

## A detailed reflection of my neighbourhood

May 07 F

Una detallada Reflexión de mi barrio

### Part 2

#### **Tizona** (An experience of work in a factory of the barrio)

When Popular Unity came to power in Chile in 1970, Carlos was an **obrero** (a worker) at Tizona, the biggest guitar factory in Chile, operating at no. 1053 Esperanza Street. The following are his memories of these very interesting years.

Tizona was a guitar factory employing, by the beginning of the 1970s, about 35 people, several of whom were from Esperanza Street. Although the factory was small in terms of people employed, it was by then the biggest guitar factory in Chile in terms of the number of guitars being produced. Carlos worked there from 1967 until March 1973 and, in his view, these were six long, happy years full of great experiences in a country which have decided in 1970, through the ballot box, to work to become a socialist country under the leadership of Salvador Allende.

Tizona, in the 1970s, was organised around a board of management led by Don Leonardo Rodríguez Dummond, the founder of the firm. He was assisted by his younger brother Beto, who had an unclear role within the company, and Hernán Gajardo, the **gerente** (financial director) in charge of Tizona's finances. He was Tizona's accountant and responsible for preparing people's contracts. There were other people involved, including a young man who acted as a secretary and was responsible for the paper work but, according to Carlos, perhaps the most important person was Patricio Valenzuela the shop floor manager (**el jefe**). He was the one in charge of the production, allocation of work and the connection between the workforce and the board of management. Pato, as he was known to all the workers, was also a good craftsman, a great footballer, and the person who had, some time in the 1960s, helped Don Leonardo to set up Tizona in a tiny room in one of the many cotes of Esperanza Street, close to Mapocho Street. Tizona did not have a Union.

In the beginning, the guitars were made completely by hand by Don Leonardo and Pato Valenzuela. As the two craftsmen became more successful, more people began to be employed and a new space was needed. Some time during the 1960s, Tizona moved to an old building in Esperanza Street, which used to be the famous **Sindicato de Panaderos** (the Bread-makers' Union). When Carlos was a youngster, he and his friends went to two separate meetings there to listen to speeches by two former presidents of Chile - Jorge Alessandri and Salvador Allende – both seeking the support of the Bread-makers' Union. When Carlos was first employed at Tizona in 1967, there were few people and they were only able to make between eight and ten guitars a day. The guitars then were made bit by bit, by different people. Each guitar was given an entry in a book in the form of a date, a type and a reference number. Little by little, more people were employed and suddenly, it seemed, there were about 35 people. As more people were employed, output also increased through the implementation of new production methods, involving the introduction of machines to

cut and bend pieces of wood of different sizes and a large, rectangular steel container in which long pieces of timber could be dried at a certain temperature. *“The timber was Oregon pine, originally used as beams in the old houses of the towns and cities of Chile. Tizona bought these timbers when the old houses were demolished. Oregon pine was brought to Chile on their return journeys by the cargo ships that used to take the salitre (nitrate) to the United States.”*

**El maestro Peñailillo** was the person responsible for inventing machines to increase production. He was a very pleasant, and very intelligent man who worked at Tizona as a part-timer, as he was in fact a civil engineer working for the Chilean Airforce at Cerrillos, at that time the main airport of Santiago. This short, slightly plump, balding man, with a fringe of curly hair and a friendly smile, had managed to invent machines that were excellent for the mechanical manufacture of different guitar parts. Thanks to these machines, some workers’ tedious jobs all of a sudden became easy. These increases in production coincided with a period when people began to have more money in their pockets as a result of Allende’s economic policies.

Between January and July, Tizona was able to make 40 guitars a day. Then, from August until New Year, the factory was able to produce 50 to 60 guitars a day. During the month of September, there was a great demand for guitars because of the 18th of September, Chilean Independence Day. For some reason, during **fiestas patrias**, Chileans bought a lot of guitars. At Christmas time, there was also a great demand for guitars, always a popular present among the people. *“It was hard work. In order to meet targets, many of us had to do a lot of overtime. We used to work at times from 8 am until midnight and beyond. A lady was employed then to cook to provide us with food in the factory. We worked on Saturdays and Sundays. Overtime was paid at double rate.”*

### **Conditions of work and wages**

Carlos remembers that the conditions of work were not good. The building had no access to fresh air except via a wide entrance where the cutting of wood took place. But it was not enough for all of the old building. In general, workers had to work permanently under a cloud of dust. Safety measures were non-existent. It was up to the worker to ensure his own safety and many accidents happened. *“I remember one day hearing an horrific screaming. We soon discovered that **El huaso** Casas, one of the workers, had cut off one of his fingers when he was using the electric saw”.* Casas ended up in hospital only to return to work at the factory a few days later, as if nothing had happened. In Chile, there had never existed a culture of safety to protect the well being of working people. *“Yes... in Esperanza Street there was a **fábrica** specialising in building containers for transporting liquid. Here too, Miguel, a guy in our barrio, lost one of his hands, when one of these heavy containers fell on top of it. Miguel ended up with a rubber hand”.* Tizona was a very ugly place to work in and full of rats. Wages were not good either and, as a result, people had to do plenty of overtime. However, Don Leonardo compensated his workers by allowing them to build in his factory, and at a very low cost, things useful for their houses, like tables, chairs etc. Pato was also very good, as he would allow people to come to the factory in their spare time to make things. *“I could not build anything, but I used to get new guitars at a very good rate so that I could sell them for a profit. These were guitars which were perfect from a musical point of view but perhaps had a small fault in the paintwork.”*

