

# Chilean Political Prisoners Bulletin

Published by  
Non-Intervention in Chile



Dec-Jan '78

Leader Arrested

## Relatives of Disappeared Prisoners Harassed

Jorge Rene Palma Pacheco, 27, a leading member of the Group of Relatives of Disappeared Prisoners, was arrested Sept. 8, 1977 by armed security forces who raided his apartment at 3 a.m. In a violent disruption they tied up Palma, locked his wife and three small children in a room, and ransacked his home, confiscating papers which Palma kept relating to the disappearance of his brother-in-law. Palma was severely beaten and thrown down a flight of stairs. Neighbors who witnessed the incident were ordered to return to their apartments and turn off the lights.

He was taken to an unknown location, severely tortured, held incommunicado for ten days and then transferred to the Public Jail in Santiago. The Second Military Prosecutor charged him with giving out "subversive material" and possessing two suitcases full of such material. The Prosecutor also claims that Palma was arrested on Sept. 9 at 1:30 p.m., despite the fact that neighbors and his family witnessed the Sept. 8 raid. It is believed that the military added the alleged anti-Junta material to the papers it stole from Palma's house in order to fabricate evidence for a case against him.

During his interrogation the military authorities tried to obtain information on the structure and activities of the Group of Relatives, as well as the names of possible leaders. Palma was accused of having instigated the June 1977 hunger strike by 26 women at the UN's Santiago office and of organizing a group of people to demon-

strate during the visit to Chile of Terrence Todman, U.S. Asst. Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs.

### Group of Relatives

The Group of Relatives of Disappeared Prisoners and the Vicariate of Solidarity, of which it is a part, have become primary targets for the dictatorship's repression. In an effort to find out what has happened to more than 2,500 disappeared prisoners, the Vicariate (part of the Catholic Church) has filed hundreds of writs of habeas corpus and other legal papers. The courts have denied all but one writ, and the dictatorship has consistently claimed that disappeared prisoners do not exist, that they have left the country, or that they are living clandestinely.

Facing an official wall of silence, the Group of Relatives has become more open and vocal in its pressure. It has presented a petition signed by 2,300 clergy, labor leaders and professionals, carried out a public demonstration at the Supreme Court, and a hunger strike. It has been effective in bringing the situation of disappeared prisoners to worldwide attention, and the dictatorship is under increasing pressure to respond.

### Junta's Response: More Arrests

The dictatorship's dilemma is that it has no answer. Admitting that many of the disappeared have been killed or exposing the fact that others have been held for years in secret torture and detention centers would further isolate it in world public opinion and would weaken its rule inside Chile. It responds instead with lies or silence, and arrests those who try to make the truth known, such as Palma.

Palma's arrest represents an escalation of the dictatorship's attack against the Group. All opposition to the dictatorship is prohibited—freedom of speech and the right to organize to fight injustices do not exist today in Chile. Many members of the Group have regularly been harassed by the military. Some receive frequent late-night visits by plainclothed intelligence officers who urge them to discontinue certain activities and sometimes force them to sign prepared statements. Several prominent lawyers who worked for the Vicariate defending political prisoners have been jailed or exiled.

Immediate pressure is needed to force the dictatorship to release Palma and end its harassment of the Group. Sample letters will be found on page 3.



Vicariate aids political prisoners, their families and the unemployed.

## Argentina

# Repression against Santucho Family

In Oct. 1977, Francisco Santucho, 81, and his wife Manuela, 65, visited the U.S. as part of an international journey to expose the violation of human rights in Argentina. Of their 10 children and numerous grandchildren, 14 are exiled abroad, 5 have been killed, 5 have disappeared, and two are recognized prisoners.

The Santucho family has become a target of intense repression because their son, Mario, was Secretary General of the Argentine Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), and an internationally known revolutionary leader. He was killed by the Army July 19, 1976. Two other sons, Oscar and Carlos, have also been killed.

In a New York press conference, the elder Santucho's stated: "Our own situation ... summarizes at once the dramatic situation of the thousands of Argentine families in which one or more members have been murdered, kidnapped, detained or simply disappeared. Our principal objective is to contribute to ending the crimes and brutalities being committed against the Argentine people."

In speaking of their children, they said: "We are parents of a family of 10 children. We raised them to have profound feelings of love, and a strong commitment to solidarity and justice, so that their conduct in life was only the consistent practice of those principles."

The following members of the Santucho family are currently in prison or disappeared:

**Amilcar Santucho**, the oldest, has been imprisoned in Paraguay since April 1975 without charges. The Argentine dictatorship is now pressuring for his return.

**Francisco Rene Santucho**, journalist, was kidnapped in April 1975 by the AAA, a right-wing death squad. He may be dead or detained in a concentration camp.



Mr. and Mrs. Santucho

**Manuela Elmina Santucho** (granddaughter), a defense lawyer for political prisoners; **Cristina Silvia Navajas de Santucho** (daughter-in-law), a sociologist; and **Liliana Delfino** (wife of Mario), a psychologist, were arrested in July 1976. They have been seen in different concentration camps. All have been tortured and are unrecognized prisoners.

**Graciela Noemi Santucho** (granddaughter), 18, was arrested in April 1975 and accused of subversive activities. She is the only family member whose detention has been acknowledged. She is under permanent danger of being executed in an alleged "escape attempt."

Another granddaughter, **Maria del Valle Santucho**, 26, disappeared Dec. 19, 1975. Recent unofficial reports indicate that she died after months of intense suffering.

In addition, eight young grandchildren, aged 9 months to 15 years, were arrested on Dec. 8, 1975. As a result of public pressure from inside and outside Argentina, they were released after seven days of imprisonment in military barracks.

See page 3 for sample letter.

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## POLITICAL PRISONERS SPEAK OUT

The following are excerpts from a declaration made by the political prisoners of Chile on the 4th anniversary of the coup in Sept. 1977:

"...When we denounce the violation of human rights in our country, we say that the military dictatorship does not respect the collective rights of our people or the individual rights of personal dignity and life.

"The collective rights of our people are the rights of those trade union and political organizations that represent us, that defend our jobs and standard of living, that defend the national patrimony and our natural resources, that defend the right of freedom of in-

formation and the dissemination of ideas and doctrines, the struggle and defense of a people's government, the legitimate aspirations of a struggle for a society free of exploitation and a new state that will interpret the interests of the national majority.

"The collective rights of our people were negated by the coup... This attack on the collective rights of our people, and their political and trade union organizations, is the original source of the violation of human rights in Chile, rights which are no more than those which belong to people in society, in a social context

which understands human beings rather than denying them.

"Our people...fought back by denouncing the coup and the pro-coup military officers. They organized in defense of the constitutional government and for socialism. They fought against the unconstitutional military forces that rose up seditiously. And they struggle clandestinely, organizing the people against the military dictatorship.

"We, the political prisoners, are part of that fighting people... The struggle for the rights of political prisoners is part of the struggle for the rights of our people."

# Arturo Villavela: Life Endangered

Arturo Villavela Araujo was arrested March 29, 1974 by the Air Force Intelligence Service. He was tried by an Air Force War Council and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

On Aug. 29, 1977 Villavela was admitted to the Penitentiary Hospital in Santiago, suffering from severe intestinal pain. He has received minimal medical examinations and an x-ray, none of which has determined the cause of the pain. The authorities refuse to transfer him to a better medical facility, and efforts by the International Red Cross have not produced results. It is feared that the military authorities' indifference to his case could cause his condition to deteriorate so much that he will be in imminent danger of death.

This fear is further confirmed by the fact that the Supreme Court has denied Villavela's petition for *extranamiento*, a procedure whereby prisoners' sentences can be commuted if they agree to leave the country. Villavela applied for *extranamiento* and was interviewed by Sr. Rossi of the Pardons Commission on March 30 and April 6, 1976. Rossi later confirmed that his request had been approved, only to be reversed by the Supreme Court. He has been granted visas for both Mexico and Cuba. The Supreme Court's decision was appealed on June 21, 1976, but to date no action has been taken.

Villavela is one of hundreds of officially recognized political prisoners in Chile who are eligible for release from prison. While international pressure forced the dictatorship to institute the policy of *extranamiento*, the authorities have caused delays and legal obstacles in the cases of numerous prisoners. Immediate pressure is needed to force the military authorities to provide proper medical attention for Villavela and to release him under the *extranamiento* procedure.

