

# Peruvian exile speaks out on Latin America

Today there are only two surviving democracies in Latin America, Colombia and Venezuela. The rest of the continent shudders under military rule. To contain popular dissent military governments have prohibited such fundamental liberties as the freedom of speech and assembly. Basic human needs such as housing, adequate nutrition and employment have been denied to millions. Thousands of men and women have been tortured, interred or executed by the police. For all of its people Latin America has become one big concentration camp.

Excalibur's Andrew Nikiforuk talked to Hugo Blanco, a Peruvian exile and revolutionary on this situation. We extend our thanks to Eduardo and Sonya for their patient translations of Blanco's clear and frank Spanish.

**Excalibur:** Latin America today is virtually an armed camp. How can a revolutionary like yourself operate in a society of concentration camps and police stations?

**BLANCO:** It is an armed camp that needs workers to survive ... Pinochet (dictator in Chile) couldn't kill all the leftists because then, he himself would have to go out and work all the factories of the land.

If there are still people to work with there are still a lot of possibilities for revolutionary work. Especially when these people are hungry. Recent events in Nicaragua are showing us that. Resistance against Nazism showed us that too.

The resurgence of the Spanish revolution is another example. In Chile there are isolated strikes now. In Brazil there have been some student demonstrations that the government didn't dare to repress. In Bolivia the government was pressured to declare an amnesty, and even had to broaden this amnesty due to mass pressure.

I say again that the Nicaraguan example is good, because after two weeks they couldn't kill all those

involved in the general strike. What a revolutionary must do is to act according to the conditions that exist.

*Por ejemplo*, in Chile a few months ago, after the coup, what developed were *comedores populares*, kitchens where everyone cooked together in the same neighborhood. That was a revolutionary action because in Chile all the organizations of the workers in the shanty towns had been crushed. These new organizations represent the beginning of a new awareness among the people. New leaders from these organizations have begun to emerge and people from different sectors have begun to communicate.

As I said there have been some isolated strikes already. Later on they might reach the level that the struggle in Argentina has. And later on to the level of Peru. And later on to the level Chileans had in 1973.

**EXCALIBUR:** Is it possible to achieve social change in Latin America without the support of some sectors of the armed forces?

**BLANCO:** The army is an institution that defends the interests of the ruling class. One of the steps that has to be taken during the revolutionary process, is the destruction of this institution. And one of the ways to destroy this institution is to work from within this organization. I am talking about the democratic organization of soldiers.

Of course we are not opposed to having generals participate in these organizations, but they must accept the democracy of the soldiers.

We cannot demand that soldiers have a high level of consciousness because they are just a reflection of what's happening on the whole. The soldiers in the United States started to organize against the Vietnam War. We couldn't demand that those soldiers have a socialist consciousness... because the consciousness of the people of the United States was not socialist.

But the consciousness of the American people was against the war.

The consciousness of the Chilean soldier was even much higher during Allende's government. The problem was that no one told them to organize to fight against the army, a pro-coup institution.

I have got to say a few things about Chile. I said no one told the soldiers to organize themselves against the coup even though a majority of the soldiers were against the coup. One of the slogans that was raised especially by the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) was "Soldiers Disobey the Pro-Coup General".

That slogan was good but not complete. Because what do I do? Suppose I am a soldier, I disobey the pro-coup general and then what do I do? - do I obey the one who is opposed to the coup? The soldiers did that and many of the anti-coup officers were assassinated before the night of the coup (from 2,000 to 3,000 men were killed). Allende said in his last speech on September 11 that Pinochet had told him the day before that he was loyal to his government. The soldiers do not have any instruments to tell who is lying or speaking the truth.

**EXCALIBUR:** Liberation in the Americas means more than overcoming economic, social and political dependencies. It means the creation of what Che Guevara called "the new man and woman". How do you envision this new man and woman?

**BLANCO:** I think that those aspects you mentioned, the economic the political and social structures — their change will set the basis from which will be created and formed a new man and woman. Now our thoughts and morality are determined and pressured by the economic system in which they develop.

*Por ejemplo*, we are living under an economic system that tells us

if we want to climb up we have to step on the head of the one who works beside us. Despite this there still exists human solidarity. When we socialize the means of production we will say, "Well if you want to climb up you should also help the person beside you climb up". So that the new economic structure instead of fighting against that humanistic sense in all of us, will try to develop it.