### **Holidays arrangements - Tizona style**

During the summer, most workers had their holidays paid and, on top of that, Don Leonardo and Pato organised, for all the workers and their families, 15 days of leisure time at a holiday resort. The Tizona workers would build little, pre-fabricated, wooden huts in the factory, which could then be assembled at the beach. Tizona also provided the transport to take the people, the pre-fabricated huts and the food all the way from Santiago to the beach (about 110 kms. away). The food stocks, including live animals, such as chickens and pigs, eggs, fruit and vegetables were bought by Tizona at the nearest small town to the beach. In addition, a lady was paid to cook for all the people. Carlos still has a lot of warm feeling for Don Leonardo Rodríguez who had a nice attitude towards his workers in this respect. *“Don Leonardo, who, I believe, died young, gave me, as a present, an wonderful concert guitar made especially for me by el guatón Bastía, a very good craftsman and a fellow worker of mine. This guitar is still in my possession, and the last time that I played it in public was at Villa Ada in Rome in July, 2001, when I accompanied my Chilean friend, singer-songwriter, and former winner of the Viña Festival, Titín Molina.”*

### **How Carlos’s wages were spent**

Carlos was paid on a Friday and, as soon as he left the factory, he had to start paying his creditors, usually standing waiting at the entrance of Tizona. Firstly, he had to pay the agreed weekly share of money to the common fund organised by **el viejo Edmundo**. This was a well-planned savings scheme in which a worker would receive, on a specified date, all the money paid in that week by all the members involved in the scheme. Only trusted workers were admitted into the savings scheme. There were about 25 of them, out of 35 employees. The system worked as follows: each worker would put into the fund an agreed sum of money each week. Edmundo would then put 25 numbers into a box. Each number would correspond to a week and a **sorteo** (a draw) would then take place to decide which week a participant would receive the money of the rest of the participants. Number ‘1’ was withheld from the draw because this number corresponded to the first week of the saving scheme and was, by tradition, allocated to **el viejo Edmundo**, the organiser. *“It was nice to know that, in a specific week, I could count on a specific amount of money. El viejo Edmundo would always receive the first available fund as a reward for volunteering to stay every Friday until late to collect the members’ money. Because it was always a large sum which I received, I always allocated it to buying important things for my home, a television set, a sewing machine, a fridge, etc. However, each participant knew that it was very desirable to get the first numbers out of the box because, if someone had drawn, say, no. 25, this person would have to wait 25 weeks before he could receive any money. This would be fine if inflation was under control but, in the case of Chile, this was never achieved and the Government of Allende was no exception to the rule. In Allende’s time, there was inflation. In fact, hipper inflation”*

Secondly, several people at Tizona, including Carlos, bought shoes, shirts, trousers and books (encyclopaedias) on credit (**comprar a credito** or **comprar con facilidades**). These items, too, had to be paid to the creditors waiting at the entrance of Tizona. Thirdly, on his way home, Carlos would go straight to pay the lady who provided him, and many other Tizona workers, with lunch from Monday to Friday (**la pensión**). Fourthly, Carlos had to go to a shop and buy his mother some sweets

and then give her some money for the week, as a contribution to her own subsistence. Fifthly, from his mother's home, he would go to his own home to pay his weekly rent . *"I rented a room from Pato Gaete's mother in an old house at 2515 San Pablo Street."* . Finally, Carlos had to pay Clara, the person who, on a regular basis washed and ironed his clothes. Clara was a **lavandera** (laundress), a common job in the barrios of Chile. The work was carried out by hand. Clara , a gentle woman, earned a living in the barrio by washing other people's clothes. She was married to Nano, a wonderful barrio footballer who could easily have played professional football with Palestino, a team belonging to the rich Arab Community in Santiago. He did not do so because he was unable to stop drinking and died young, leaving his wife and children. According to Carlos, the money earned in a hard week's work was spent in a few hours. *"It was always very hard to learn a living. At times, I did not even have money to invite a girl to the cinema at the weekend. I always felt embarrassed about this because, in those days, men were expected to pay when inviting a woman out. This was a typical point of discussion in our Catholic group"*.

### **Human relationships among the 'compañeros de trabajo' (work-mates).**

The experience at Tizona was really good, especially from the point of view of human relationships. *" Oh yes...we worked very hard at Tizona; however, I have very good memories of the place, of my bosses and my **compañeros de trabajo**', each with different characteristics, but all of whom I can characterise as lovely individuals. They were, in my view, excellent people. Some of them had some education; others, like myself, had just managed to finish primary school, but all of us formed a unit which was able to work very hard, responsibly and in friendship"*. People at the factory played a lot of football and many **asados** (barbecues), with a lot of singing and guitar playing, were organised in the **patios** of the homes of some of the workers. Famous football games at Tizona were the ones between the single men and the married men (**partidos de fútbol de solteros contra los casados.**)

*" I loved these games although we, the **solteros**, always were the losers against the team of the **casados** led by **el huaso Casas** and **el Pato**. (**Huaso**, symbol of "Chilenidad", the Chilean cowboy, a person from the Chilean countryside. **Pato** = duck, also short for Patricio)"*

The workers at Tizona were of different ages. Some were young, others not so young, and anyone of a certain age in Tizona was referred to as **el viejo**. We have seen that Edmundo Alvarez was known as **el viejo Edmundo** ("Old Edmundo"). There was also **el viejo Poblete** another craftsman, a guitar maker. He was a tall man with a very sharp sense of humour. (**bueno pa' la talla**), the type of person you want to have in any social gathering. He taught Carlos the following song :

*Me pediste un beso y te lo dí,  
me pediste amor y te lo dí,  
pero matrimonio no te puedo dar,  
oh nana, oh nanaa.  
Oh Nanaa, matrimonio no te puedo dar,  
por que no me gusta trabajar, oh nanaa, oh Nanaa aaa..*

“You asked me to give you a kiss and I gave you one, You wanted me to give you love and I gave you love, oh Nanaa, I cannot marry you however, because I hate working... oh! Nanaaa.!”