Villavela is 33 years old, is married and has a 6-year old son. He is an engineer by profession and a leader of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left.

Sample letters for this case will be found on page 3.

## SAMPLE LETTERS



For JORE RENE PALMA write to:

Sgr. Maria Madariaga  
Ministerio de Justicia  
Agustinas 1401-1409  
Santiago, Chile

Dear Sra. Madariaga:

*I have recently learned that Jorge Rene Palma Pacheco, age 27, was arrested Sept. 8, 1977. This arrest is clearly an attack on all families of disappeared prisoners in Chile who are trying to find out what has happened to their relatives. Arresting people like Palma is no answer to all of us who demand to know the fate of over 2,500 disappeared prisoners in Chile. I urge that Jorge Palma be released immediately and that harrassment of other relatives of disappeared prisoners end.*

For ARTURO VILLAVELA write to:

Sr. Ricardo Martin Diaz  
Comision de Indultos  
Agustinas 1401  
Santiago, Chile

Dear Sr. Martin:

*I am writing in regard to the case of Arturo Villavela Araujo who is currently in serious condition at the Penitentiary Hospital in Santiago. Your government has agreed that the sentences of political prisoners can be commuted if they leave the country, and Sr. Villavela has received visas. I urge that Sr. Villavela be given immediate medical attention and that his petition for *extranamiento* be granted at once.*

For PALMA and VILLAVELA write to:

Mr. Terrence Todman  
U.S. State Department-Room 6263  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Mr. Todman:

*I am writing regarding two prisoners of the Chilean dictatorship: Arturo Villavela Araujo, arrested in 1974, is currently in serious condition in the Penitentiary Hospital. The Chilean government refuses to provide proper medical attention and will not release him even though he is eligible for exile under the Junta's own laws.*

*Jorge Rene Palma Pacheco, a member of the Group of Relatives of Disappeared Prisoners, was arrested Sept. 8, 1977. This is a clear attack on people in Chile who are trying to find out what has happened to more than 2,500 disappeared prisoners.*

*The U.S. Government has repeatedly stated its intention to work for respect for human rights. I urge you, therefore, to pressure the Chilean dictatorship to release these two prisoners who are being illegally detained.*

For the SANTUCHO FAMILY write to:

Ambassador Aja Espil  
Argentine Embassy  
1600 New Hampshire Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Ambassador Espil:

*I am writing to demand the immediate release of the members of the Santucho family, especially Francisco Santucho, Manuela Santucho, Cristina Navajas, Liliana Delfino and Maria del Valle, all of whom have disappeared in your concentration camps. I also demand that the charges against Graciela Noemi Santucho be dropped and that she be released immediately.*

*The Argentine government now holds more political prisoners than in any other Latin American country. I urge that the Santucho prisoners and all political prisoners in Argentina be freed.*

## About the Bulletin

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To become part of this network, send the coupon below to your nearest NICH chapter or affiliate group. Organizations which would like to receive multiple copies of this Bulletin for distribution should write to New York NICH.

Clip and mail to your nearest NICH chapter or affiliate group.

- I want to participate in the Prisoner Support Network and will write at least one letter a month.
- Please send more information on Chile.
- I am interested in doing further work on political prisoners.
- Enclosed is \$5 (\$3) for a subscription to the Chile Newsletter.
- Enclosed is a contribution to help pay for the Bulletin.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Support Network Grows

Since initiating the Prisoner Support Network on a national scale last June, the project has grown to include 1,500 participants. You can help it grow even more by distributing copies of the Bulletin to your friends and inviting them to participate.

The Bulletin is distributed free to all network participants. Funds are urgently needed to help pay for the printing and distribution costs, and we urge network participants to contribute whatever they can.

NICH also publishes a bi-monthly newspaper, the CHILE NEWSLETTER, which contains news and analysis of the situation in Chile and other Latin American countries. Subscriptions are \$5 per year (\$3 low income).

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# Chilean Political Prisoners Bulletin

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Non-Intervention in Chile



Feb-Mar '78

U.N. Vote Condemns Chile

## Junta's Opposition Protests Plebiscite

In reaction to the United Nation's 99-14 vote condemning the Chilean government for its continued violations of human rights, Chile's dictator, Gen. Pinochet, announced a plebiscite for Jan. 4. Chileans were asked to cast a "yes" or "no" vote on the question: "In the face of international aggression unleashed against the government of the homeland, I support Pres. Pinochet in his defense of the dignity of Chile, and reaffirm the legitimacy of the Government of the republic to conduct, in a sovereign way, the institutionalization of the country."

The plebiscite was widely denounced. The parties of the Chilean left and the Christian Democrats (which together had won 70% of the vote in the last free election in Mar. 1973) stressed the ludicrousness of holding an election with no freedom of speech, press and assembly, and when any manifestation of opposition to the dictatorship is grounds for arrest, torture and imprisonment. They further stated that the compulsory vote by identification cards (the junta destroyed all voter lists), the environment of severe repression, and the fact that voting would be supervised by the armed forces, would make people afraid of losing their jobs or being imprisoned if they voted no. The Catholic bishops declared that the vote was another violation of human rights and urged that it be suspended.

Pinochet campaigned heavily, and helicopters dropped leaflets over working class districts, appealing to national sentiments and urging people to vote yes "in their own interests."



Police break up anti-junta protest Jan. 2

### Large-Scale Protests

The plebiscite provoked the strongest expression of mass anti-junta sentiment since the coup. The junta's opposition, denied access to the media, took to the streets in almost daily demonstrations, shouting "Chile Yes! Junta No!" and distributing leaflets urging people to vote no. On the eve of the vote, members of the MIR managed to take over a Chilean radio station and broadcast a one-minute message urging people not to vote or to vote no. While the government and its supporters campaigned freely, five anti-junta demonstrators were detained.

Meanwhile, on Dec. 29, close to 100 relatives of disappeared prisoners began a five-day hunger strike at San Francisco Church in Santiago, calling upon the government to account for over 2,500 disappeared political prisoners.

### Pinochet Claims Victory

Even before the polls officially closed on Jan. 4 the government claimed a huge victory. In his "victory" speech, Pinochet made clear his real purpose in calling the plebiscite—to use it as a mandate to continue the institutionalization of his repressive government. He announced that there would be "no more elections until 1986" and a new constitution would be decreed without further voting for ratification. One must wonder why, with such alleged popular support, Pinochet finds it necessary to continue denying the Chilean people their basic freedoms and to continue the state of martial law, which allows the government to arrest and imprison people without charges.

Internationally, the commercial media took a somewhat guarded view of the results, and a U.S. State Department spokesperson announced that the U.S. government considered the vote invalid because normal political activity was banned.

Chile's working class, which has carried the burden of the dictatorship's repressive social and economic policies will not be so easily fooled. A woman in the San Miguel district of Santiago summed up her feelings to a New York Times correspondent: "A few days after they killed Allende, the military came here looking for what they said was a communist priest. They machine gunned the chapel. You can still see the holes in the benches. On this block there are three men who had to leave the country to find work. There is the son of another woman who is on the run after the police came looking for arms. There is a girl who spent nine months in the Tres Alamos prison camp, where she was raped by the guards. This is the violence we know about here and I am voting no."

# Sergio Hidalgo Orrego

## Disappearances Continue in Chile

**SERGIO HIDALGO ORREGO**, of Quilpues, a town near Valparaiso, was arrested on Aug. 31, 1977. According to his wife, individuals in civilian dress came to their home and took Sr. Hidalgo away under the pretext of repairing a machine at the VEP industrial plant. He never returned. The authorities deny that he has been arrested.

Has the Chilean government abandoned the practice of disappearances? While fewer cases of disappearances are coming to the attention of church and human rights organizations, Sr. Orrego's case, and a number of other cases in Santiago and Valparaiso, indicate that this method is still being used. Little or no information is available on arrests outside Santiago. It is generally believed that repression in rural areas and small towns is more severe than in the capital. Security forces operate with a freer hand in outlying areas and the individuals involved and their relatives do not have access to human rights groups and are more easily intimidated and threatened.

In addition, a pattern of short-term disappearances has emerged in Santiago in

the past few months, directed principally against university students and people connected with church sponsored social service agencies. These disappearances range in duration from a few hours to several weeks. People are usually arrested at home and taken to secret locations where they are interrogated and tortured. Almost all have been pressured to become government informants as a condition for being released, and are threatened with death if they report their experience to human rights agencies. Some have been turned over to the military justice system, using signed confessions extracted through torture as proof of wrongdoing. Several people who had disappeared for short periods had actually been kept in moving vehicles, brutally beaten, and then abandoned on a public thoroughfare to create the appearance of a criminal act.

