

TRADE UNION BULLETIN No. 36

**COUNTRY
DOSSIER****SECTION****6****CHILE****Death Threats Against Actors**

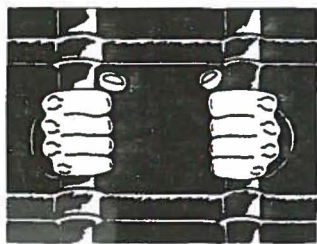
In early November 1987 numerous television and theatre actors, writers and directors, and dissident or progressive theatre groups, were threatened with death if they did not leave the country.

The death threats were sent to the homes of some of them and to the offices of SIDARTE, the actors' union. Further threats were sent to the SIDARTE offices on 30 November, the deadline given for their departure. The unions had responded to the threats by organizing a special public event on that day, supported by actors from Argentina, Uruguay, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America. Although the event was banned by the military authorities it went ahead at a different venue from that originally planned.

The threats continued in December and early January 1988. Carlos Valenzuela, an actor who was not on the original death list, spoke out in support of the threatened actors after winning a dancing competition. The speech was broadcast live on television throughout Chile. As he returned home he was followed by four cars. He decided to go to a friend's flat but

when he got there he saw two men get out of each car. He sought refuge in another flat.

Another incident involved Carla Christi, also not on the original list, who received repeated telephone calls at her home. At the same time stones were thrown at her house. Monica Garcia, a human rights lawyer acting for Carla Christi, was also threatened. In March 1988 another actress, Lorena Nazal, was abducted and beaten.



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In response to the international campaign on behalf of the threatened workers, SIDARTE has sent the following letter:

"Dear Friends

With deep gratitude and emotion we have received your message of solidarity regarding the threats against 81 of our fellow actors, directors and writers.

The truth is that we lack the words to express what your support has meant to us. You have touched us profoundly and have given us strength at a time of growing alarm. There is no doubt that you have also protected us. Against such hatred and irrationality, solidarity and the constant warning to our persecutors that the eyes of the world are on them are the most powerful defenses we can count on.

We have received thousands of messages. At the solidarity rally organized by SIDARTE and other cultural unions on 30 November we were able to welcome delegations representing actors and artists from Argentina, Uruguay, West Germany and the United States. They shared with us the new blow of seeing the meeting banned by the military government from the place where it had been booked, and of its having to be improvised with great difficulty elsewhere.

It has truly been a flood of affection and support. We wish we could thank you all personally but we simply lack the hands to do so. That's why we ask you please to pass on these words of thanks to all the members of your company or organization.

It is painful to have to tell you that while the threats have diminished, they are continuing. Colleagues are still being threatened by telephone, and there have been two serious cases of harassment by "unidentified civilians" in the street outside a private residence.

Nevertheless, we are in good spirits. Our trust is that "Commando 135 - Pacifying Action Trizano" will fall short of the sufficient viciousness to carry out its threats. But, in any case, we will not leave our country. Here we stay, with your support and that of our people.

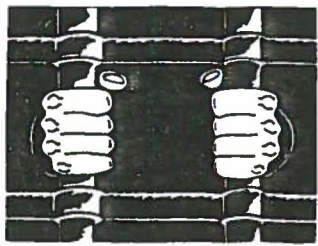
With deepest regards,

Edgardo Bruna
President
SIDARTE

Delfina Guzmán
President
Human Rights Commission, SIDARTE

Santiago, December 1987".





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SECTION 6
COUNTRY DOSSIER

Actors marching in defiance of death threats against their colleagues

The Chilean government has said in a letter to several of those who sent appeals about the death threats that it will guarantee through all legal means the security of the community: "In the specific case of the group of artists, which the Government deplors, the security forces have gathered information published by the press and is making efforts to safeguard the security of those affected and to identify those responsible with the aim of placing them at the disposition of the courts..."

However, Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of these artists and many others who have been subjected to harassment. Although police protection was granted by the courts to the actors for a time this period has now ended. Despite government assurances that Chilean law guarantees the rights of all its citizens Amnesty International has extensive information indicating the responsibility of the security forces for arbitrary arrests and for torturing and killing private citizens. It is disturbed because the clandestine squads seem to act with impunity and believes these groups are linked to the official security forces.

During the past year such activities appear to have intensified. In its figures for the period January to November 1987 the Vicaria de la Solidaridad, the Roman Catholic human rights organization, records 91 abductions. More than 700 complaints of intimidation were received in Santiago alone.