**El viejo** Edmundo, like **el viejo** Poblete, was also very witty with, perhaps, a slightly more refined sense of humour. He was a good talker, a socialist in political terms, and a good footballer like Poblete. *“With **el viejo** Edmundo we used to exchange works of literature and points of view on the present political situation in Chile, as the people of our country were currently involved in a socialist experiment led by Salvador Allende who, several years before, had sat only a few steps away from where we were working. When Allende was elected, we used to discuss, as we worked, the political situation which was full of intrigue, surprises, hope and fear. Edmundo and I used to read **El Clarín**, the working class tabloid, printed in bright red colours. This so-called **periódico del Pueblo** (“People’s paper”), was very supportive of the Allende government.”*

Carlos worked in an open space in an elevation not far from the ceiling and just in front of **el viejo** Edmundo’s work-bench, along with two other interesting people, each of whom had his own work-bench on which to place the guitars. This room was the so-called “Finishing Section”, the end of the production line. Here, among various delicate tasks, the guitar bridge, the machine heads and the strings had to be put on the guitars. This job was done by Carlos, José Lazo and another Carlos, known as “Carlitos” Duran. The three of them had to organise themselves to produce, at the end of the day, the musical product which bore the imprint “**Guitarras Tizona**”. This job was done while listening, on a small radio, to a variety of programmes, such as **Chile ríe y canta** “Chile Laughs and Sings”, conducted by Rene Largos Farias. José Lazo was the one who put the bridge on the guitar, a job that had to be done extremely accurately, so that a conscientious guitar player who wanted to be able put his fingers on the finger board at the right place to find the exact chord could do so. Carlos’s job was to put on the machine head and the strings. *“I used to put the strings on 40 guitars in just two hours. This was achieved thanks to a clever tool that maestro Peñailillo had made for me to speed up my task and to make my job easier”.*

José Lazo was a very gentle individual of about Carlos’s age, who, unlike Carlos and Carlitos Duran, had a good education and expected one day to go to university. José was a socialist, a good talker and an inspiration for Carlos in thinking about human behaviour. He was an ‘intellectual worker’ with the knowledge to make people think. *“With José we used to have fun trying to calculate, while working, Tizona’s expenditure and income in order to relate that to our poor wages. In our conclusions, Don Leonardo and Pato came out well...but Don Leonardo’s brother Beto and Gajardo, the accountant, came out as the villains, promoting various forms of exploitation in the factory. In fact, one day we went with José to the office to ask for a wage rise. We pointed out the economic situation of Tizona and its relationship with our wages. Beto and Gajardo convinced us that we were wrong. We miserably failed in front of them because we did not put our case strongly. Several months later we went back to the office again, this time with figures in our hands, a little research and full of conviction. The three of us were given a pay rise”.*

Carlitos Duran was the other member of the team of three in the Finishing Section. He was the same age as Carlos and, like Carlos, lived in the 3rd citè of the Chiflón. He was famous in the barrio and at Tizona because he was a great football player and,

since he was not a paragon of cleanliness, he was nicknamed : **El Capitán Piñen**. Carlitos's jobs in the Finishing Section were varied and he, too, performed responsible tasks. Carlitos, apart from playing football, and working at Tizona was the one who could not make it into work on a Monday, Monday being recovery day after a weekend of drinking and adventures on the dance-floors of cafes, restaurants or brothels **de mala muerte** (with a bad reputation). *“He was the one who, in the course of our work, used to tell José and me about his dangerous Saturday night adventures. Carlitos was a protagonist in many fights and yet his appearance to us was of an easy-going guy. We tended to assume that he was never involved in anything really serious, otherwise we could not have counted on him within our Section. We always tried very hard to persuade him to stop getting into trouble.”* Carlos also has good memories of other people at Tizona, including **Chorito Esteban**, who was a hard-working, introverted **Mapuche** man. Carlos also remembers another Carlos known as **“Carlitos ñaja ñaja”** because of his way of speaking and Manuel Ojeda, known to all as **‘El presa ‘e ponche’**, the man in charge of painting the guitars. He remembers with affection Ramón who had been a miner in the North of Chile and the hunchbacked man known to all as **el Chico Espinola**, an **evangelico** who belonged to the Pentecostal Church. He did office work and also tuned the guitars. He played the guitar in his church and taught Carlos some new guitar chords. He was great fun and always used to shout to Carlos when there was a telephone call for him:  
**“ Arredondoooooooo.....Telefonoooooooo !!!”**