The Chilean dictatorship has continually refused to provide information on more than 2,500 disappeared prisoners and is increasing its repression against the relatives of disappeared prisoners

and human rights groups which are demanding an accounting of these prisoners. The letters you write on behalf of Sergio Hidalgo are an important way to keep pressure on the Junta on the question of disappearances.

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## Villavela and Schnake Freed

In response to strong international pressure, the dictatorship was forced to release two prisoners, Arturo Villavela and Eric Schnake.

Villavela, a member of the Central Committee of the MIR, was released Dec. 21. NICH and other organizations waged an emergency campaign in December when it was learned that Villavela was in danger of death. Hundreds of participants in the Prisoner Support Network responded to requests for emergency telegrams, and demonstrations demanding his release were held in several cities. Villavela is now in Norway, where he is receiving the medical attention he had been denied and is progressing satisfactorily.

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## Emergency Action Needed

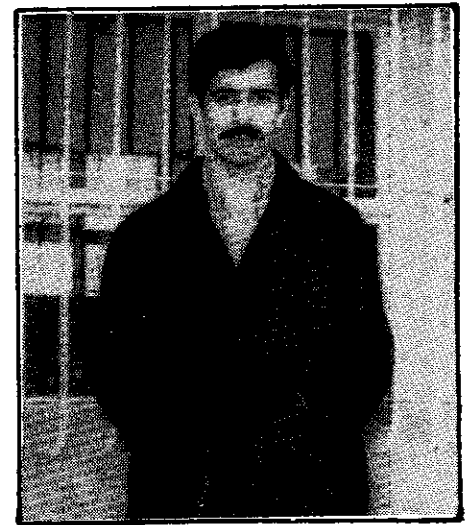
### Resistance Leaders Arrested

On Dec. 9, 1977 **HORACIO MAROTTA**, a journalist and member of the Central Committee of the Chilean Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), was arrested by the dictatorship's security forces. Also arrested with him were **DIANA DUHALDE**, **INEZ NARANJO** and **ISIDORO LIENDO**. The arrest came shortly after the murder of another MIR Central Committee member, Agosto Carmona Aquevedo, in Santiago on Dec. 7. The prisoners are being held incommunicado, presumably in a military prison in Valparaiso.

The arrest of Marotta and the others appears to be part of the dictatorship's recent trend of hunting down leaders of the popular opposition, fabricating false evidence against them, and trying their case in the press. A few days prior to the arrest an article appeared in *El Mercurio*,

the pro-junta daily, alleging that Marotta was responsible for placing bombs in various locations in Santiago and that he was a "dangerous" person. Such newspaper articles have been used as a justification for arrests and to create the impression that the individuals arrested were involved in criminal activity.

Marotta, age 35, is a cripple, having only minimal use of both arms. A statement issued by the Political Commission of the MIR the day after the arrest states: "The brutal behavior of the Chilean repressive agencies... leads us to fear for the lives of these detainees... [we] call upon political parties, revolutionary and democratic organizations, trade unions and journalist organizations and the international solidarity movement to begin a worldwide campaign aimed at defending the lives and winning the freedom of these companeros."



*Arturo Villavela*

Eric Schnake, a former Socialist Party Senator who had been imprisoned since the 1973 coup, was also freed in December. The international campaign for Schnake's freedom was supported by a large number of international organizations, trade unions and governments.

The release of these two prisoners once again demonstrates the effectiveness of international solidarity.

Puerto Rico

# Nationalist Prisoners Still Held in U.S. Jails

For the past 25 years, five Puerto Rican Nationalists have been held in U.S. prisons. **Oscar Collazo** was imprisoned after a 1950 attack on Blair House, the residence of Pres. Truman, and **Lolita Lebron, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irvin Flores** and **Andres Figueroa** were jailed after a 1954 attack on Congress. Condemned as terrorists and fanatics, the U.S. government ignored the motives behind these actions and charged the five with attempted murder. All received life sentences.

While Pres. Carter recently granted a pardon to Andres Figueroa (who is dying of cancer), the U.S. government still refuses to treat the case as political. What motivated these five young Puerto Ricans to take such direct action 25 years ago? The answer lies in the history of U.S. domination of Puerto Rico.



L-R Raphael Cancel, Lolita Lebron,  
Andres Figueroa and Irvin Flores in 1954

The U.S. invaded Puerto Rico in 1898 and acquired it as a colony when the Spanish-American war ended. Self-government was eliminated and U.S. corporations took quick control of the island's economy. In 1950, under growing international anti-colonial pressure, the U.S. government proposed that the Puerto Rican people choose between the prevailing colonial system and a new status known as a "Free Associated State."

Pro-independence forces, led by the Nationalist Party, saw that Washington's new formula was merely a maneuver to keep U.S. control of the island while allowing a margin of self-government to placate anti-colonial sentiment. The desire for independence was firmly rooted in the Puerto Rican people and strong resistance to this new type of control developed, culminating in a revolt known as the Jayuya Revolution. The U.S. Army moved quickly to crush this revolt and thousands of nationalists were ruthlessly persecuted and jailed. And although 48% of the Puerto Rican electorate boycotted the 1952 plebiscite, the U.S. government maintained that they had freely chosen the new status.

Oscar Collazo's attack on Blair House was a response to U.S. repression of the independence movement. The 1954 attack on Congress called worldwide attention to the real status of Puerto Rico—that the "Free Associated State" was simply a new way of denying the Puerto Rican people their right to independence and self-determination, and a convenient legal arrangement under which U.S. corporations could continue to exploit the island's natural resources and maintain a source of cheap labor. "It was an intolerable situation which forced us to take some

## SAMPLE LETTERS

**General Cesar Benavides**  
**Interior Minister**  
**Edificio Diego Portales**  
**Santiago, CHILE**

*Recent reports indicate that your government continues to arrest people arbitrarily and that people continue to disappear. I am particularly concerned about: (1) Horacio Marotta Rossman, Inez Naranjo, Isidoro Liendo and Diana Duhalde, arrested Dec. 9, 1977 in Vina del Mar and currently held incommunicado in violation of the junta's own laws; (2) Sergio Hidalgo Orrego, a worker from Quilpues, who was kidnapped from his home Aug. 31, 1977 and has disappeared.*

*Until these prisoners and all political prisoners in Chile—both recognized and disappeared—are freed, any statement your government makes about human rights is totally unbelievable.*

**Ms. Pat Derrian**  
**Office for Human Rights — Rm. 7802**  
**U.S. Department of State**  
**Washington, DC 20520**

*I urge that your office take immediate action to pressure the Chilean military dictatorship to release the following prisoners: (1) Horacio Marotta Rossman, Diana Duhalde, Isidoro Liendo and Inez Naranjo, arrested Dec. 9, 1977 in Vina del Mar, and currently held incommunicado in violation of the dictatorship's own laws; (2) Sergio Hidalgo Orrego, of Quilpues, abducted from his home Aug. 31, 1977 and disappeared. The authorities deny his arrest.*

*While Gen. Pinochet would like the world to believe that his government respects human rights, these two cases show that arbitrary arrests and disappearances continue in Chile.*

**Pres. Jimmy Carter**  
**White House**  
**Washington, D.C.**

*I urge you to unconditionally release the four Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners currently held in U.S. prisons: Lolita Lebron, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Oscar Collazo and Irvin Flores.*

*These four have been in Federal prison 25 years. Your failure to release them makes a mockery of your statements concerning human rights.*

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action which would expose the political masquerade that the imperialists were trying to impose on us," stated Irvin Flores. "We had to show the world the true facts—that Puerto Rico was still a colony."

The four nationalists still imprisoned are the longest held political prisoners in the U.S., and the demand for their unconditional release is supported by broad political and religious forces on the island—including the legislature, the past and present governors, and the Archbishop of San Juan. In addition, a movement in solidarity with Puerto Rican independence has developed in the U.S. in response to growing pressure for independence in Puerto Rico.

We urge you to support the campaign to free the nationalist prisoners by sending a letter to Pres. Carter. For more information, write: U.S. Committee to Free the Five Puerto Rican Nationalists, 80 5th Ave., Rm. 1204, New York, N.Y. 10011.

