

## A reflected look at my neighbourhood

Una detallada Reflexión de mi barrio

### Introduction

What you are about to read is the first part of Carlos' life which takes place in Chile before his departure to Scotland via Peru in the year 1974.

For Chilean singer and songwriter Carlos Arredondo the strongest emotions about Chile are the ones related to the images of the barrio Esperanza, the place where he grew up and lived until the age of 25 before leaving for Scotland via Perú:

*“My barrio represents a great deal in my formation as an individual. It shaped my identity as a Chilean although there is nothing that could deter me to say that Scotland is now my country. What Chile provided me with was the first real feeling about life and death and the necessary experiences about the real world. It was here, living with my family, where I made my first friends and learned that humanity, at times, is a very difficult thing to understand. The barrio is a good social-cultural and political expression of a country. During the 1970s I began to be involved, in a small scale, in social issues related to my barrio. I never belonged to any particular party but I was neither absent from the political upheaval affecting Chilean society of the Allende's period. Everything during these days, 1970-1973, was extraordinary: politics was at its best and at its worst and cultural life was exceptional rich. As a working class young lad I obviously supported heartily my social class. The 60s and 70s were a very important period of my life and that of the people of Chile. The 1970s were the time of Salvador Allende, the first Marxist-socialist President of Chile to be democratically elected in the world and the time of Augusto Pinochet, who deposed him in 1973 to impose on the Chilean people a bloody dictatorship. This was the end of Chilean democracy and a type of Dark Ages fell upon Chile and, with it, political repression on a large scale, never seen in this country before. Thousands of Chileans were put in concentration camps, other were tortured and killed and about three thousands were made disappeared and thousands and thousand of people were forced in terror to leave the country. I was one of them. From January 1974 my life took a new direction and, for more than 20 years, I was unable to visit my mother, my friends, my barrio and my homeland. However, I have kept in my memory my origins, and in my attitudes and actions the idea of being a **chileno in Scotland** (whatever the implications).*

Carlos' life touches on a variety of themes related to Chilean culture and history and I obviously thought it proper, to delve further with him into these arguments. So I arranged, during a weekend, a lengthy interview with him, appearing at the end of the book, to explore further with him some of the things he said about his life, his barrio and Chile. (This was an unforgettable experience)

Finally, everything which is said in the book appears to be real and yet it is unreal. One man appearing in the book, however, is authentic and I know it.

The Author

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