

Dear Pearl,

4/3/73

Hasty response to your letter of the 29th., asking what can be done to help a reporter friend, Leopoldo Aragon, jailed for five years in Panama without trial.

In short, I wish I knew! In a dictatorship, laws and lawyers generally mean nothing.

If anything can, I suppose it is making it embarrassing for the dictatorship. The first consider, I would also suppose, is causing attention so that he will not suffer needlessly and may have a better chance for survival. If he is at all leftist, as you say he is, his survival prospects are dimmer. Therefore, if from my inexperience I can give any advice, I would urge public attention outside of Panama by whatever means possible.

The most obvious would seem to be through the various organizations of journalists. Another is through the U.S. press, some elements of which like to consider themselves decent and sometimes welcome a chance to make the pretense. When it is another country, it is easier for them.

If you were still in Mexico, I'd suggest counsel with Belfrage. He is now having his own troubles. The U.S. will not admit him to keep some university speaking engagements in connection with a book exposing U.S. repression.

However, anything along these lines should be done with scrupulous accuracy or it will be shot down immediately.

Perhaps it would be possible to get representatives of Latin American countries not particularly sympathetic to Panama to make noises at the UN? There also are commissions on human rights. I think appeal might be made to them.

If deportation could be arranged, that would seem like a good solution. After some publicity his prospects might be better if this can be brought about. He'd be a kind of hero in many places and could earn a living.

I have gone over Hinckle's Esquire piece with some care. I think that in time it may be quite helpful to you. Especially if the Hinckle-Turner integrity even becomes an issue!

Better luck in Los Angeles.

Our best,

c/o Lynne Daniels
4054 Garden Ave.
Los Angeles, Calif.
90039
March 29, 1973

Dear Harold,

Looks like I'll be back on my way to L.A. which is why the above address although still in S. F. If your answer can arrive before the 9th please use the S. F. address. The reason being, scarcity of jobs, even if you got one, would take two weeks's pay to live in a decent apt. - and from the advice I've been gathering from reliable sources (what other kind do we use!) - L. A. in the publishing business ^{in the West} is in the publishing business in the East.

Anyway, have a completely different question to ask you. A friend is in jail in Panama. He's Panamanian, a correspondent, author of 9 books on leftist politics (published in Peru), was well-known in Wash. D. C. many years ago where he resided. He was given a 5 year sentence without a trial. His wife has written about the conditions in prison which would make a day in the life of that Russian a guest at the Hilton. She contacted something known as a Committee for Amnesty which I think is located in NY, but no success. She said the best thing would be for him to get deported. She's afraid he won't last five years. Local attorneys are helpless. The unsung hero's name is Leopoldo Aragón. Mrs. Aragon is in constant touch as I promised I'd do what I could. What do you think can be done? A Kaplan helicopter escape is out.

My, how do we get into these things!

Best to you and Lil,

Pearl