## Help Build Support Network

There are several ways individuals can help the Chilean Political Prisoners Support Network to grow. One way is to talk to friends about it and to write to NICH for additional copies of this Bulletin to pass along to them.

Another way is to set up an informal "House Meeting" for your friends who are interested in learning more about the situation in Chile and what they can do to help. NICH and other Chile solidarity groups can provide a speaker, film or slide show for such a presentation.

For more information, contact one of the committees listed below, or the NICH National Office in Berkeley.

## Chile Newsletter

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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- **ATLANTA NICH**, Box 7611, Sta. C, Atlanta Ga., 30309
- **BERKELEY NICH** (National Office), Box 800, Berkeley, CA 94701
- **CHILE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE**—Binghamton, Box 1466, SUNY, Binghamton, NY 13901
- **LATIN AMERICA SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE**, Box 40, Norton Union, SUNYAB, Buffalo, NY 14214
- **LANSING NICH**, Box 344, East Lansing, MI 48823
- **LOS ANGELES NICH**, Box 57022, Los Angeles, CA 90057
- **NEW YORK NICH**, 339 Lafayette, St. New York, NY 10012
- **PHOENIX COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA**, Box 20075, Phoenix, AR 85036
- **SAN FRANCISCO NICH**, Box 6669, San Francisco, CA 94101
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# Chilean Political Prisoners Bulletin

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April-May '78

## Political Hostages Junta Refuses to Commute Sentences

In September 1975, in response to worldwide pressure Gen. Pinochet announced that political prisoners could have their sentences commuted if they agreed to leave Chile. This procedure was formalized by Decree Law 504 and applies to political prisoners who were arrested under the state of siege, tried and sentenced by military tribunals, and who have secured a visa to another country. With the enactment of this law, the dictatorship tried to convince international public opinion that all political prisoners were being freed.

Several hundred prisoners were released after this law was decreed. Most were literally removed from prison, taken directly to the airport and put on planes to the country which had accepted them. All prisoners were given passports stamped "valid only for leaving the country." Since under this law prisoners cannot be released *inside* Chile, some prisoners whose sentences were almost completed or who did not want to be separated from contact with their families, decided to stay. The majority, however, realized that remaining would more than likely mean rearrest after they were released, or disappearance.

A little more than a year later, Gen. Pinochet proudly announced that "with the liberation of the last prisoner held under the terms of the state of siege, there is no longer anyone arrested or imprisoned for simple reasons of subversion or politics."

The truth is quite different. Hundreds of prisoners who qualify for release under Decree Law 504 are still imprisoned. Pinochet claims that no other country wants them. Chilean human rights organizations have produced a list of 93 prisoners whose applications were rejected. In addition, information from 19 different prisons on a sample of 126 prisoners shows that only 23 applications were approved, 28 were rejected, 48 had not yet been acted upon, 19 prisoners had not yet applied, and 8 were ineligible because they have not been sentenced or because they went through civilian trials.

### Political Hostages

Why has the dictatorship refused to release a significant number of these prisoners and created delays in the cases of others? Since taking power in September 1973, the military dictatorship has been trying to institutionalize its rule. On the one hand it tries to silence its opposition at home, and on the other, it seeks to quiet the international outcry demanding freedom for political prisoners. In this context, the dictatorship's Decree Law 504 was an attempt to improve its public image. It will continue



*Recognized prisoners in Santiago Penitentiary*

to hold these prisoners until it is politically convenient to release them. A communique from political prisoners in Chile of September 1977 states, "Today, hundreds of political prisoners are held as political hostages, for exchanges and deals designed to better the junta's image by releasing prisoners."

### "Common Criminals"

The dictatorship uses other means to hide the existence of political prisoners. In the last year an increasing number of arrests have been made by regular police officers, with the detainees charged with common crimes and receiving trials in civil courts. Political prisoners who are classified as common criminals do not qualify for expulsion under Decree Law 504. Most of these prisoners must go through long drawn-out trials, receive lengthy prison terms, and their sentences are often fraudulently extended when they are about to terminate them. An important demand of political prisoners in Chile is that these prisoners be officially recognized as political prisoners and that Decree Law 504 be applied to them.

NICH and other Chile solidarity organizations are beginning a major campaign to pressure the dictatorship to allow these prisoners to leave Chile. In the coming months this Bulletin will include more cases of these prisoners. In addition, we encourage participants in the Prisoner Support Network to join in the Chilean Political Prisoner Adoption Program, which is described in this Bulletin.

## After the Plebiscite

# Arrests and Murders of Resistance Leaders

A wave of arrests and raids on the homes of opponents of the military dictatorship have followed Gen. Pinochet's plebiscite of Jan. 4. In addition to the arrest of several hundred people who had publicly campaigned for a "no" vote, a number of arrests and murders of resistance leaders occurred in January.

On Jan. 16 local residents in Santiago reported that an unmarked car containing five men arrived at the house of **Octavio Riveros Rovelo**. The five men opened fire and were driven back by return fire. They were later reinforced by uniformed police who used tear gas to disperse a crowd which had gathered and to force out the occupants. One man, three women and an infant were seen leaving the house in police custody.

The following day the Santiago newspaper *Cronista* reported that Riveros had committed suicide when police arrived at his house and a shootout occurred. Witnesses' description of the man seen leaving the house corresponded to a photograph of Riveros' body which appeared with the press article, however.

A writ of habeas corpus was filed by Monsignor Ferraris of the Catholic

Church's Vicariate of Solidarity, and officials acknowledged that two of Riveros' companions, **Sofia Donoso** and **Sara Palma Donoso** and her infant had been detained. They are currently being held incommunicado. No mention was made of the third woman arrested at that time, **Haydee Palma Donoso**, a pediatrician who has been wanted to the junta since the coup. Information was received that she was seen alive on Feb. 7 at Villa Grimaldi, one of the dictatorship's most brutal torture centers.

Also on Jan. 16, **German de Jesus Cortes**, a priest and leader of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), and **Bernarda Nubia Santelices** were stopped on the street in front of their house by five government agents. According to a report in the newspaper, *La Segunda*, Cortes was taken back into the house where it was alleged he attempted to shoot his captors with a hidden revolver. The official version is that Cortes was then shot by one of the agents. Bernarda Santelices was taken away with her child and the authorities refuse to provide information on the case.

One week later, agents of the National Information Center (CNI, formerly DINA) arrested **Maria Angelica Sepulveda** in Santiago. She is accused of being a liaison to the MIR. She is a telephone operator at a medical clinic. Her whereabouts are unknown and military authorities deny her imprisonment.

The events in January confirm that the dictatorship is using the alleged "favorable vote" in its rigged plebiscite (see Bulletin Feb-Mar) to escalate its repression against people it believes to be part of the organized opposition. The attempt to cover-up the murders of German de Jesus Cortes and Octavio Riveros through phony newspaper accounts is part of the dictatorship's effort to portray its repression as "legal."

International pressure is needed to protest this new wave of repression and to demand the release of the individuals arrested in the January raids, particularly **Bernarda Nubia, Haydee Palma, and Maria Angelica Sepulveda**, all of whom have disappeared.

Sample letters for these prisoners will be found on page 3.

## Hernan Pacheco

# Anti-Coup Fighters Still Jailed

**Hernan Pacheco Quiroz** is one of many Chilean political prisoners whom the dictatorship refuses to release under Decree Law 504.

Pacheco was arrested shortly after the September 1973 coup by naval officers. Together with sailors and non-commissioned navy personnel, he was charged with having informed the constitutional government of Salvador Allende of plans for the coup.

The defendants were forced to make statements under torture and were kept in solitary confinement for several months, making defense impossible. The accused were never informed of the specific charges against them and were represented at a military trial by lawyers appointed by the Naval Judge.

Hernan Pacheco, a leader of the United Popular Action Movement (MAPU), was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment with compulsory work. He applied for commutation of his sentence in December 1976 and again in August 1977. Although the first application was

unanimously approved by the Pardons Commission, the Naval Judge of Valparaiso, and the Ministers of Justice and Interior, Gen. Pinochet did not sign the order for his release. The second application was again approved by the Pardons Commission, only to be rejected by the same Naval Judge who had approved it earlier. No reasons were given for the rejection.

Pacheco has had a visa to enter France since 1974, and the other eight prisoners who are still being held from this case (Court Martial #3926) also have visas for foreign countries and have been refused commutation.