### **What type of years were they while Carlos was working at Tizona? A brief account.**

The years between 1967 and 1973 are those in which Carlos began the difficult journey towards adulthood and the years in which Chile began the difficult journey towards hope and disaster. These are the happy years when he mixed with different groups of people like the Catholic Youth Clubs, the J.O.C. (**Juventud Obrera Católica**), influenced by Boccaccio, and played a lot of football. This was also the time when he became a secondary student, taking evening classes at the **Liceo Vespertino** Francisco Miranda, thanks to the educational reforms introduced by the Eduardo Frei Montalva Administration (1964-1970). This, too, was the time when Carlos began to have his first girlfriends and to fall in love for the first time in a serious way. He remembers Clara (**la china**), from the Chiflón, as the first person he fell in love with but then he remembers other girls also: Ana María, Marta and Juanita. He also began to read a lot and to feel a real sense of the world surrounding him. It was a time of great events – and Carlos remembers many of the advances in Science then being made : for example, in the year in which he began to work at Tizona, Dr Christian Barnard performed the first human heart transplant operation. In the same year, Che Guevara was assassinated in Bolivia and millions of Chileans and Latin-Americans paid their respects to his memory. In 1968, Czechoslovakia was invaded by Soviet troops and this was also the year when France rebelled. Twelve million French workers were on strike, 122 factories occupied and a great student revolt took place. In this year of 1968, a massacre of students took place in **La Plaza de las tres Culturas** in Mexico City. In 1969, while two citizens of the United States arrived uninvited on the moon , Chilean

university students occupied their universities, some priests occupied their churches, and women began to use the pill to avoid pregnancy. This was also the era of the Beatles and Twiggy.

*“Beatles music had a great impact on Chilean culture. The Chilean Ministry of Education, for example, began to recommend to all schools that students should not have long hair. It was not acceptable on the grounds of decency and hygiene”.* In 1970, Allende became President of Chile. The great poet, Pablo Neruda, was appointed Chilean ambassador to France. In 1971, as the Tizona workers were busy at their work-benches, they received the wonderful news that Neruda, the People’s Poet, had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature - the second Nobel Prize in Chilean history. This was also the year in which Fidel Castro paid a long and controversial visit to Chile. *“During the month of November, I asked Pato for permission to go to my home as I wanted to see Fidel, who was going to pass along the very street where I was living. I saw him, together with Allende, from the terrace of my home, from where I could also see thousands of people waving at them”.* During 1971, Carlos, Carlitos Duran, José and Edmundo also discussed the controversial activities in Bolivia of the so-called “U.S. Peace Corps”, whose work in that country involved sterilising Indian women without their consent. This U.S. Organisation was consequently expelled from the country. It was also about this time that Carlos and his friend **Chico Luis**, also from the barrio Esperanza, travelled, during their February holidays, to Peru - their first ever trip outside Chile. This was a wonderful learning experience. They met Victor Hugo, who had previously visited the barrio Esperanza in Santiago at the invitation of **el pelao Orrego** (“Baldy” Orrego), a popular fellow, who was married to Norma, at the time one of the most beautiful women in the barrio Esperanza. She was the sister of Chamelo, Casilda, and Jorge known as **el pilla la bala** (“Pinch-the-ball”), as he was so fast on the football pitch : *“El pelao Orrego was a photographic technician at Fernández Lithography and the son of Señora Pipa, a lady who was always very good to me when I was a little kid.”* Lima, the old capital of the Spanish Empire in South America, and Perù, the home of so many fascinating past civilisations, of which The Incas were only one, enchanted Carlos and **Chico**. In addition, they greatly enjoyed Peruvian food and the Peruvian people. They met Victor’s family, who turned out to be wonderful. *“As a present, I took them a Tizona guitar and my songs. The Huapaya family was made up of beautiful women and it was this family that, when the coup took place in Chile, hastened to invite me to their country in order to be safe. They paid for my journey from Santiago to Lima by Braniff Airways on the 4th of January, 1974. I stayed with them for a month and a half. As soon as I began to work in Glasgow, by December of that year, I made sure I paid them back their money.”* In October of 1972, came the news that a Uruguayan plane carrying young middle-class Uruguayan rugby players had come down in the Andes Mountains on a flight from Uruguay to Chile. Nobody knew what had happened to the airliner and its occupants. Then, two months and ten days later, some of these Uruguayans were found alive by a Chilean peasant who raised the alarm and the fantastic news was announced to the whole world. They had, however, to explain to the world as best they could that, in order to survive in the mountains, they had had to resort to acts of cannibalism. 1972 was also the year in which ‘The Americans’ began to withdraw from Vietnam, after committing so many atrocities there over a long period.

### **Great excitement.....**

At Tizona, it was a time of great excitement, as it was for the whole of the Chilean working class, since a lot of effort was being put into building a new Chile – this time based on socialist ideals, as opposed to capitalist ideas and values. The thinking of the time was that Socialist policies could bring better opportunities to millions who, for centuries, had had none. Great excitement existed, too, because Chileans began to delve into their own culture in order to assess, or re-assess, their sense of identity, the revaluation of their history and their place in the world. *“It was as if we all knew we were Chileans, but not all of us were certain how to verbalise our Chilean-ness to our best advantage. We had seen how Governments of the past had given away our resources cheaply to American companies. Few Chileans knew Chilean history and the value of understanding it properly. All they knew was a romanticised history of the country, which suited the interest of the powerful very well. On the other hand, few people valued Chilean culture and the ability of Chilean artists was always questioned”*.

