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Peruvian Miners Launch 24-strike To Protest Union Leader's Assassination

by John Neagle

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On Feb. 16, Peruvian miners staged a 24-hour strike in protest of the murder of union leader Saul Cantoral. Spokespersons for the miners' federation said he was killed by an "anti-rebel" guerrilla group known as the Rodrigo Franco Command. The Command, said the spokespersons, is linked to the governing APRA party. Cantoral was shot to death late on Feb. 13. (See LADC 02/16/89.) Government officials said an investigation was underway to determine whether the attackers were from Sendero Luminoso, the Rodrigo Franco Command, or a previously unknown rightist death squad. Cantoral, 42, led miners in two national strikes last year, resulting in an estimated \$400 million in losses equivalent to one-third of Peru's annual exports. The strikes failed to persuade mine owners to accept a federation demand that labor contracts of mine unions be negotiated jointly rather than on the current union-by-union basis. Mine owners claimed that the strikes were being manipulated by Sendero Luminoso. In January, the federation decided to strike again over labor contracts. Federation spokesperson Leonardo Ramirez said the strike is tentatively scheduled for sometime in March. (Basic data from AP, 02/16/89)

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