Pacheco has already served almost half of his sentence. It is clear that the dictatorship has no "legal" grounds for holding Pacheco but is doing so as a further way to punish him and his companions who bravely fought against the pro-coup military forces.

International pressure is needed to force the dictatorship to free Pacheco and all other political prisoners who



*Hernan Pacheco (lower right) with co-defendants from Navy Trial.*

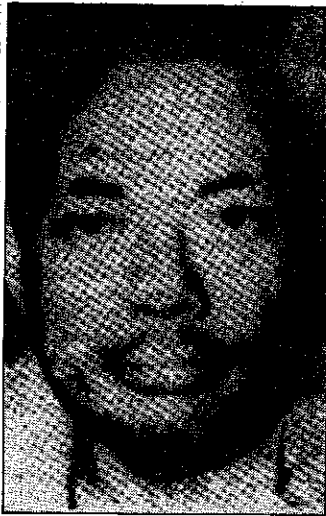
have already been promised their freedom. Such pressure recently forced the dictatorship to release Erik Schnake and Arturo Villavela, both of whom had previously been denied commutation of their sentences.

Nicaragua

## Free All Political Prisoners Now!

During over four decades of military rule, the Somoza family's dictatorship has traditionally distinguished itself by murdering rather than jailing political opponents. Recently, however, the dictatorship made a number of notable exceptions and tried 111 civilians (76 in absentia) in a military court martial. Among them was **Tomas Borge**, a long-time leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

Borge was arrested in Feb. 1976 and was sentenced a year later to 30 years imprisonment. In spite of the fact that the dictatorship did not kill him, the conditions of Borge's confinement show



*Tomas Borge*

that every effort is being made to physically and mentally destroy him. As a result of almost total sensory deprivation (he passes days on end without hearing other human voices, without feeling the sun, without exercise, without family visits), he is reported to be in very poor physical and psychological condition. He has participated in three extensive hunger strikes of 50 days each, and has been denied medical attention until his death appeared imminent.

During the first six months of his detention (during which the government denied knowledge of his arrest), he was brutally tortured on a regular basis, and was kept constantly hooded. For seven months he was handcuffed to a wall. While all political prisoners are kept under dismal conditions, Borge has been singled out for such harsh treatment because of his 17-year participation in the Sandinista Front.

The Sandinista Front has led the struggle of the Nicaraguan people against U.S. intervention and the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship. While the Somoza family's assets are valued at \$500 million and they receive half of the Gross National Product, 50% of the population is illiterate and earns under \$90 a year, and official unemployment is 36%. Thousands have been killed or disappeared and hundreds more have been rounded up by the National Guard and held without charges.

U.S. companies and banks held \$308 million in assets in 1974, and the U.S. government has been bent on maintaining control in Nicaragua since it views it as an alternative site for a canal and of strategic importance in controlling Central America and the Caribbean.

In the past several months resistance to the Somoza regime has escalated, and the government was rocked by a broadly-supported (80%), 17-day general strike in January. Street demonstrations became a daily occurrence during this period and participants were brutally repressed. The majority of the population, however, is united in its demand for the ouster of Somoza.

Pressure for the release of Tomas Borge, and all political prisoners, is especially important at this time. A sample letter is included on this page.

## Sample Letters

**Sra. Maria Madariaga**  
**Ministerio de Justicia**  
**Agustinas 1401-1409**  
**Santiago, CHILE**

*I am alarmed to learn that a number of people were killed or arrested by Chilean security forces in January. Among them are three women whom your government denies having detained: Bernarda Santileces, Haydee Palma Donoso, and Maria Angelica Sepulveda. I demand that these women be accounted for and hold the Chilean government responsible for their lives.*

*I am also distressed that your government has rejected applications for commutation under Decree Law 504. Hernan Pacheco Quiroz has been rejected twice, with no reasons given. As Minister of Justice, you should see to it that Mr. Pacheco and all political prisoners are immediately released.*

Copies can be sent to: Ambassador Jorge Cauas, Chilean Embassy, 1736 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

**Mr. Robert S. Driscoll**  
**Country Officer for Chile**  
**U.S. Department of State**  
**Washington, D.C. 20520**

*After the plebiscite in Chile, security forces conducted a number of raids which resulted in the murder of two people and the imprisonment of many others, among them Bernarda Santileces, Haydee Palma Donoso and Maria Angelica Sepulveda. The authorities refuse to acknowledge the detention of these three women, underscoring the unfortunate reality that people continue to disappear in Chile.*

*The dictatorship also violates its own Decree Law 504 by refusing to commute the sentences of recognized prisoners. I am particularly concerned about Hernan Pacheco Quiroz who has been denied commutation twice although he has a visa to enter France.*

*I urge you to pressure the Chilean authorities to immediately release these prisoners.*

Copies can be sent to your local senator and congressperson.

**Dr. Antonio Mora**  
**Ministro de Gubernacion**  
**Managua, Nicaragua**

*Your government is responsible for the murder or disappearance of thousands of Nicaraguan citizens. I am very concerned about Tomas Borge, who has been imprisoned since Feb. 1976. I understand that Mr. Borge's physical and mental condition is very bad due to the brutal tortures he has received. I demand that Mr. Borge be released at once, and that all political prisoners be freed.*

Copies can be sent to:

Msr. Obando y Bravo  
Arzobispo de Managua  
Managua, Nicaragua

Washington Area  
Nicaragua Solidarity Org.  
P.O. Box 32074  
Washington, DC 20007

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- I am interested in adopting a prisoner. Please contact me.
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- Enclosed is a contribution to help pay for the Bulletin.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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- LOS ANGELES NICH, Box 57022, Los Angeles, CA 90057
- NEW YORK NICH, 339 Lafayette, St. New York, NY 10012
- PHOENIX COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA, Box 20075, Phoenix, AR 85036
- SAN FRANCISCO NICH, Box 6669, San Francisco, CA 94101
- SEATTLE NICH, Box 21502, Seattle, WA 98111
- D.C. NICH, Box 32115, Washington, DC 20007

# Chilean Political Prisoners Bulletin

Published by  
Non-Intervention in Chile



June-July '78

"We have the right to exist."

## THE MAPUCHES OF CHILE

*"We have the human right to exist; our way of existing is to be Indian—and that is our only way. To live as Indians we must have our own land."*

—leader of Confederation of Mapuche Indians.

The Mapuches are the native inhabitants of Chile. Over half still live in the south in conditions of utter poverty, and have been the target of fierce repression by the dictatorship.

While information is limited, reports reveal that many Mapuches were massacred after the coup. Near Pitroquen in the south, dozens of bodies were seen floating in a river and being transported by military trucks. The victims were Mapuches from the Puraquina reservation who were murdered on the basis of an unfounded rumor of armed resistance.

Antonio Millape, president of the Confederation of Mapuche in exile, gave the



following report to the U.N. Conference on Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in the Americas in Geneva in September, 1977:

"... I was detained at least 10 times, not only myself, but the presidents and leaders of 63 regional associations of Mapuches—more than 3,000 leaders. . . A massive extermination of the Mapuche occurred. In some places now a hen or two only exists. People are starving. There is no food, not even for the hen. The land is arid. The people cannot even eat the eggs for they have to sell them to get medicines and soap. . . That is the form of extermination today under Pinochet. The goal is to totally wipe out the indigenous population of Chile."

### Theft of Land

During the Allende period and after long years of struggle, the Mapuche were able to win back a portion of their ancestral lands. Agrarian reform was carried out extensively in Cautin, the southern province with the largest concentration of Mapuche. Much land in this area was recovered through grassroots actions such as "fence-moving." Compensation was given to the previous owner, and programs were initiated to help provide supplies and credit to the newly formed cooperative farms.

Since the coup, 30,000 peasants have lost their land. In many cases this was done by government decree; if not, former landowners used force to evict the peasants. Many peasants had to sell their plots when government credit was ended. The Junta also decreed laws prohibiting peasants who had participated in land takeovers from keeping land. The Panguipulli Indian community lost some areas of their legally owned properties because the neighboring landlords



claimed the Indians were "inefficient" laborers.

Unemployment in the countryside is now over 50%. Land holdings have been reduced to less than two acres per family and the majority of Mapuche young men, with no land or jobs, are forced to work for large landowners during harvests under conditions of servitude. Infant mortality among Mapuches is over 60%, and increasing numbers of Indian women practice prostitution to survive, especially in places close to military camps.

