

188 coups, but social conditions desperate in Bolivia

Peru in Similar State

In "The Revolution That Never Was," Bolivia's neighbour Peru finds itself in a similar state of affairs. Peru is remarkably unchanged ten years after a revolution led by the left-wing of the military.

Before this revolution, the peasants' lives were controlled by the landlord of the land they worked, a relationship similar to the European Middle Ages. After the revolution, the landlords were expelled, as the peasants took control of the land establishing food co-operatives. However, as a Peruvian peasant said, "No longer do I call anyone 'master,' but how can I be free when I do not have enough to eat?"

The co-ops are at the mercy of the prices they receive for their produce. The crops are bought at prices that do not pay for their production, causing the co-ops to fail.

The film contrasts the peasants' situation with that of the Peruvian rich elite. A recent right-wing military coup has replaced the ousted landlords back in a position of economic power, now in Peru's light industry and manufacturing sector. Surrounded by a modern-day city, scenes of luxurious social functions, a well-dressed descendant of the Spanish conquistadors explains that from his point of view, Peru is now managed in a "much more professional and orderly manner." A forced economic recession "will put Peru more strongly in the marketplace," he said.

The irony of these self-satisfied words are compared

to the words of a woman peasant. "We always need more food and hope for a day's work. In winter it's unbelievable trying to keep the cold out and we always get sick."

Given the desperate conditions of the peasants in Latin America, Oxfam Canada helps by funding indigenous popular groups that have initiated their own programs. Volunteers in Canada form the backbone of Oxfam. Oxfam's board of directors decides what projects to fund, basing its decisions on the criteria of need and the ability of a group to manage and account for the money on its own.

Some projects are jointly funded by the Canadian government through CIDA, Canadian International Development Agency. The miner's radio project, and the program to aid Bolivian women, are examples of Oxfam's policy of "helping people to help themselves."

There have been an incredible 188 coup d'etats in Bolivia since its independence in 1825. "Conditions of health, education and nutrition are very desperate," said Paul Mably, Latin American field worker for Oxfam, commenting at a film presentation at the National Film Board Theatre, Friday, November 7th.

The film "My Life in the Mines," an autobiography of a Bolivian miner, along with a film on Peru, "The Revolution That Never Was," sparked questions and discussions about the situations in these countries. The two films and Malby's appearance were

sponsored by Oxfam, a Canadian non-profit organization that works to alleviate the causes and results of underdevelopment in Third World countries.

Since a successful worker's revolution in 1952, conditions at the Bolivian mines were improving. However in 1964 a military coup brought the mines firmly under state control. "Miners had no weapons against tanks," said Mably about the coup that forced a 50% cut in wages onto the miners. Some efforts are now being made in mining cooperatives to improve their conditions. The establishment of indispensable communication links through the means of radio, is a project aided by funds from Oxfam Canada.

Miner's life story explored

The film "My Life in the Mines" explores the life of a man from when he started working in the mines as a boy, through the two revolutions, until the age of 45 when he contracted the inevitable miner's disease, silicosis, and was forced to retire.

His wife describes the difficulties in taking care of a family. Food is hard to come by and is very dear as it is brought in from western Bolivia. A woman must go and stand in line at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning in order to purchase food. Wages remain the same although inflation raises the cost of food, which takes up 80-90% of a family's earnings.

There is no security against accidents and disease. It is common for a

miner to die, be ill or laid off, necessitating the woman to work at the mines to support the family.

The film describes the urgency with which miners seek to discover new veins of minerals. Although at one time and endless source of jobs, the mines are becoming depleted. A slight drop in the world price of tin has a direct effect on whether a family can afford enough food to live on.

Miners have started numerous local radio stations out of their own incomes. Radio is extremely important, Mably said, as it is a means for the mostly illiterate miners to communicate with the outside world and other mining localities, and to counter the state propaganda. Oxfam sends funds to the "Support

Centre for Miners" which puts together a weekly hour-long cassette to be used by the radio stations. The cassette, played on Sunday when all shifts of miners are at home, carries news on the mining industry, world prices of tin, union progress, and legal, safety and educational information.

