

Opinion

Solidarity towards Chilean people is fading

By PETER DANSON
Revolutionary Marxist Group

It is now five months since the military seized power in Chile. Across Canada following the coup, there was immediate response in solidarity with the Chilean workers and peasants. This activity has largely abated but not because of any changes in the situation. The daily media now is largely silent on Chilean events and consciousness has declined as a result.

Despite the blackout in the media (with the exception of the recent "goodwill mission" of the Canadian government), the Chilean resistance demands our active solidarity with its struggle against the brutal thrust of the junta. The question has not been faced in most parts of Canada as to how best to build an effective movement to play a role in actually changing the balance of international forces in favour of the Chilean resistance.

Some in Canada have become distracted from continuing as a result of the token gestures by the Trudeau government in allowing a small number of refugees into the country. That action by the government can, to some degree, be counted as a victory for the various committees in Canada. It is not an end nor does it address itself to the many thousands who still face imprisonment, torture, and death at the hands of one of the most brutal regimes in Latin America.

The refugee question was the central focus of most early actions around Chile and correctly so. The role of the Canadian government in its support for the junta and the role its diplomats played in excluding exiles from

the Santiago embassy were too obvious for the daily press to ignore. Even with the admission of small numbers of refugees into Canada, the government has followed a course which shows that it is more interested in excluding revolutionaries (witness the extended security checks) than in the plight of the political refugees who have sought asylum. The government delayed processing of most applications until after the junta's final date of "safe conduct".

The government's delaying tactics make the situation in Canada even worse. The Trudeau cabinet obviously wished to see the issue quieted. Members of Chile Solidarity Committees across the country occupied Immigration offices to force the issue into public view. Fourteen were arrested in Toronto and are scheduled for trial January 23. One of the means to raise the issues of Canadian government policy and the continuing repression of workers and peasants in Chile is to organize a political defence of the militants arrested in the Immigration office occupations. The issue of repression in Chile stands as the central issue for Chile solidarity in the immediate period. The lives of many leftists and foreign exiles in particular stand in jeopardy. Arbitrary arrest and summary execution continues daily in Chile. The junta has even pushed aside normal diplomatic relations as it proceeds with its butchery. The Swedish ambassador who gave aid to those in need of refuge was declared persona non grata and was himself physically assaulted by government troops.

A list of 48 most wanted people has been

circulated by the junta. This "death list" includes many of the most outstanding leaders of the workers' organizations and radical intellectuals.

The range of activity around the repression in Chile can include petitions, resolutions in trade unions and other organizations, public rallies and demonstrations, offers of asylum and jobs. Such activity can, to a limited but important extent, force the junta to retreat from its present level of wholesale repression. The activity of groups in solidarity with the Chilean resistance and in defence of the political prisoners must be aimed at reducing the capacity of the Chilean junta to regularize its activities both in Chile and internationally. Here we must include selective boycotts such as that raised by the Vancouver Chile Solidarity Committee and Hortensia Allende — a boycott by longshoremen of Chilean ships. In other parts of the country, it may be more effective to boycott Chilean wines, clothes manufactured in Chile and other products.

All of these objectives to aid the resistance in Chile must be situated in the actual context of the present events in Chile. The junta is being forced to take extreme measures in its drive to crush any emergence of mass opposition. It has systematically attempted to break up the workers' and peasants' organizations. The junta has shown that it has no delusion about "restoring basic democracy" nor is it afforded the manoeuvring room to do so. While we strongly criticize the failure of the Unidad

Popular political strategy (the peaceful road to socialism) and the failure to prepare and arm the masses for the bourgeois counteroffensive, we recognize that the advanced elements of the working class and vanguard organizations were able to win gains which were important in the development of strong class consciousness. The organization of the industrial cordons is but one example. The junta aims to liquidate this. To do so, it must not only smash the organizations of the mass movements, but carry off measures to defeat and demoralize the workers and peasants.

These circumstances create a potential situation not only for severe repression but also for a qualitatively higher level of political activity by the resistance. The revolutionary left managed to keep much of its organization intact and a united front has been organized by the MIR. In Quebec, a day of solidarity with the resistance is being organized in early February on the six month anniversary of the coup. We feel this represents an important development which should have its reflection in English North America. The Revolutionary Marxist group is willing to cooperate with all interested groups and individuals in building such a day in Toronto. United action is the best way for the left to raise the struggle in Chile as an issue of real solidarity.

Those interested in sending funds for material aid to the Chilean resistance and the victims of the repression can write to the Chile Solidarity Committee, P.O. Box 2881, Vancouver, B.C.

Opinion

Vandalism, a new fad?

Following the damage to a valuable sculpture and the theft of objects from the recent India Arts exhibit, campus vandalism reached a new low this week with the theft of an elevator shaft from the Ross Building.

It appears that some individuals will stop at nothing to get a lift. What is most disturbing about this particular incident is the apparent ease the robbers had in removing the shaft undetected. Security personnel received a report Monday that a vacuum cleaner was missing from maintenance. They speculate that the thieves may have sucked the shaft into the cleaner during their weekend heist.

Security has requested that anyone seeing individuals fitting the description issued earlier this week contact their office. The chief of security admitted he was pessimistic.

"These culprits sound too smart to stick around here. As for the shaft, it's too dangerous to carry around in one part. They'll likely break it down into small pieces and try to sell them as donut centres on the black market."

Students are warned to be aware of such an element on campus. The Chief advised locking of doors as one solution, but confessed that three keyholes had already been stolen this week.