Everything at this period was intermingled with some very important experiments in music, theatre and film making. Great works of literature from all over the world were printed at very low cost. Important sectors of the Catholic Church also took part in this huge cultural movement. The Chilean people loved it and, along with listening to the music of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, etc., they also became enthusiasts for the ‘new music’, referred to as **la nueva canción Chilena**, being created at that time, some of whose main exponents were Victor Jara, Tito Fernández, the Inti Illimani and the Quilapayun. The music and the cultural work of the great Violeta Parra began to be considered very seriously. Chilean film-makers, such as the acclaimed Raúl Ruiz, today working in France, began to produce new and interesting films influenced by Italian Neo-realism, which, according to Rossellini, represented a moral position from which to look the world. It was, in fact, a time to look at the world from new perspectives and to search for new ways to achieve happiness and fulfilment for all. It was a time to look into Chilean traditions and their background. The seeds were planted in this period for a multiracial discussion of the cultural and social conflict between the European and the indigenous elements of Chilean society. The European, as is well known, had always dominated the indigenous elements. Chile, therefore, became more aware of its ethnic heritage. *“In this sense, we can say that Allende’s government was, in a way, an enthusiastically nationalistic one. Sadly, it was all in vain because the **chilenismo** of the Chilean Army, with the help of foreign torturers and ideologues, ended up killing their fellow Chileans on a large scale. Even Chilean soldiers who refused to kill were themselves tortured and killed in an atrocious manner, as happened to Carlos Pratt, the General-in-Chief of the Army at the time of Allende”*.

This was a period in which Chile went through a real revolution and every Chilean, about 11 million of them at the time, was in one way or another involved in political discussion, to a greater or lesser degree. People from all over the world came to see and experience for themselves the first elected Socialist government in the world. Chilean patriotism at the time was restrained and Chileans embraced the idea of being Latin-American in spirit and in common history, and accepted the existence of that other world, the so-called Communist bloc, so hated by the Capitalist bloc. Everything in the international arena became relevant to Chileans.

This is also the time when Carlos and many of his friends at Tizona and in the barrio Esperanza went to huge political rallies organised by the left. It was the time

of many left-wing political slogans like : **Momio escucha , te vamos a sacar la chucha. Wi wi !! in Francès, yes yes !! en Inglès, piano, piano en italiano, momio mierda en Castellano !! Crear, crear Poder popular !! Crear, crear Poder popular !! El pueblo Unido Jamás sera Vencido !! El pueblo Unido Jamás sera Vencido!!**

(“The People United will never be defeated!”). It was the time when Chilean society, and the community of the barrio, began to be divided into two clear camps: **la izquierda y la derecha** (the Left and the Right). The poor of the barrios began, with good reason, for the first time in their lives to have some hope in the future. *“I felt then that my dignity as a human being was beginning to be restored by providing me, and many in my barrio, with the basics to succeed in life: that is, better opportunities to achieve a better quality of life, including education for all.”* Contrary to all Western argument, freedom of the press was at its greatest during the Allende government and a close look at the newspapers of the 1970s will confirm this. *“El viejo Edmundo used to say to me: **Estos huevones** of the right-wing press under Allende are enjoying beautiful spring days (**hermosos días primaverales**).”* It was a time when the right-wing press could print whatever it wished, including downright lies. We can readily contrast this state of affairs with the dictatorship of Pinochet when the press was violently suppressed. This was also the time when Carlos used to entertain his friends at night by playing his guitar. Sundays were also great days, spent playing a lot of football with his pals in the famous dirt football pitches (**canchas de tierra**), known as **las canchas de Cachuping**, located in the **barrio Carrascal**. By then, many people in the barrios were smoking marihuana, like one of Carlos’s best friends: **el negro José**. The word ‘peace’ was in the mouth of most Chileans in those days and, although many people were working very hard, no-one minded because there was the idea that it was for a better future. It was a time when many Chileans began to go to Russia to study. Most of these students were connected with the Chilean Communist Party and enthusiasts for the Soviet system. *“Many years later in Scotland I met Manuel López who, at the time of the coup, had been a student in Russia. He did not return to Chile and came instead to Aberdeen to continue his studies as an agronomist. He eventually came to Glasgow, where I met him. Here he was re-united with his wife, Rosita. They had a daughter and lived in Drumchapel. Rosita eventually returned to Chile and Manuel decided to go to Nicaragua to help, with his skill and knowledge, the Nicaraguan economic and political revolution. This gentle man was killed by the US backed **contras**, the forces opposing the changes in Nicaragua.”* Allende’s economic policies were thought at the time to hold the key to succeed where others had failed. *“The only thing which turned out to be true was that the Left had the evidence to show that capitalism in Chile had been a failure. Many Chileans believed this, many others did not. My father, for example, was never convinced of socialism. But, despite all the difficulties, Allende’s supporters remained loyal until 1973 and many others also began to support him.”*

### **Interesting happenings**

At Tizona, Carlos began to notice strange things happening. Someone offered one of the López brothers a paid trip to the United States. *“We were all surprised at how lucky he was. Many Chileans like him were, for some reason, offered the same trip.”* Carlos points out that a Tizona worker in those days could never have afforded to travel anywhere, and a trip to the United States was a dream which only

