

### 30th general assembly

# IAPA asks Ford to identify papers that got CIA money

The 30th general assembly of the Inter American Press Association in Caracas, Venezuela, last week vigorously condemned the reported CIA "support" of the "opposition press" in Chile under the Allende regime and called on President Ford "to clarify once and for all" the scope of CIA intervention by naming the newspapers which accepted financial assistance of that nature.

"All free newspapers of the Americas are justly offended by this action of CIA which casts doubts on the integrity of the hemisphere's press and makes it possible for the enemies of a free press to circulate all sorts of slanders and defamations against it," the IAPA said.

The organization requested President Ford to "order the CIA to put a stop to any subsidization of newspapers or journalists" and condemned, at the same time, newspapers and journalists who accepted such assistance.

The IAPA action came after prolonged debate on the reports of CIA intervention in Chile and following vigorous denials by editors of *El Mercurio* in Santiago, *El Sur*

in Concepcion, and *El Rancaguino* in Rancagua, that such payments had been made to them.

The general assembly condemned the military government of Peru for its expropriation of the independent press of Lima and declared "that government an enemy of the free press." The association deplored that some journalists and press organizations in various parts of the hemisphere have approved the attitude of the Peruvian government.

The action was taken after reports by two IAPA members who had visited Peru prior to the assembly—Guido Fernandez, editor of *La Nacion* of San Jose, Costa Rica, and Rafael Molina, editor of *El Nacional* of Santo Domingo. They had talked to previous owners, editors and reporters as well as the government-appointed editors and concluded that a free dialogue no longer exists under the "independent Marxism," as they called the new regime.

Following three days of reports, IAPA:

- Condemned the absence of freedom of the press and other civil rights in Chile;
- Said the tyrannical regime in Haiti

does not permit a free press;

- Protested to the government of Nicaragua for depriving newspaper editor Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, *La Prensa*, of his civil rights and denying him an exit visa from the country because of his published statements that his country's elections were a fraud;

- Declared that because of censorship there is no freedom of the press in Brazil;

- Denounced the lack of a free press and the violation of human rights in Cuba and asked the Organization of American States not to lift sanctions against that country until the Castro regime has given proof it is ready to restore a free press and human rights and release political prisoners including dozens of journalists.

- Declared that the existence of government agencies which monopolize distribution of governments' commercial advertising constitutes a threat against a free press;

- Noted that eight publications have been shut down by the Argentine government and said the recent adoption of an anti-subversion law throws shadows on the people's right to information;

- Reported that after IAPA had accused the government of Ecuador of refusing to authorize publication of a new newspaper, *Extra*, the government had changed its mind and expressed satisfaction to the President of Ecuador for that development.

IAPA found that in Panama the press is owned or controlled by the government and in Paraguay there is a state of permanent siege and censorship.

The association found that in Canada, Argentina, El Salvador, the United States, Trinidad, Tobago, Barbados, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Jamaica, Costa Rica, and Colombia there are isolated obstacles but a deep foundation to support a free press.

Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez opened the IAPA meetings emphasizing the importance of a free press within democratic systems of government. Press freedom is indispensable to the democratic system and added the "system is defeated and losing prestige in a large part of Latin America. . . . Other banners are being raised up before our peoples which promise bread and order but not liberty. But we must not compromise liberty."

In a veiled complaint against the U.S. press, the president complained that mass media in industrialized nations are failing to inform the public adequately on events and issues in Latin America.

"I am aware of the fact that I am speaking to editors who have suffered exile and imprisonment but I am also aware that in their countries many citizens have been unable to express themselves because special interests have blocked them from doing so. This is a form of dominance exercised by the stronger over the weaker.

"The IAPA could be a powerful instrument for the demonstration that freedom of expression should not be compromised by special interests or ideological dogmas," the president said.