The large landowners dominate the political and economic life of the region. Mapuche fishermen on Pine Island came into conflict with a modern German fishing concern about the rights of using the rich waters of the zone. The Mapuche used to come earlier than the German boats to tend their nets. In October, 1975 several Mapuche fishermen were

# MAPUCHES...

detained by police. Days later four of their bodies were found. Since then only the Germans fish in the zone. In Budi lake, truck drivers refuse to transport Mapuche products to markets or charge exorbitant prices for their services. The Mapuches are then obliged to sell their products for almost nothing to intermediary businessmen or to consume them themselves.

## Food for Export

The dictatorship justified the return of lands to former owners to correct what it considered to be the "inefficiency" of cooperative farms. It hasn't worked. (Even before the Allende period, small farms produced 40% of Chile's agricultural output on 21% of the land.) Official figures now admit agricultural production is down 25%. Government subsidies to small farmers have been drastically cut, tariffs on imported food have been eliminated, and tax breaks are given to large producers to encourage the export of food. With wages in general down 50%, the ability of the average worker to buy food is dramatically reduced. It is no surprise that the U.N. Human Rights Commission declared that in Chile "A whole generation may be affected with mental and physical disorders due to lack of proper nutrition."

For the most part, the large landowners who produce for export also have interests in industrial and financial operations connected to U.S.

corporations. The U.S. government has aided the dictatorship's policy by providing millions of dollars through the Food for Peace Program to help make up for shortages. Unfortunately, this aid does little, if anything, to help the Mapuches and other sectors hit hardest by the dictatorship's economic policies, while supporting the large landowners' profitable export activities.

## Mapuches Resist

The Mapuches, whose resistance to the Spanish conquest was the longest successful Indian resistance in Latin America, have not lost their determination to win their basic human rights. The fight for land still continues. On Pine Island, for example, Mapuches have



organized to prevent non-Indians from entering their areas. In August, 1975 the Panquille community decided to recover stolen lands by moving the old, "legal" landmarks to positions they had before the coup. Similar actions occurred in Curacautin. While these actions were met with brutal force by the police, they show the Mapuche's determination to resist the dictatorship's genocide.

Antonio Millape summed up this sentiment in Geneva: "All regional associations have been banned. It is difficult to organize now. Our most immediate goal is to stop starvation, this extermination. We cannot allow this to continue. Dictatorships will not provide the solutions, only we can."

## Two Mapuche Prisoners

The following are cases of two Mapuche prisoners currently held by the dictatorship:

**Abel Pailiaman Tenorio**, a campesino, was arrested sometime after the coup and subsequently disappeared. He is one of 2,000 prisoners whose existence the Junta refuses to recognize.

**Ramon Erminio Palil Nahuelquin** was sentenced to seven years in prison by a military tribunal. He has received a visa to Canada but has not been permitted to leave Chile. Pressure is needed to force the dictatorship to release Palil and all other prisoners.

## AMNESTY OR PUBLIC RELATIONS?

In line with efforts to improve its public image, the military dictatorship recently declared an "amnesty" for political prisoners and the end of the State of Siege. While on the surface these measures would seem to indicate a relaxation of the repression, a closer look shows that they are little more than public relations maneuvers.

In announcing the amnesty on April 19, the Junta stated that all prisoners held for violating State of Siege laws would be released. Excluded are those who have already been sentenced, those accused of common crimes, and those currently undergoing trials. How many of Chile's more than 4,000 political prisoners will be affected by this decree? This is quite unclear, but the dictatorship claims that 224 are eligible to be released, on the condition they leave the country. No mention is made of the 2,000 people

who disappeared after being arrested, many of whom are believed to be held in secret prisons. One must ask why there is even a need for an amnesty decree when the dictatorship claimed two years ago that there were no more political prisoners in Chile.

The State of Siege, which had been in effect since the coup, was officially ended on March 10. The State of Emergency—also declared on the day of the coup—remains in effect, however. Emergency rule differs only slightly from the State of Siege—the President can order detentions for up to five days in places not recognized as jails, arrests can be made by specialized agencies, and people can be expelled from the country. The ban on political organizations, the denial of trade union rights and military control of the educational system remains unchanged.

Ending the State of Siege will probably mean fewer trials by military tribunals. The dictatorship will no doubt continue to increase its practice of charging political prisoners with common crimes and trying them in civilian courts. While this may result in lighter sentences, it also makes it extremely difficult to identify who is a political prisoner, and is yet another way to hide continuing political arrests.

These measures are part of the dictatorship's efforts to clean up its image in order to attract foreign loans and investment. While they represent no real change in repressive policies, they do show that the dictatorship is under strong international pressure. Our role now is to keep maximum pressure on the dictatorship to demand the recognition of disappeared prisoners and the release of all political prisoners in Chile.

# Native Americans PELTIER FIGHTS FBI FRAME-UP

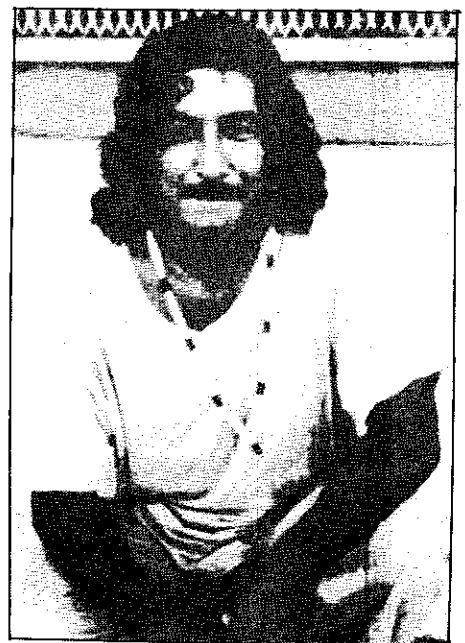
Leonard Peltier, a 32-year old Chipewa-Sioux from Grand Forks, N.D., has been an activist in the American Indian Movement for many years. Peltier was on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota on June 26, 1975 when 100 armed FBI agents entered it to prevent opposition to the U.S. government's sale of one-eighth of the Pine Ridge land (which contains one of the world's largest uranium deposits). Federal gunfire killed one Indian man, and two FBI agents were found shot to death. Despite an intense search for the alleged killers, no one was ever found or accused. Peltier and three other AIM activists were later charged with "aiding and abetting" in the deaths. Charges were dropped against one defendant and two were acquitted, with the jury agreeing that the Federal government had indeed attacked the reservation and that the deaths of the agents were acts of self defense.

The government, however, moved Peltier's trial to Fargo, N.D. with a judge who cooperated fully with the Federal prosecution. Peltier was convicted and given two life sentences based on an FBI agent's testimony that he recognized Peltier a half mile away through his rifle telescope. Another government witness who had signed statements implicating Peltier later testified *with the jury absent* that she had been terrorized by the FBI and that the statements were false. The judge ruled her retraction unbelievable and would not let the jury hear it.

An appeal for a new trial has been heard by the Circuit Court of Appeals but no decision has been reached. Pressure is needed to force the Justice Dept. to release Peltier on bail, order a new trial and end government harrassment of AIM members.

The Peltier case is an important one, not only as another example of an FBI frame up, but because it raises the question of the fundamental right of Native Americans to sovereignty and self-determination—to defend themselves against the U.S. government's attempt to steal their lands and destroy them. In this attempt, the U.S. and Chilean governments are pursuing similar policies against native people.

The repression against Native Americans continues even inside prison. Peltier writes about the treatment of other Native Americans at Marion Federal Penitentiary: "... Alfred Smith is in the dreaded Control Unit... (which) has about 70 sealed-tomb tiger cages, many of them constructed with closed steel fronts so that they are virtually sound-proof. These are sensory deprivation chambers... Brothers are sent to these cages from all over the federal system for experiments in brain tampering. Hiller Hays has been on dead-lock in the Control Unit for 5½ years... you are in the cage 23½ hours of every day. Alone. Men go mad. Some commit suicide. Others only mutilate themselves. The prisoners in the Control Unit have filed a



lawsuit in federal court to see if the judge will think these terms of confinement are unconstitutional." (The court ruled in favor of the suit.—Ed.)

