

## Editorial

# Hands off EIR in Colombia!

Once again, the lives of people working with this magazine in Ibero-America are being threatened, because they have dared to name the names of those persons "above suspicion" who run political protection for the lucrative traffic in illegal drugs—upholding, at the risk of their lives, the 20-year tradition of *EIR* of engaging in combat against the heads of the monstrous international drug cartel.

The latest series of threats began on Aug. 3. A caller with a Cali accent (Cali is the city which is the base for the Cali cocaine cartel) telephoned the home of our correspondent Javier Almario and said, "You're going to pay for writing such trash," explicitly referring to articles which Almario has written in *EIR*. In another call, a voice said, "Be careful, creep!" On another occasion, Almario's home was broken into and burglarized. Then, in the early morning of Aug. 26, an individual called Almario to say: "You aren't going to make it past this week."

Threats have also been made to Maximiliano Londoño Peñilla, president of the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) in Colombia, whose views are frequently featured in *EIR*. On Aug. 21, a woman called Londoño's home and warned his wife, "Squealers are the first to die." On Aug. 25, another threatening call was received; the voice said only, "Son of a bitch." On the morning of Sept. 5, Londoño's wife was told by another caller, "Fools! Don't you know we are following you?"

Nearly simultaneously, at 2 in the morning of Sept. 12, "heavy breathing" phone calls were made to the homes of Londoño and of Almario.

All of these threats have been duly reported to the Colombian authorities. The issue was also raised at the U.S. State Department on Aug. 3.

In Colombia, those who make such threats have ample means to carry them out. In 1984, Attorney General Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was assassinated by the cocaine cartel's hit squads, because of his courage in carrying out the war on drugs and terrorism. When *EIR* brought out a new Spanish edition of our famous exposé book *Dope, Inc.* the following year, it was dedicated

to the fallen Lara Bonilla.

The pattern is serious enough to have opened some crevices in the wall of silence long maintained by Colombia's media against everything linked to the LaRouche political movement. On Aug. 5, the Bogotá daily *El Tiempo* reported in its "Ecos" column, on the threat against Almario. Then, on Aug. 30, under the headline, "Foreign Correspondents Threatened," the Colombian daily *El Nuevo Siglo* published a story from the Spanish news agency EFE, which reported, "A correspondent and a Colombian collaborator of the magazine *Executive Intelligence Review* . . . received repeated death threats because of their denunciations of the drug trade and of the guerrillas. . . . That magazine, in various of its issues, published denunciations of criminal activities by the drug-trafficking cartels from Medellín and Cali, as well as of the clandestine fight of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Their press release says that, despite their complaints to the authorities, they know of no investigation being conducted to unveil the groups carrying out the campaign of intimidation and terror against Almario, Londoño, and their families."

On Aug. 31, in its program "FM Live," the radio station Caracol transmitted a live interview with Javier Almario. After reading several quotes from the EFE story, the interviewer asked Almario: "What kind of threats are you getting? What have you written to provoke these threats? What you are saying has been written about Colombia; what's so special about what you have to say?"

The fact is, that the Colombian State, represented by the National Election Council, had already attempted, last June, to silence the MSIA by suddenly annulling its status as a registered political movement, which had included the rights to regular broadcast time. Now Maximiliano Londoño has filed suit against the electoral body to overturn that outrageous and illegal action. Already, his attorney in the suit, on Sept. 12, received telephoned death threats.

The case could not be clearer. But where are the "human rights" groups now?