Opinion

Foreboding issues on the way

By COLAN INGLIS

The editor-in-chief has accused me of being highly opinionated, so, being a faithful scribe, I now present the first in what will hopefully be a series of opinion pieces about some of the issues affecting York students. I hope they will elicit some response from the community at large. An outline of the issues meriting a more in-depth look appears below.

The biggy, of course, is the budgetary problems resulting from the cutbacks in educational spending by the Ontario government.

The slashing of departmental budgets is going to result in staff and faculty cuts. The library and various peripheral services such as audio-visual will also take a beating. All of this forebodes a dramatic hike in tuition fees, an action which must be sent to an early grave now.

Be prepared for a confrontation, because I can't see the government making concessions.

The administration is practically in collusion with the government because of its unwillingness to censure the province's high-handedness in attacking the education sector. Maybe the administration wants a

favourable ruling on its liquor licence application so it can complete the plan to take over the distribution of booze on campus. Not to mention the profits to be made from such hegemony, which would go a long way toward reducing the supposed budget deficit in food services.

Hold on to your beer mugs or you may be drinking Yoltan ale, Becker lager or Knox draft.

CYSF is so ridden with problems that I will save all the goodies for a later date. However, I will mention that elections are coming up (holy ballot box!), so get ready to cast your votes.

This week's cup of hemlock goes to Radio York for trying to pull off a wishy-washy referendum to get at student monies. It seems to me that the staff at Radio York in their zeal to get an FM licence took what they saw as the path of least resistance. Unfortunately, this path cuts across student government and allows the administration a tighter reign on student monies.

RUMOR MILL: Food prices may be going up.

ECO NOTE: Conserve water. Shower with a friend.

Letters To The Editor

All letters should be addressed to the Editor, c/o Excalibur, room 111 central square. They must be double-spaced, typed and limited to 250 words. Excalibur reserves the right to edit for length and grammar. Name and address must be included for legal purposes but the name will be withheld upon request.

Public urinals for dogs or bookstore pencils — issues for our activists

I am outraged by even the consideration that CYSF pays \$300 to cover legal fees for York students involved in the Artistic Woodwork strike.

I am fully aware that since the war ended in Vietnam, there have been many unhappy students at York. Fortunately, some heard about the Artistic Woodwork strike and decided that they could be a nuisance there instead. I am fully opposed to such disorderly conduct and the immature tactics that were shown.

If by chance these people are sincere in their protests, be it for public urinals for dogs or free pencils at the bookstore, they should conduct their activities within the constraints of the law. If, then, their behaviour goes beyond the boundaries of the law of the land they should face the consequences, including the financial burden of legal fees.

These people are already a burden on the taxpayer, and their personal debts should not be the responsibility of the York community. If CYSF at all represents the 'whole' York community, they must reject such an idiotic capital expenditure. I am sure that these 'protesters' by

no means represent the York community.

The long range consequences of this CYSF activity are profound. It seems that most often when York students appear in the 'real world' news, it is in a negative way—strikes, protests, demonstrations. Is CYSF trying to foster this trend? I will not belabour this point.

It disturbs me to be so deterministic in this letter. CYSF and a few college councils, over the past four or five years, have notorious records of outlandish spending (the effects of deficit budgeting). This blatant disregard for the student body by the selected representatives must be stopped now.

Thank you for your attention.

NORMAN FEFERMAN
Mes. II

Bibliographer bemoans breakfast-to-bedtime broadcasting blanket

Help! Who/where do I write to protect my rights/health/sanity from the threatened dawn-to-dusk blanketing of this campus by Radio York?

MARY WILLIAMSON
Fine Arts Bibliographer
Scott Library

Ed. note: People with good or bad taste can take their complaints to Radio York, CYSF John Becker, the Board of Governors.

Perverse attempt, says student, Yevtushenko criticism is unfair

Your reader's somewhat perverse attempt to rescue your critical sense might be tolerable if it were made without invoking the names of such people as Shelley, Blake, and Yeats to prove a point which is so very wrong.

In commenting on your review of Yevtushenko's poetry reading, Mr. Sherman stated that "art for Art's sake" is an attitude suitable for a country where "Sunday political views can be bandied about as if they were bits of gossip." Perhaps this is true, but only because art, including poetry, is treated with little more respect and attention than gossip.

Those of us who remained after the reading and listened to Yevtushenko's comments were struck mainly by the frustration of the man who, after reciting poems like "Dward Birchers", which describes the hardy little trees which cannot blossom now, but which dig in to the frozen Russian soil to await their time, was confronted by people like your reader, demanding a public statement on the repression

carried out by the Soviet regime.

There can be no more devastating an indictment used against a poet than the one which your reader levels against Yevtushenko—traitor to his role as poet. And perhaps for one moment, when Yevtushenko turned to the people around him and asked, "Didn't you understand?", the poet himself may have had a flash of doubt regarding his ability to communicate with his audience. But this is only because he comes from a country where, as oppressive as the political system admittedly is, artists like Yevgeni Yevtushenko (and Alexander Solzhenitsyn) are listened to and taken seriously.

Your reader goes on to make several shallow and vicious remarks not deserving of further comment, before giving a lopsided view of Yevtushenko's opinion of Solzhenitsyn for his courageous stand. Martyrdom, however, does not transform the martyr into a being beyond comment and criticism, nor is it, as Yevtushenko's example demonstrated, the only effective way open to the artist.

JULIAN ZUCKERBROT
Calumet College

Staff meeting

Room 111,
Central Square
2 p.m.