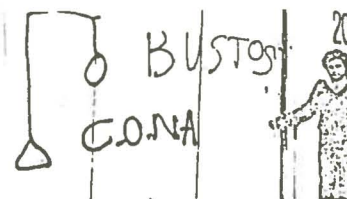


The threats against Manuel Bustos led 32 leaders of human rights organizations, professional bodies and unions from the Valparaiso region to send their names and photographs to a national daily newspaper with the message: "To you who show no face, ..to you who daily threaten our colleague Manuel Bustos, we want to spare you the trouble. You don't have to look for us. Here we are with our names and faces. Manuel hasn't done anything that we wouldn't have done..."

Shortly afterwards, several of the signatories themselves received death threats. Also threatened the same month, November, were Valparaiso trade union leaders Alejandro Valenzuela, President of the Sindicato de Comercio, a tradeworkers' union, and Andrés Reyes, a leader of the

teachers' union. ACHA warned in a letter: "Your murder will be our best homage...If you want to be the spokesman for the dead you will be".

Other union leaders who have been threatened in the last few months include Patricia Talloni Valdés, President of the Colegio de Enfermeras de Chile, Chilean Nurses College; Miguel Allende, President of the Confederacion de Trabajadores Bancarios, the Bank Workers' Confederation; Jorge Richards, Vice-President of the Colegio de Periodistas de Chile, the Chilean Journalists' Association; Silvia Rios Montero, leader of the Association of Academics at the University of Chile and Yolanda Badilla Rosales, wife of the regional CNT Vice President in the north.



SE BUSCA  
POR AGENTE K.G.B

ASESINO



VIVO . MUERTO  
ACHA

Death threat received  
by Manuel Bustos