came true for wealthy Chileans, given the expense of the journey and the cost of living there. Looking at Chilean history of the time, one discovers that the trick was that people could go free to Miami and stay there for a while, provided that they bought, from Chilean banks, as many dollars as they could afford for the trip. Chileans travelling abroad were entitled, in those days, to take hard currency out of the country for such purposes. Those dollars, obviously, and the journey to the United States, were bought for the travellers by rich right-wing speculators who, in this case, offered Lopez a free trip to the United States. Most of the dollars, however, were kept by the speculators and taken by them out of Chile to be deposited in the banks of other countries. The aim was clear. To empty the Chilean banks of the hard currency so necessary for the purchase abroad of essential imports. *“Yes, Chile could not buy, let’s say, machinery and food abroad with escudos, the Chilean currency. In the 1970s, millions of dollars left Chile in this way”*. Hundreds of similar tactics, including political assassinations, were common in Chile in order to stop Allende developing his social programme based on what he called ‘justice and democracy’, the very things that the people of Chile needed. During these years, too, the right-wing speculators also used to hide merchandise and food from the people to make sure that the **almacenes**, the little shops of the barrios, would be seen to be run out of stock. Even things like toilet paper were difficult to get and people grew very angry indeed. Queues were the order of the day, even for essentials like bread and flour. Allende had to create a food distribution network but, at one point, hundreds of lorry drivers decided to go on strike. Many years later, Chileans learned that the lorry owners had been in the pay of the CIA. As a consequence, Allende was blamed, no matter how much he did to resolve the problem. Criminal activities like these were commonplace and Carlos never understood why Allende’s government did not punish these people, referred to in those days as **los sediciosos**. Many people at Tizona, as well as people in the barrio, the press and the Chilean families, commented on the disgraceful situation of Chile at the time. For the Tizona workers’ families it was also very difficult to get fresh fruit and vegetables to prepare food in their home. *“At that time, most of us were pensionistas of señora Elena. This lady, from whom we got our lunch at one o’clock, also had many difficulties in getting the things she needed to prepare our meals. It was about this point that I contacted my friends Rolando Rodríguez and Catalina and Roberto Gallardo who, through their political contacts, managed to get a food supply for señora Elena in order to provide us with lunch.* (The reader will remember that these three people were a part of a group assassinated by the Pinochet regime) Carlos remembers very well that, as soon as Pinochet came to power, many shop-owners began very quickly to hang out the Chilean flag and to put on to the empty shelves the goods they had held back. Many shop-owners also began immediately to receive supplies of goods from the big food traders who were in opposition to Allende. Miraculously, people soon began to see the shelves full of goods.

### **Conflicting sentiments...**

*“For many, Salvador Allende was a great man, but for others (I never understood why) Allende was just the opposite. My father, for example, never voted for Allende. In 1958, he voted for the right-wing candidate Jorge Alessandri. (In those days, our room in the Chiflón was adorned with a big coloured poster of Alessandri pointing a finger at you and saying, “A usted lo necesito!” (“I need*

You!”). *In the election of 1964, my father again refused to vote for Allende and gave his vote to the Christian Democrat candidate Eduardo Frei.”*

The period 1970-1973 was one of conflicting sentiments among families, friends and political parties. It was a very difficult time, involving love, hatred, contempt and cynical disdain for popular political culture. *“The real motive for Fidel to carry out a revolution in Cuba was love for its people and real hatred for Batista and his supporters, who had made Cuba an international brothel for wealthy Americans.*

*Allende was the same - he loved his people but not those who oppressed them. He felt contempt, in my view, for those who denied **el Pueblo** what they were entitled to. The oppressors were in a difficult situation and many of them left, taking with them their fortunes. Socialism was a political proposal to the working class which could have allowed them a better deal. Allende put faith in us, the working people, and faith in our popular culture as a means to achieve great things.”.*

The 1970-1973 period was also a time to learn the real history of Chile and the real history of many oppressed people around the world. It was a time to please the poor and to expose American culture as an oppressive economic system which seems to work only for itself and, perhaps, a few other countries but not for most of the countries of the world. Its prestige in the Chile of that time was in question.

As Allende began his project for Chile, the Chilean People (**el pueblo chileno**) began to suffer the consequences of the multiple reactions from the Chilean Right and from abroad, especially from the Government of the United States, which was very hostile to the successful economic policies benefiting the poor. There was a great deal of happiness on the one hand and a great deal of distress and fear on the other. Absurdity was the agenda of the day. It was as if the rich were afraid of getting poor and ending up living in the shanty towns, just as the poor were hopeful of becoming well-off. It was all about finding ways to distribute the wealth of Chile, hitherto in the hands of the few, more evenly among all its people. The Chilean Right, for some reason, imagined a Chile full of Russian tanks. With three years of Allende in power, what Chile got were many recriminations and many hopes. Soon after, Allende was forced to kill himself and it was not Russian tanks, as envisaged by the Right, but Chilean tanks that roamed the barrios of Chile, occupying their own country and it was Chilean soldiers, instead of Russians, who began to kill their own people, with the help of the government of the United States. It was rather like Italy during World War II, when the Germans were killing Italians with the help of the Italian fascists. The American Government of the time (Nixon, Kissinger) thought of the Chileans as “irresponsible” people.

*“ I remember how annoyed some of us at Tizona were with the American interference in Chileans affairs. “**Estos conchadesumadres se creen dioses en nuestra America!**” This was the popular sentiment towards the United States in our place of work. (“These sons of bitches really believe that they are God in our America!”). What really happened was that Chile was seen by the United States as a real threat to its interests in Chile and Latin America. “**Con que ropa !**”, said Carlos, in a spontaneous Chileanism of the barrio. Chile was just a small, dependent Republic in economic and military terms.*

### **Why the resentment.**

The fight, during the government of Allende, was an ideological one, but it was also a cultural one, with an economic and social dimension and was fought between

**los explotadores**, the ones that have everything (money, power, influence, education, etc.) - the middle classes who already had achieved something - and **los explotados**, the ones, like Carlos, who had nothing. It is true to say at this point that Allende's economic policies were not benefiting the strong middle classes and certainly not the rich and the powerful. The Christian Democrat Party, which represented the middle classes in Chile, tried hard to bring down the Allende government. The rich, represented by the **Partido Nacional**, were trying even harder, even before Allende came to power. For centuries, the upper classes had been accustomed, like a spoiled child, to have government after government operate the economic agenda for their benefit, and not for that of the poor. **La Nueva Matucana, El Chiflón** and the thousands of other poor barrios were clear examples of past government neglect.