Despite the false conviction and inhuman conditions in prison, Peltier continues to fight for his freedom and the freedom of all Indian people: "The U.S. thinks they can stop our movement by locking us in a cell, but they are wrong. We will resist with our lives the outright murders, the theft of our lands, the forced sterilizations—we will have justice rather than more lies, deceit, and broken treaties. We will continue to fight for complete sovereignty—nothing less than Nationhood—and so long as Mother Earth provides and the Great Spirit guides there is not a power on earth that can stop us!"

## SAMPLE LETTERS

**Sr. Sergio Fernandez**  
Ministerio del Interior  
Edificio Diego Portales  
Santiago, Chile

*The situation of the Mapuche Indians in Chile is a matter of concern for everyone who values freedom and human dignity. I am particularly concerned about two Mapuches who have been imprisoned by your government: Abel Paliaman Tenoria, a campesino who has disappeared; and Ramon Erminio Palil Nahuelquin, sentenced to 7 years and eligible for release under Decree Law 504.*

*Not only are these two prisoners deprived of their freedom, but your government is carrying out a genocidal policy against the Mapuche by taking away their land. Respecting human rights means freeing these, and all political prisoners, and ending all forms of repression against the Mapuche.*

*(Copies or similar letters can be sent to: Sr. Ricardo Martin Diaz, Comision de Indultos, Agustinas 1401, Santiago, Chile; and Ambador Jorge Cauas, Chilean Embassy, 1736 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington DC 20036.)*

**Mr. George Lister**  
Special Assistant for Human Rights & Inter-American Affairs  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

*I am writing concerning the situation of two Mapuche prisoners in Chile: Abel Paliaman Tenorio, campesino, who has disappeared; and Ramon Erminio Palil Nahuelquin, who was sentenced to 7 years and has been denied release although he has a visa to Canada.*

*I urge you to pressure the Chilean government to release these and all political prisoners. Until all political prisoners are released, and the 2,000 people who have disappeared are accounted for, the Chilean dictatorship's statements about "amnesty" have no meaning.*

*(Copies can be sent to: Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, at the same address and to your local congressional representatives.)*

**Mr. Griffin Bell**  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C.

*I protest the imprisonment of Leonard Peltier, a Native American who has been falsely convicted as part of an FBI campaign of harrassment of the American Indian Movement. I demand that Mr. Peltier be released immediately on bail, that he be given a new trial and that government activity against the American Indian Movement end.*

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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# Chilean Political Prisoners Bulletin

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Sign of Growing Resistance

## Prisoners' Families Wage 17-Day Hunger Strike

*"In 1976 my father was suddenly arrested when he was leaving for work. We were waiting for him at night, but he did not come. Then a neighbor told us he had been picked up. Since then we have not heard anything. All letters and petitions have been fruitless. My mother is working in order to support the family with five children. I decided to go on hunger strike for my father."*

—teenage participant in hunger strike.

The hunger strike by relatives of disappeared political prisoners in Chile began on May 22 in three churches and in the UNICEF office in Santiago. It was a response to the Junta's continued silence on the question of disappeared prisoners and to Pinochet's "amnesty" declaration on April 19. This "amnesty" affected only a tiny portion of Chile's 4,000 political prisoners, while exonerating Junta murderers and torturers who had been named in legal proceedings around disap-

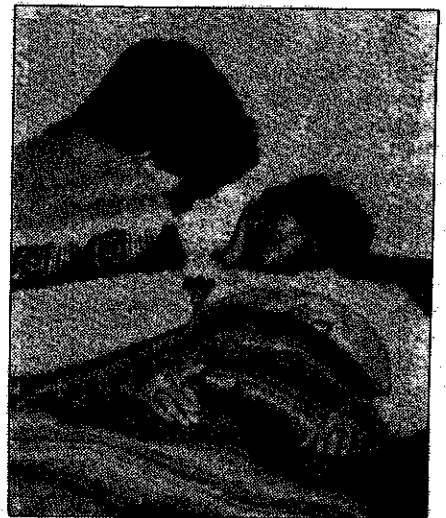
peared prisoners—closing the cases of these prisoners as well.

Under the slogan "Our lives for the truth," the strike quickly spread from the four sites in Santiago to 25 other locations throughout Chile, including a strike by 31 political prisoners at the Santiago Penitentiary; a 24-hour fast led by Pablo Neruda's widow, Matilda, at the U.S. Embassy; and a strike at the Red Cross office in Santiago.

### Wide Support for Strike

People rallied in support of the strike, bringing water and blankets to the strikers and conducting vigils and demonstrations almost nightly in working class neighborhoods. 100 women risked arrest by marching through downtown Santiago to the steps of the Supreme Court, where they deposited signs and lists of the disappeared and then quickly dispersed.

Dorothee Soelle, a German theologian who visited many of the strike sites as part of an international



*Many strikers became seriously ill; some were taken to hospital.*

delegation, described some of the support actions:

"Medical students came for a visit and delivered a declaration of solidarity, by which everyone who signed may be kicked out of school. Yet there were 1200 signatures."

"We spoke with a union leader... The hunger strike, he said, represents what the majority of the people want. This majority right now is oppressed by the government through legal methods, like abolition of civil and union rights, and through illegal methods, like banishment, expulsion into exile, arrest of workers. It is an important task of the unions within the broad movement, of which only the top is visible in the hunger strike, to spread the news. The hunger strike has lost the character of an individual and civil means of combat. 'It will go on,' one union leader said, 'until a solution is reached, which for all conscious workers can only be a political one.'"

Seventeen unions sent messages of support stating they would become



*Street demonstration in Chile during hunger strike.*

# Hunger Strike...

more active if the situation was not quickly resolved.

International support grew throughout the strike—73 support strikes were held in 23 countries with over 1000 participants (see box for U.S. activities). Diplomatic pressure came from most western countries with the notable exception of the U.S. Jimmy Carter's "concern" for human rights in Chile was expressed by accepting the credentials of the new Chilean ambassador and stating that relations between the two countries were much improved.

## Dictatorship's Response: More Lies

Pinochet refused to communicate directly with the Group of Relatives of Disappeared Prisoners. Roman Catholic Cardinal Silva Henriquez met with the Interior Minister who stated that the government would not respond on the matter until the strikes ended. The Cardinal, perhaps fearing the spread of a movement he could not control, asked the strikers to stop and announced the formation of a church commission to see that the government would respond.

On June 8 the strikers reluctantly agreed to suspend their action for a month, and vowed to continue if they received no answer.

On June 15, Interior Minister Sergio Fernandez went on national TV to clarify the government's position on

the disappeared. He justified actions by security forces as necessary to maintain peace and security in a time of "latent civil war." He claimed that the disappeared were living underground, had assumed false identities, or had been killed in clashes with security forces, and stated that the government had no information to indicate that these people were being held secretly by the authorities.

The Group of Relatives later denounced his statement, pointing out that his analysis of the current situation was in contradiction to the dictatorship's statements that order and tranquility had been restored, and asked how they were to believe his explanation of the fate of their relatives when the vast majority had been arrested by security forces *in front of witnesses*. They stated that they will not accept "justifications, global answers, nor juridical formulas which only obstruct the path to a serious, responsible and truthful answer."

## Strike: Sign of Growing Resistance

While the strikers' demand to know once and for all the fate of their relatives was not met, the hunger strike marks an important stage in the Chilean people's struggle against the dictatorship. Dorothee Solle commented, "The political meaning of the hunger strike has to be seen in a double context. On the one hand, in the context of the increasing weak-



Child wears photograph of her disappeared father.

ness, insecurity and quarrels within the Junta staff; on the other, in the context of the engagement of the people in resistance, which today is expressed more publicly and consciously than a year ago."

"...the climate has changed. The Junta today could not afford to kidnap the hunger strikers. This does not mean that the terrorism of the government has come to an end, yet the strike stands as a symbol of the more broadly growing and more and more currently broad resistance. The Junta cannot just act as it wants, but is hesitant out of a certain weakness to make decisions. It is obvious that the cases of the disappeared cannot be solved as long as the military regime exists."

The issue of disappeared prisoners will no doubt remain a focal point of anti-Junta activities in Chile. We can support this struggle by continuing to keep maximum pressure on the Junta.

## Free All Prisoners Now!

Lenin Diaz Silva was kidnapped from the home of his father-in-law on May 9, 1976. He was 31 years old at the time and is the former director of the "La Exotica" mine. His wife participated in the hunger strike.