**EXCALIBUR:** What can Canadians do about political repression in Latin America?

**BLANCO:** To denounce the monopolies that are supporting the dictators like Pinochet. And to denounce these dictators precisely as instruments of these big monopolies, to organize campaigns against these big monopolies to force them to stop helping Pinochet and other dictators, to prevent the Canadian government from supporting these dictators in direct or indirect ways and to extend these campaigns to fight for the freedom of political prisoners and for the right of political asylum. And also to fight for the right of those who

have been deported to return to our own countries.

**EXCALIBUR:** You have been hunted by police and soldiers, you have been imprisoned for ten years, you have been both exiled and deported — what keeps you going, how do you renew your faith?

**BLANCO:** Everywhere I go I find a lot of humanity in people and that is what continues to give me strength. *Por ejemplo*, to be in Canada which is an imperialist country and to see that the people here are in solidarity with us and not with the big Canadian monopolies, that gives me strength.

The policemen who were guarding me (when I was in prison from 1963-1970) were changed many times. Many of them were charged and brought before the courts and others were forced to leave the police. All of these guards expressed a solidarity with me and the cause I represented. If I can see solidarity even in the ranks of the repressive apparatus of the state then how can I not continue to take a stand and have faith?



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## Harbinger's Column by Sue Kaiser



## A little birth control quiz

Essay writing got you down? Take time out for a quick quiz on practical matters. No waiting for results, they're printed at right.

These questions and answers were prepared by Family Planning Services of Toronto. For more information on questions of birth control and sexuality, contact Harbinger, 667-3509.

### QUESTIONS

1. A woman can buy the pill at a drugstore without a prescription. Yes No
2. The pill becomes an effective method of birth control as soon as you begin to use it. Yes No
3. A woman can become pregnant during her menstrual period. Yes No
4. Natural Family Planning is another name for the Rhythm or Calendar Method. Yes No
5. A condom should be put on just before ejaculation. Yes No
6. A diaphragm must be placed in the vagina immediately before intercourse and removed immediately afterwards. Yes No
7. The safest time for insertion of the I.U.D. is during or just after the menstrual cycle. Yes No
8. A woman can become pregnant the first time she has intercourse. Yes No
9. It is possible to get pregnant as late as five days after intercourse. Yes No
10. A boy cannot make a girl pregnant until he is at least 15. Yes No

### ANSWERS

1. NO — The pill must be prescribed by a physician who will take a medical history and prescribe a particular brand to suit the particular patient, or the physician may suggest an alternative method of birth control which appears to be more appropriate for that individual.
2. NO — The pill is not as effective during the first month that it is used. During that time, another method of birth control such as vaginal foam and/or condoms should be used, in addition to the pill.
3. YES — An egg can be released any day of the month so a woman can become pregnant during her menstrual period. She's more likely to release an egg during mid-cycle.
4. NO — Natural Family Planning includes the ovulation, temperature and rhythm or calendar method. Any of these methods require proper instruction from qualified people at Family Planning Clinics.
5. NO — A condom should be put on before intercourse when the penis is erect and it should be put on before the penis is near the vagina. This is because sperm is released from the penis long before a man has a climax and the sperm can find their way up to a waiting egg even from outside the vagina. After ejaculation, the penis should be removed from the vagina immediately, before the penis relaxes completely. The rim of the condom should be held in place so as not to spill the contents.
6. NO — A diaphragm may be placed in the vagina up to six hours before intercourse, but if it has been in place for more than two hours, insert an extra application of jelly, cream or foam, without removing the diaphragm, before each act of intercourse. When the diaphragm is first inserted, use at least a teaspoon of contraceptive jelly or cream in it and spread a little around the middle of the rim. The diaphragm should not be removed before 6-8 hours after the last act of intercourse, nor should the woman bathe or douch during this time.
7. YES — The safest time for insertion of the I.U.D. is during or just after the menstrual cycle so that the doctor is sure that the woman is not pregnant. It must be inserted by a physician in his/her office. When the woman decides she wants a child, the I.U.D. must be removed by a physician.
8. YES — A woman can become pregnant the first time she has intercourse, especially if she uses no method of birth control.
9. YES — Sperm can live from four to five days within a woman's body so it is possible to have intercourse on Monday and get pregnant as late as Friday.
10. NO — Almost from the time a boy has his first ejaculation, he is able to make a girl pregnant. Most boys have their first ejaculation between the ages of eleven and fifteen.

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