*“ Although most of my friends in the barrio could read and write and had finished primary school, few had gone to secondary school and even fewer had finished it. A very few in the barrio had managed to acquire a profession. Lalo Farias, for example, was an exception. He was regarded, in the barrio, as a right-wing accountant. Moyano was another. He was a conceited, but intelligent, individual who was supposed to be on the left. Despite being **un huevón muy pesado** (in Chilean language), he became a university teacher (**un profesor universitario**). For my part, I just managed to finish my Primary School as I had to go to work at an early age to earn a living (**a ganarme la vida**). In 1962, at the time of the world cup in Chile, I was 12 and working in a famous kiosk located in **Avenida Matta**, on the corner of **Avenida Vicuña Mackenna**. I began every day at 7.00 in the morning and in winter it was very dark, cold and rainy. I used to help **Don Guillermo** (Don Willy) to make breakfast for the workers of the famous **Soprole**, who ran a daily distribution of dairy products to many parts of Santiago. Part of my job was also to cut small pieces from a long rectangular block of ice in order to prepare the well-known drink known as **Mote con huesillos**. To get to my place of work from my home in Esperanza Street, I had to take the number 25, a Mitsubishi bus, on Matucana St., at the corner of San Pablo St. The journey lasted about 45 minutes, which I spent sleeping”.*

When the coup took place, Carlos was no longer working at Tizona. All the indications had been that the masses (**las masas / el populacho**) were getting a much better deal from their socialist rulers. Socialist economic policies, however, dangerously closed the path to capitalist interests inside and outside Chile. As we have seen in other parts of this account, American companies exploiting the copper mines were always set to earn millions and millions of dollars in profit as a result of their investment in the mines. The sad thing was that nothing was left invested in Chile. This situation was epitomised by the slogan of a well known Santiago shop called La Polar - **“Llegar y llevar, dijo la Polar”** (“Arrive here and carry off the goodies!”). The government of Allende, through the mandate of the Chilean electorate, said: **“Basta! con el robo de nuestras riquezas naturales!”** (“Enough of this robbery of our natural resources!”) – “And let's nationalise them without paying any compensation!” With this nationalisation measure, Chile antagonised the most powerful nation in the world and had to pay very dearly for it. The United States found easy ways to sabotage production in the copper mines, and so did many Chileans who were economically well-off working for the American companies. Many skilled Chilean technicians, for example, were not prepared to work under a management that was politically motivated and which was not prepared to pay them

their very good salaries in dollars, as had been the case before nationalisation. “ *With Edmundo we always discussed the Yankee doctrine of interference and lack of understanding towards Latin America. Our conclusion then was that the United States, in its own view, could not afford Socialist economic policies and values to succeed, because the example could have set a dangerous precedent in Latin America and, consequently, in the whole world where capitalism, as an economic system, had failed. We have also to remember that, during this period, there was an ideological war taking place between the United States and the Soviet Union and, in the middle of this dispute, were two renegade Latin American countries, Cuba and Chile.*

#### **A little detail..**

Men being Men and Women being Women, the people on the left were far from perfect and some party members of the left operating at Government and ‘street’ levels proved to be bad politicians, bad tacticians and, at times, very sectarian among themselves. This fact proved to be fatal in a country learning to do things differently and caused a lot of resentment among the Chilean people, including those on the left. “*I learned more about their sectarianism, bad attitudes and opportunism in Glasgow, where I had the chance to meet many of my compatriots in exile, some of them with impressive academic and political records in Chile. Of course, I also met in Scotland excellent Chileans and hard-working **compañeros** ”.*

*“As we can see, my memories of Tizona, as an important part of the memory of my barrio, are related to a specific state of mind, framed around recent Chilean social history, which is loaded with political and cultural significance.”*

#### **However... However...**

It is fair to note that these changes and the conflict of interests created as a product of these economic, social and political changes, came into being under democratic conditions founded in so-called “Chilean democratic traditions”. It may be recalled that, during this period of Chilean history, there were in Chile all the political mechanisms of the State, including the Judicial System, operating normally, although under great duress imposed by the political conditions and ideological conflicts which, at a later stage, become very nasty. Political violence was on the increase and the so-called “hard left” began to react to the violence carried out by the Chilean “hard right”. For better or for worse, by 1973 the Chilean people (**El Pueblo**) was already being pushed by powerful and violent forces into a very long black tunnel, full of horrible creatures spitting fire at them. “*My recollection of this time is that, in those days, I could see a very angry lion whose wonderful, succulent food was taken away by its keeper in order to distribute it among the numerous hungry cubs. The lion could not stomach it, attacked the keeper and killed him.*”

#### **Memoria documental** (Documentary memory as material culture).

There is a type of memory which provides very valuable information. This is what an ethnologist would call “Material culture”. In this case, it is kept by Carlos in the form of sentimental objects, such as photographs and personal letters, or in the form of utilitarian official Chilean documents such as the Certificate of Birth,

the **Libreta de Familia** (Family record book), educational documents, etc. In addition, there are other types of utilitarian objects. For instance, when Carlos left Chile, he took with him his Tizona guitar, which proved to be so important in times of need. Solitude was always a factor for many Chileans who left their country after the coup. It is important to reflect about material culture because, in the hands of its owners, from a sentimental point of view, it may cause a lot of anguish, deep feelings and high emotions. On the other hand, this material culture has the specific function of revitalising human memory, especially when it begins to become fragile. From a practical point of view, this material culture can also be seen as tool to help us to learn something about Carlos's country. Among the items of material culture that Carlos brought to Scotland was an interesting official document given to his mother by the authorities of the hospital where he was born. It is a document called **Tarjeta de Identidad, recién nacido... 12 de Septiembre, 1949** (Identity card of a new-born boy). Among other things, it shows the street where Carlos's mother was living - in this case, 194 Vivaceta St., Santiago. But the most interesting thing is that, in the middle of the card, are his mother's thumb print and, beside it, the prints of Carlos's tiny feet. These prints guarantee his origin on his mother's side. It is an important official record, with a copy perhaps being kept in the files of the Identification Services in Santiago.

