

## Military rule on campus

Patricio Lanfranco, the president of Agrupacion Cultural Universitaria (ACU), a student cultural group in Chile, is touring Canada meeting with student groups on numerous campuses. He spoke last Wednesday at a Future of Education forum on campus; Alison Thomson of the Gateway spoke with him later that afternoon. The interview was translated by tour organizer Lake Sagaris.

**Gateway:** Patricio, where do you go to school and what are you studying?

**Lanfranco:** I am an economics student, and I go to the largest campus of the University of Chile, in Santiago. It was the leading university until last year, when the government passed a law resulting in a lot of small universities instead of one large one.

**Gateway:** Why?

**Lanfranco:** To make them more controllable, I think.

**Gateway:** How does the government control the universities?

**Lanfranco:** The university president is a military man, a general. He appoints all the authorities. As well, there is a department coordinating security.

**Gateway:** Is that effective in controlling the students?

**Lanfranco:** No, I don't think so. Chilean students have a tremendous tradition of democracy; the first students' union was established in 1906. Students have had a tremendous influence on the social and economic life of the country. Many graduates became reps in our parliament — we like to argue a lot!

ing, studying, and if they have any spare time, perhaps a little sports, but they should stay out of the nation's affairs. The average student listens to news two or three times a week, reads newspapers and magazines. He's continually being informed of what's going on in the country.

He also participates with great pleasure in cultural activities. Forums and debates are always full.

**Gateway:** Are the magazines and newspapers censored?

**Lanfranco:** Of course. All books have to go through the National Director, who reads all the first issues and decides whether to publish. Censorship can also be more subtle; books which disagree with the regime clearly aren't encouraged.

To get around this, many publications, technically illegal, simply aren't sent to the directorate. The magazine of ACU, the *Plumtree*, is not legal, but it's completely open. The authorities don't do anything about it because it has such tremendous support.

**Gateway:** What about foreign magazines? Are they allowed?

**Lanfranco:** Only the ones favorable to the regime.

**Gateway:** *Time*?

**Lanfranco:** Yes, *Time* is OK, *Time* supports monetarism.

**Gateway:** What do you find different about Canada?

**Lanfranco:** Lots. The food. I was astonished by breakfast. Canadians seem completely different mentally. You're more consumer oriented. Also more joyful, I would say, always joking. Canadians are



photo Ray Giguere

Chilean Speaker Patricio Lanfranco on tour in Canada.

dance, theatre. They exist in all faculties. Once a week there is an event by some workshop. The poetry readings are sometimes censored. ACU is banned from a number of campuses — each time we apply to have an event the answer is different. If they won't allow us to use university space, we meet outside. In August, the tail end of winter, we held a theatre festival with 23 different groups.

**Gateway:** Has ACU a political affiliation?

**Lanfranco:** No! The association is an organization to which many students can belong. They aren't asked about their affiliation or their past. For sure, the huge majority are progressive. It is clear for all of us what we do not want, but not so clear what we do want.

**Gateway:** Is there a strong feminist movement in Chile?

**Lanfranco:** I think that in the last 25 years women have been creating a much stronger awareness of their role. It was only 1954 that women got the vote. My country is an extremely macho country; women are relegated to the house.

**Gateway:** Is it dangerous for you to be here?

**Lanfranco:** I think not. If there were a problem I would hope there would be a lot of support from Canadians since Canadians asked me to be here.

**Gateway:** What about for students becoming active in student groups like ACU? Is that a dangerous thing to do?

**Lanfranco:** Yes. Students are always being thrown out. Students also risk more direct repression. More and more the student movement has grown stronger and is much more difficult to repress since the outcry would be so great if the junta were to try to break up the students.

**Gateway:** When students in Canada take positions of support for students in Chile or other countries, there is always some debate about whether it is useful, or just a gesture. What do you feel about Canadians expressing support for you and your organization?

**Lanfranco:** It's very important. It shows the government that not just Chilean students, but students all over the world are involved. They have to be a lot more careful. Plus, for the students, knowing that Canadian students are concerned about us is very encouraging and we redouble our efforts.

**Lanfranco will be visiting Vancouver, Winnipeg and Toronto, among other places.**

For more about the problems of South America, see the film *Controlling Interests* showing in room 142 SUB at 7:30 tonight.

*Students are always being thrown out. Students also risk more direct repression.*

For this reason, we know a lot about what is going on. The government hasn't been successful in preventing debates, forums, discussions.

**Gateway:** You visited our Students' Council yesterday; what do you think of our democratic tradition?

**Lanfranco:** Very impressive. It seems to me there was a tremendous atmosphere of respect for opinions given and I got the impression student leaders had a tremendous interest in resolving problems. It would be a very efficient kind of council.

**Gateway:** How does the average student, as opposed to student politicians, spend his time?

**Lanfranco:** The new general appointed to head my university thinks students should spend their time studying, study-

very direct. We are more subtle and ironic.

Canadians also seem more tolerant, less prejudiced than in Chile. For example, here in Canada I find there are organizations for homosexuals; there's nothing like that in Chile. It would be considered extremely strange.

**Gateway:** Finances of university students is a major issue here. Is it a problem for students in Chile?

**Lanfranco:** Yes. Most students are financed by their parents. The vast majority of students come from wealthy backgrounds.

**Gateway:** What does ACU do?

**Lanfranco:** Lots. We are an organization of 50 cultural workshops — clubs — doing things like photography, folk

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- submit the annual budget for the *Gateway* to the Administration Board in compliance with By-law 700.
- ensure the smooth operation of the Students' Union newspaper.

**Salary: \$500 per month**

**For further information, please contact:**  
Keith Krause, Editor-in-Chief, *Gateway*, at 432-5168, or in Room 282 Students' Union Building.

**Deadline for Applications:**  
28 January 1981, 4:00 PM to Room 259 SUB