

Peruvian revolutionary Blanco is symbol of human solidarity

Hugo Blanco, the Peruvian revolutionary leader, is currently on a speaking tour of Canada and will be at York in Curtis LH-L next Tuesday, December 3 at noon. His topic is, *After Chile: Which way for the Latin American Revolution?*

Danny DiFelice, a former United Left Slate candidate for CYSF, has written a background on this renowned revolutionary.

Hugo Blanco is one of the most outstanding Latin American revolutionaries of our time.

Blanco's efforts to organize Peruvian peasants and his subsequent persecution by the Peruvian government have brought him international renown. His book, *Land or Death: The Peasant Struggle in Peru*, has been compared with the works of other famed Latin American revolutionary leaders like Che Guevara, Regis Debray, and Hector Bejar. He is a leader of the Fourth International, a policy-making international communist congress.

Blanco was born in Cuzco, an impoverished area of Peru. It was there that in 1958 he began to organize the movement of peasant unions, which was to spread from Cuzco over all of southern Peru.

Under his leadership, these peasant unions fought against disease, hunger, illiteracy and forced labor. Their struggle took shape against the great landowners who had robbed them of their land, their only means of livelihood, and who reacted violently to peasant union efforts to recover this land peacefully.

DEATH SENTENCE

In 1963 Blanco was hunted down and imprisoned for three years before being tried by a military tribunal and sentenced to death by a firing squad.

An international campaign was waged in his defence. Demonstrations were held at Peruvian embassies and consulates all over the world. Distinguished philosophers, scholars, leaders of trade unions and members of parliament joined with thousands of teachers, students, and workers to save his life.

Jean-Paul Sartre and Bertrand Russell headed defence efforts in France and England.

In Canada, the Halifax and Calgary Labour Councils passed resolutions demanding amnesty for Blanco; the Quebec Federation of Labour sent

out an appeal to every CLC local in Quebec on his behalf.

In 1967, when Blanco was facing the death penalty, the Canadian Committee to Free Blanco received a letter from him in which he said: "You know and we know that at the risk of death or not, with the threat of jails or not, the day of victory approaches with great strides. And that it is not the work of individuals, but of all the people."

ENEMIES OF MAN

"Ultimately it is of little importance if I am killed or not, if I am imprisoned or not. What is important is that you have extended your arm to stop the bullets, to tear away the bars. That is what is important, comrades, important as a symbol, as an example that human solidarity extends throughout the world and will drown out the enemies of man."

The world-wide defence campaign saved him from death and brought about his release from the island prison of El Fronton in 1971. Since then he has been driven from one Latin American country to another because of his ideas and his example.

Nine months after his release by the junta, Blanco was deported from Peru because of his continuing participation in the struggles of the oppressed. From Peru he went to Mexico, and was then expelled to Argentina. There he was soon imprisoned and held incommunicado. He was

released after three months on the condition that he leave the country.

ASYLUM

Receiving asylum in Chile, he fought with the workers in the industrial belt of Santiago. When the coup occurred in September, 1973, Harald Edelstam, the Swedish ambassador to Chile, helped to save his life and allowed him to escape to Sweden, where he now lives.

Blanco is known throughout the world for his work, and is a legendary figure in Latin America today. In some parts of Peru it is a tradition for the peasants to leave a spare place setting at the dinner table in case Blanco passes through.

The tour of Blanco through Canada comes at a time of increasing repression in Latin America. Recently, a state of siege was announced in Argentina, which removes most democratic and civil liberties in that country. Under these circumstances Blanco's tour takes on added significance.

A strong international defence of victims of repression can help to restore liberty to Latin America.

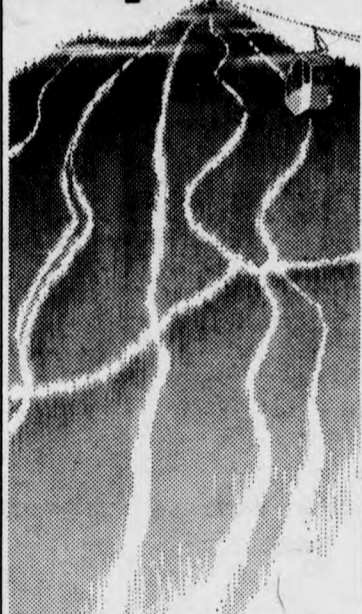


Matthew Mutch photo

The folly of pancake gluttony

Doug Lumley pauses during a marathon Founders contest last Friday to determine the university's top pancake-eater. Fifteen contestants scambled through the 20-minute regulation eating time. Fergus Mallon and Harry Brugmans each forced down 10 pancakes, and were ushered with greening faces into a double pancake munch-off, winner take all. Mallon regurgitated his share; Brugmans walked off with \$41 in prizes and the title.

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