**Servicio de Identificación.** This record of Carlos's birth shows that he was born into an organised society. Carlos explained that finger-printing was invented in Argentina by Juan Vucetich and, by 1932, it was serving as a powerful instrument for the Argentinean police in solving criminal cases. Soon, this finger-print technique crossed the Andes to Chile. *“Everything I have from Chile is priceless for its sentimental value. This material culture you have just mentioned will undoubtedly help my family, that is, the family which I now have here in Scotland. It will especially help my Scottish children to have concrete evidence of my origins and a little understanding of who I am, where I come from, why I left Chile, what I used to do in that country, why I behave in the way I do, who my friends were, where I worked, why I developed politically in the way I did, etc., etc. Furthermore, by looking at this material culture my family will be able to see how certain things were done in my country. It was interesting that you noticed that Chile is a organised country. More often we have the impression that Europe and the United States have, on the whole, very little regard for societies in Latin America or in Africa ”.*

#### **What follows now are some examples of material culture related to Tizona.**

Carlos still has many photos of his former **compañeros** at work and, as time passes, memories began to fail him. *“Yes.. it is impossible to remember names and details of so many experiences - however, I have with me many pictures showing the faces of my **compañeros** and, by looking at them, I feel surrounded by emotion. One of these pictures was taken in the factory in the company of Geoffrey Stevens, a wonderful Chilean boxer of the 1970s, who had only just lost a world featherweight title fight in Tokyo. One can see the big smiles on our faces. I have another picture of when Pato got married. It shows him with his wife, myself and Manuel Ojeda.”*

Carlos has also many documents relating to his working life at the guitar factory and to the many **escudos** (the Chilean currency of the time) that he paid to the Chilean State in order to receive 'one day', a pension or some form of sickness

benefit. *“I must be one of the few who left Chile in 1974 who still has **La Libreta del Servicio Seguro Social** created by Law 10.383 of the 8th of August, 1952.”* This green book was his official **documento obrero** (worker’s document) during his working days in Chile. The pages of this document are full of official stamps representing his years of work at Tizona : 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, until March 1973 which was the month he left the factory. The official stamps have different values in **escudos** : 5, 10, 50, 100 500, 1000. The 10.383 Law stated that the worker (**obrero**) and the owner of the business (**el patrón**) had to pay into this type of ‘social fund’, a percentage based on the wages earned by the worker, the percentage being established by law. Thus, we read that the **obrero** had to contribute 5.5 % to his/her fund and the **patrón** 12 %. The Chilean state also contributed to this fund with a small amount. Unfortunately, in the Chile of Carlos’s time, many **patrones** never paid their share or contributions into the worker’s fund organised by the **Servicio Seguro Social** and this, of course, affected the worker’s benefits. *“ I remember that, when I left Tizona, I had to argue with Gagardo in order to get my **libreta** updated, as I had to take it to my new employers. That was in the event that I was going to work as an **obrero** again!”*. While money was taken from Carlos’s wages every week to pay his contribution to the ‘social fund’, Tizona, on the other hand, was not paying it’s share. Carlos assumes that the contributions of his fellow workers were also not being paid. The important thing was that Tizona should pay in the end. Carlos will never be able, however, to get back the money that he paid to the State and he does not expect ever to have a pension in Chile.

During his time at Tizona, Carlos performed on some Santiaguino radio stations, because the factory used to sponsor certain radio programmes, such as **Chaparrón**, presented by a well-known presenter (**locutor**) called Juan La Rivera. Carlos has a card in an envelope from **Radio Cooperativa**. *“On the card, Juanito asked the famous Chilean Musical director **maestro** Valentín Trujillo to help me. “**Querido Valentin, te pido una gauchada de ayudar a este joven obrero de Guitarras Tizona que quiere grabar sus canciones y no tiene a nadie que lo haga...**”* (*“Dear Valentin, I would like to ask you to help this young Tizona worker who would like to record his songs and has no-one to help him do so. Stgo. / Sept./ ‘71).* Carlos paid a visit to **Sabados Gigantes** of **Canal 13**, where Valentín Trujillo was the Musical Director of this famous television show directed by Don Francisco. (This programme is today produced in the United States and shown throughout Latin America, where Don Francisco is now very famous.) Carlos spoke to Mr Trujillo, who received him well and gave him the card back. On the other side of it he had written the answer, *“Dear Juanito, I will be pleased to help, but I need him to record his songs on a 7,5 or 3,75 tape), Yours Valentin.”* Sept/3/71. The recording materialised, along with a couple of live performances by Carlos on **Radio Cooperativa**, but never managed to organise a session with Mr Trujillo in which Carlos’s songs could be transcribed into musical notation. Carlos still keeps the card in his **baúl de los recuerdos** (trunk of memories).

When Carlos left Tizona in March, 1973 to work as an assistant on many different jobs in the Department of Design of the University of Chile in Cerrillos, Santiago, many things happened: the Coup took place on the 11th of September and Carlos lost contact with the Tizona people. He learned many years later that there had been a major fire at the factory, fortunately with no tragic consequences.