Oxfam also works to aid women by funding a program encouraging women to participate in the mining co-op movement. Although wives must often work, and help in union struggles, they are not allowed membership in the co-ops, nor do they take a vocal role in the decision making processes.

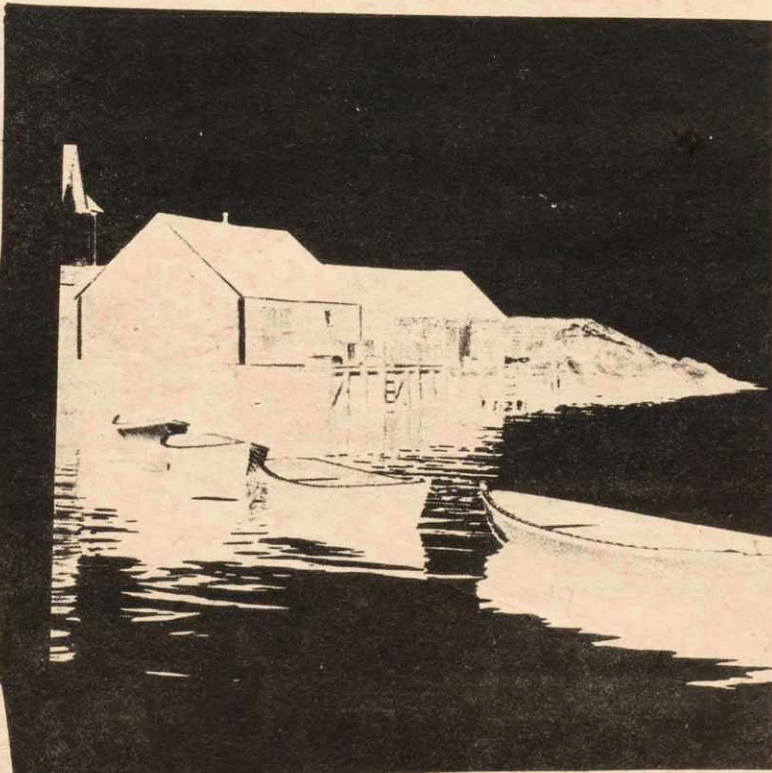


POETRY CONTEST

The Dalhousie Gazette is pleased to announce our second annual Poetry Contest. This year the Nova Scotia Poetry Society will co-sponsor the event. All Dalhousie students, full or part-time, graduate or under-graduate, are invited to enter.

The contest, which will begin this issue and end Dec. 10, will feature a \$100 first prize, a \$50 second prize and a \$25 third prize. Publication of the winners' poetry will take place in the first issue of the Gazette in 1981.

The rules are simple. The contest is open to all Dalhousie students. No more than two poems of any length can be submitted. All material submitted must be typewritten on white paper. All poetry must be submitted by midnight, Dec. 10. None will be accepted after this deadline. All submissions become the property of the Dalhousie Gazette and the N.S. Poetry Society. Students must include their name, address, telephone number and student number with all entries. A nom de plume may be included if the



poet wishes.

Gazette poetry editor Deirdre Dwyer and representative each from the N.S. Poetry Society and the Dalhousie Faculty will do the judging. Their decision will be final.

Time is running out quickly so submit your poetry as soon as possible. If you have a talented friend, remind her or him to pass their work into the Gazette. Remember, an eager public awaits!

HIGGINS/DAL PHOTO

Paul Nicol. Young artist with a big talent. How far will he go?

Nowhere

It's only a year since art school, but Paul is already being talked about as a name to watch.

It's heady stuff. With all the adulation, Paul is neglecting his work.

Parties and late hours provide easy distractions. So does too much drinking.

Paul is abusing his health, misusing beverage alcohol and hurting his future. Unless he changes, his talent could be harmed beyond repair.

Without it, he won't go anywhere.

Very far

It's only a year since art school, but Paul is already being talked about as a name to watch.

Paul's excited, but he has things in perspective. He enjoys a drink when the time is right, with friends and with moderation. But he knows nothing can take the place of hard work to build his reputation.

Gifts like Paul's are fragile and worth protecting. Because Paul understands, he'll go far.

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