Miriam Avila Maldonado is a recognized political prisoner who is being held at the Women's Correctional House in Santiago. She was eligible for release under the dictatorship's Decree Law 504, which allows prisoners' sentences to be commuted for exile. Although her application for commutation was approved and she has a visa for Switzerland, she has not been released and her name was not included among those who were released in the recent amnesty.

Sample letters will be found on page 3.



Chilean refugees at support hunger strike in NYC

Chilean refugees and members of the solidarity movement in the U.S. organized support hunger strikes in 18 different cities. Declarations of support were made by the National Council of Churches, trade unions, community groups and local churches. Demonstrations in front of Chilean consulates were held in a

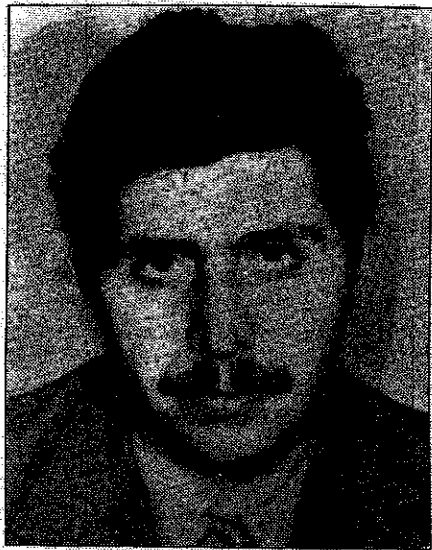
number of cities, some drawing hundreds of people.

Participants in the Prisoner Support Network responded to phone calls by sending hundreds of telegrams and letters. This support was a concrete aid to the hunger strike and helped insure the safety of the strikers.

# Your Letters Help Free Prisoners

June marked the first anniversary of the Chilean Political Prisoners Bulletin (PPB). Since its initiation a year ago, the Bulletin has grown in size and in distribution. Five thousand copies are regularly distributed by NICH chapters and other solidarity groups. Over 1500 individuals across the country have joined the Prisoner Support Network, committing themselves to write one letter a month on behalf of the prisoners whose cases are presented in the Bulletin.

People often ask us if the letters they write are effective. The answer is, very simply, YES! In the past year, for example, several prisoners whose cases appeared in the Bulletin have been released:



Carlos Contreras Maluje remains disappeared

● Five of the 11 workers and supporters of the Sol Naciente Day Care Center (Aug. '77 PPB) have been released on bail.

● Jorge Palma, arrested for participation in the Group of Relatives of Disappeared Prisoners, has been released on bail; and Arturo Villavela, leader of the MIR, was released and exiled for Norway. (Dec. '77 PPB)

● Of three women who disappeared in raids following the January plebiscite (Apr. '78 PPB), Bernarda Nubia's arrest has been acknowledged by the authorities, Maria Sepulveda remains disappeared, and Haydee Palma was dumped by Chilean intelligence at the Peruvian border with no ID and in a drugged condition. She was detained by Peruvian authorities but through U.N. intervention received political asylum from Cuba. (This was not the first time the Chilean authorities have used this tactic to cover up disappearances.)

We are still awaiting updated information on several other prisoners.

While it is difficult to determine to what extent our letters have directly influenced the release of these prisoners, we do know that consistent pressure has played a major role in winning the freedom of many prisoners and in making it almost impossible for the dictatorship to continue its practice of disappearances.

While the dictatorship has not accounted for the more than 2,500 disappeared prisoners, ongoing pressure has made the issue of the disappeared a threat to the Pinochet regime, and has helped people in Chile to carry out protest actions such as the recent hunger strike.



Haydee Palma Donoso

Even in the case of disappeared prisoners, letters sometimes lead to dramatic results. Some time ago, a North American woman wrote a letter concerning a disappeared resistance leader to a middle-level Chilean judge. The judge answered, stating the prisoner's whereabouts. The woman gave the letter to a solidarity group which in turn made it public and sent copies to international human rights groups. With such evidence, the dictatorship had no choice but to officially acknowledge the detention and eventually release the prisoner.

So, while you may wonder about exactly what effect your letter has, remember that your letter is one of hundreds that reach Chilean and U.S. authorities each month. Your efforts, combined with those of many other people in the U.S. and internationally, are a concrete and important support to the popular resistance movement in Chile. We hope that you will continue to write letters and hope that you will ask your friends to participate in this project as well.

## SAMPLE LETTERS

Sr. Sergio Fernandez  
Ministerio del Interior  
Edificio Diego Portales  
Santiago, Chile

*I support the actions of relatives of disappeared prisoners who recently conducted a hunger strike. Your response that the Chilean government knows nothing about them is an outright lie.*

*I find it hard to believe that you know nothing about Sr. Lenin Diaz Silva (ID #53979-Zocopilla), who was taken away by DINA agents on May 9, 1976. Why don't you search the jails and concentration camps for him?*

*It's not only the disappeared you lie about. What about all the prisoners who did not receive amnesty, like Miriam Avila Maldonado. She is being held at the Casa Correccional. Although her application for commutation was approved and she has a visa for Switzerland, she has not been released.*

*Until these prisoners, and all political prisoners in Chile are accounted for and released, you statements about the improved situation in Chile are really unbelievable.*

*(Copies or similar letters can be sent to: Chilean Embassy, 1736 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.)*

President Jimmy Carter  
White House  
Washington, DC

*Since becoming President you have spoken a lot about respect for human rights. In the midst of a popularly supported hunger strike by relatives of disappeared prisoners in Chile, you welcomed the new Chilean ambassador and made no mention of the fact that 2,500 political prisoners remain unaccounted for.*

*I am particularly concerned about Mr. Lenin Silva Diaz (ID #53799-Zocopilla), who was arrested by the DINA May 9, 1976. The arrest was witnessed by relatives.*

*I also believe that the dictatorship's recent amnesty declaration only applies to a small number of prisoners. Miriam Avila Maldonado remains incarcerated in the Women's Correctional House in Santiago although her application for commutation of sentence was approved and she has a visa for Switzerland.*

*You should put pressure on the Chilean government to free these individuals and all political prisoners in Chile.*

*(Copies or similar letters can be sent to your local senators and representatives.)*

## About the Bulletin

The Chilean Political Prisoners Bulletin is published bi-monthly and is sent to participants in the Prisoner Support Network. Participants in this network are individuals who express their solidarity with the Chilean people's struggle against the military dictatorship by writing at least one letter a month on the prisoners' cases presented in this Bulletin. Such letter-writing campaigns provide a consistent flow of pressure on both the Chilean and U.S. governments and have been effective in winning the release of numerous political prisoners.

This Bulletin is distributed free. We encourage everyone receiving it to contribute whatever they can to help cover costs.

To become part of this network, send the coupon below to your nearest NICH chapter or affiliate group. Organizations which would like to receive multiple copies of this Bulletin for distribution should write to New York NICH.

NICH also publishes a bi-monthly newspaper, the CHILE NEWSLETTER, which contains news and analysis of the situation in Chile and other Latin American countries. Subscriptions are \$5 per year (\$3 low income).

Clip and mail to your nearest NICH chapter or affiliate group.

- I want to participate in the Prisoner Support Network and will write at least one letter a month.
- Please place my name on your mailing list.
- I am interested in adopting a prisoner. Please contact me.
- Enclosed is \$5 (\$3) for a subscription to the Chile Newsletter.
- Enclosed is a contribution to help pay for the Bulletin.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Prisoner Adoption Program

The Chilean Political Prisoner Adoption Program is a project in which individuals work for the release of political prisoners by writing letters of inquiry and protest to government officials in Chile and the U.S., elected representatives, and international agencies. This type of "mini-campaign" has proven to be an effective way to direct pressure for the release of an individual prisoner to a wide spectrum of officials. In many cases it is also possible to correspond directly with a prisoner or his/her family, which is an important way of providing moral support. While immediate results are not often seen, the accumulated pressure over a period of time often leads to the freedom of a prisoner.

We have prepared a methodology packet for this program which includes background information, guidelines for letter writing, addresses and sample letters, as well as additional actions which can be taken.

In adopting a prisoner, you are asked to write a minimum of two letters a month, more if possible. A person from NICH or other organizations participating in this program will keep in contact with you to see if you have received responses to your letters and to give suggestions for follow-up.

If you are interested in participating in this program, please check the appropriate box on the coupon on page 4 and send it to NICH or an affiliate group.

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