

Over 50 people involved

# Chilean supporters arrested in occupation

By PETER MATILAINEN

"Canadian Asylum for Chilean Refugees!" said the banner draped across the entrance to the Canadian Immigration offices on University Ave. last Monday.

Shortly after 2 p.m., demonstrators occupied those offices and decided to stay until the Government of Canada answered a few questions and heard their demands. The Child Solidarity Committee in Toronto took responsibility for the action, part of a cross-Canada operation which saw similar sit ins in Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Montreal all united in their demands on the government.

The sit in, involving over 50 people in Toronto, acted as the focus for the other occupations, as committee members attempted throughout the afternoon to make contact with government immigration officials to hear the demands of the groups.

Over two weeks ago, demonstrators in Vancouver staged an occupation of the Canadian passport offices and received assurances from officials that the government would be willing to openly discuss Canada's role in the issue of refugees from Chile.

## York senator

This time the government refused to discuss the issue at all and instead ordered police in to remove the demonstrators. Fourteen people were arrested in Toronto, one of whom is a York Senator.

In a press release, occupiers explained they had decided to act on such a scale to draw national attention to the Canadian government's attitude

to the plight of those in Chile attempting to escape the "bloody-handed dictatorship."

These refugees, the demonstrators said, included not only trade unionists, members of the Allende government, and revolutionaries, but also hundreds of people who were not involved in Chilean politics and instead were refugees from other Latin American dictatorships. The government's refusal to carry out the promise it made in Vancouver necessitated the action.

Essentially the demands which the groups hoped to present to the government were: to grant political refugee status to those affected by the coup and exert pressure on the new regime to allow these people to leave; to provide an air-lift for the exiles and facilitate their settlement in Canada; to fire the Canadian ambassador, Andrew Ross, for his actions; and finally to call upon the military junta to release Luis Corvalan (leader of the Chilean Communist Party) and Luis Vitale (a noted socialist intellectual), both of whom face execution.

## Double standard

Speaking to the demands, Bret Smiley, one of the negotiators in Toronto, criticized the double standard Canada has for various exiled groups of immigrants who come to Canada. The government, he explained, "granted refugee status to thousands of Hungarians, Czechoslovaks and Ugandans and helped them settle in this country. So far a paltry number of refugees from Chile, slightly over twenty, have been admitted to Canada, despite the fact



Part of the occupying force in Toronto awaits government response to their appeal for a phone hook-up with sit ins in other cities. They hoped to

carry on common negotiations with immigration officials concerning the question of Chilean refugees. No answer came, just the police.

that they and thousands more face death, torture and harassment daily."

Graeme Carrasco, spokesperson for the Committee, explained the position of the CSC to a press conference and presented a specific demand for the freedom of Luis Vitale.

"We demand the immediate release of Luis Vitale, a noted Marxist intellectual now imprisoned and slated for execution. Vitale's valuable academic and theoretical work provides much of the most useful source material required by North American scholars writing on Latin America."

"It is crucial" she continued, "that Vitale be granted safe conduct to Canada and offered a teaching position at any prominent Canadian university."

"This is a demand that students and professors can clearly take up with all university administrations."

She concluded by saying that Luis Corvalan, secretary of the Chile Communist Party, should also be released and granted safe conduct if he so wishes."

## Ross supports junta

Demonstrators were particularly angered by the Canadian ambassador's role in Chile. John Harney, NDP M.P., recently released telegrams meant to be internal to the external affairs department, and subsequently caused much embarrassment for Mitchell Sharp. The telegrams pointed out the open support Ross gave to the military junta. One statement referred to those seeking to escape the repression as "riff-raff."

A refugee who was in the Canadian ambassador's residence, (which is where the 20 exiles stayed) reported that a Chilean woman made three attempts to seek asylum. The third time she jumped the wall surrounding Ross' small mansion. He again refused her admittance to the residence. She was forced to leave his property, and outside the wall the carabinieri (paramilitary police) were waiting.

All the occupations were peacefully carried out by demonstrators in the

various cities under the auspices of local Chile Solidarity Committees, and occurred at exactly the same hour to prevent any repressive response from the government, before the actions had all taken place.

In Montreal, over 40 people entered the seventh floor offices of the immigration department, announced their intentions to stay until their demands were met, and made contact with the other sit ins. They stayed until nine riot squad police cars arrived, at which point they were carried out of the offices.

## Left when told

In Winnipeg, 30 occupiers turned local manpower-immigration offices into a press room as they called on immigration officials to account for government policy before the media. They departed when ordered to do so.

The second occupation of its kind in Vancouver took place in the office of the Director-General of Immigration, where demonstrators repeated demands of the last sit-in for a public response by the government to account for its actions in regards to the junta and the actions of Canada's ambassador, Andrew Ross. They publicly questioned officials why, unlike those of the Swedish ambassador, Canadian diplomatic cars were not being used to pick up refugees unable to cross the police and military cordons around the embassy. They also tried to confirm whether special security checks were being run for all those coming from Chile, and if the RCMP was using the junta as a source for such investigations. Eleven people were arrested in Vancouver on charges of common assault.

The committee spokespersons were sure that this recent cross-Canada action would not be the last, after the last people were released from 52 division cells.



Metro Toronto police lead one of the demonstrators out of the Canadian Immigration offices on University

ty Avenue last Monday. Over 50 people participated in the sit in. Fourteen persons were arrested.

# U.S. war resisters in uniform proposed as amnesty solution

WASHINGTON (CUP)—The US Justice Department has a "new" solution for the call for war resisters. The plan is to offer the resisters the choice of serving in the army or going to jail.

Earlier, Senator Robert Taft of Ohio proposed conditional amnesty which would force draft resisters to spend three years in "alternative service" duty as the price for amnesty.

An editorial in the semi-official Army Times seems to have reservations about the new scheme.

"Resisters are causing a sticky problem for the government. Public sentiment is against sending them to jail."

The editorial suggests that other measures be used but cautions that war resisters in uniform may be more trouble than they're worth.

There is some question about the sincerity of the army's opposition when one considers Defense Secretary John Schlesinger's recent warning that falling enlistment may require the resumption of the draft.

Army Secretary Bo Calloway's statement that he is "unconcerned" about the record black enlistment (35 per cent) and is opposed to any quotas for blacks could be construed as an attempt to sow fears of an all-black army. It may be considered as another attempt by the army to justify the reinstatement of the draft.

The army's huge advertising campaign to try and recruit sufficient men to maintain a voluntary force large enough to meet U.S. needs has been a colossal failure.

## Chile petition circulates

KINGSTON (CUP)—Queen's students are circulating a petition protesting Canada's recognition of the military junta in Chile. They have become highly aware of the situation in Chile and Canada's non-opposition to it, and hope to make more people aware of the government's stance.

The petition stipulates that Canada withdraw recognition of the military junta, cut off export aid and oppose loans to the regime from the World Bank and World Monetary authorities. It also calls on the United Nations and other countries to offer political asylum to Chilean refugees.