

Day 7

“Septima pata” (Seventh leg)

One of my songs, which I sing on a regular basis, is based on a sad story I read in 1975 in a Chilean newspaper while I was living in Glasgow.

Mercurio, Domingo 23rd of November, 1975

*La noticia la recibí
cuando vivía en Glasgow,
de un periódico chileno bajo el título:
“gobierno”
segundo cuerpo,
columna
“extremismo”.*
*Decía la información, que en los cerros de Maipú.
Un comando militar se enfrento “heroicamente”,
con un grupo,
de extremistas,
todos jóvenes varones y mujeres.
Termina la información con la muerte
de los insurrectos,
Pero no como dice el diario - el día antes
me lo contaron:
los detuvieron, los torturaron y los llevaron al mentado
enfrentamiento.
Todos eran cristianos, socialistas obreros
que con la palabra en mano combatían la violencia
de los tanques, los aviones,
la dictadura entera.*

This is me at the French Institute many years later.

*Fete de la Musique
L'Institut Français d'Ecosse, Edinburgh
Evening News, MUSIC REVIEW, GARY FLOCKHART, Tue 22 June 2004*

Allez le blues, le jazz, le techno, le classical

“...Similarly, another of the evening’s big triumphs was made not in France, but Chile. Singer Carlos Arredondo, who started and ended his set with rants about Bush and Blair brought the house down during a programme of political songs covering the protest movement in Chile during the Pinochet years. Dark times, they say, have the power to bring out the poets, and Arredondo, who arrived in Scotland 30 years ago after being exiled from Chile, certainly has lived through some of those. The standout from his set was a truly awesome number called Mercurio Domingo 23 of Nov 1975 - a song depicting the day he picked up a Chilean newspaper in Glasgow, only to read that a number of his closest fiends had been killed by Pinochet’s army. Granted, the majority of live performances didn’t quite match those highlighted, but the festival was worth it for the aforementioned alone”.

History unfolding before my eyes

I was living in Glasgow when I learned something terrible had happened in Chile to some of my friends from JOC. A friend had sent me from Paris the pro-Pinochet newspaper El Mercurio of the 23rd of November, 1975. I began to read it eagerly and in one of its pages I found something that interested me very much. I read that a group of “extremists” had been killed by the Army at Maipu in the periphery of Santiago. In the group mentioned, to my astonishment, there were a number of people from our barrios and members of JOC. The group mentioned included my good friend Catalina Gallardo, her father and her brother’s wife, Monica Pacheco. I found it bizarre that my friends were called “extremists fighting the Armed Forces”. Soon I learned the truth about their death. A Chilean refugee living in Edinburgh, who had been a prisoner in Villa Grimaldi, told me that my friends had been taken by force to Maipu but not before being tortured at the notorious Villa Grimaldi torture centre. Our friends never had had any armed encounter with the Army Forces at Maipu. Everything had been fabricated. At the centre of the lie was El Mercurio. This horrendous news makes me feel sick and fills me with hate for El Mercurio, the Chilean Army and, in particular, for Pinochet.

The National Truth and Reconciliation Commission known as the Rettig Commission concluded that:

“all these people listed above were executed by DINA agents in violation of their human rights”.

Dr Sheila Cassidy, the English doctor who was detained and tortured* at Villa Grimaldi in 1975 for assisting an injured opponent of the Pinochet regime, speaks about this horrendous crime in her book ‘Audacity to Believe’.

The Gallardo story does not finish here because previously, and in a separate incident, Catalina’s brother Roberto Gallardo had also been killed by the Army.

This story continues in a rather fragmented way. I learned that in 1976 Rolando Rodriguez and Mauricio Jean Carrasco had also been killed by Pinochet’s men. Rolando, a friend of mine since my childhood, was the husband of Catalina Gallardo, killed in 1975. I also knew Mauricio. I remember him as a very gentle person and with lovely parents already of a certain age. According to the Rettig Commission, Mauricio and Rolando were sitting on a bench on the sidewalk when a convoy of vehicles stopped in front of them and a man got out of a car and without saying a word opened fire on them. One was killed instantly, and the other was left wounded and died later...:

“The commission has drawn enough evidence to come to the conviction that these two men were executed by government agents in violation of their human rights”.

* There is available a statement submitted, in evidence by Dr Cassidy, to the United Nations - 20 January 1976 - in which she relates in details her experiences at the hands of Pinochet’s agents: the DINA.

I have fond memories of all these people as wonderful and generous human beings who gave me a lot in terms of friendship and political awareness. When I left Chile in 1974, I took with me a bunch of photographs and, among them, several in which Rolando, Catalina, and Monica are shown with happy smiles on their faces as if to say, we are all enjoying life.

But Chile's recent past history still continued to surprise me and tend to unfold in front of my eyes. As the 30th anniversary of the killing of my friends approaches, I found out, through the internet that my friends Catalina and Rolando had had a son called Alberto and that he is now 28 years old and a university student. This was unknown to me. I did not know that they had had a son. I have recently (December, 2004) been in touch with Alberto in Chile to say how happy I was to have found him. I was able to say so many things to him: that I had been a friend of his parents, his uncle Roberto and Monica Pacheco his wife. It was a very interesting experience to talk to him and to be able to say who I was and what I knew and felt about his family. I told him that we were all members of JOC and that his family members were sensitive people preoccupied with many social issues affecting young people, Chilean society and the world.

I told Alberto that I had photographs of his family, including his parents, which he had most probably never seen. I told him that I have the book "Audacity to Believe" by Sheila Cassidy in which his family's story appears. I told him that I had written a song about the circumstances of his parents' death and that El Mercurio was a newspaper supporting the Pinochet Regime. I told him that I have an Edinburgh Evening News article which appeared in November of 1998. The newspaper's article tells the story of his family and it was accompanied by photographs showing his parents and many of their friends from JOC. The article in the Evening News came at the time when General Pinochet was being detained in London. The Edinburgh paper asked me to be interviewed to say something about the event.

I also told Alberto that the tragic death of his parents and of other friends had served me as a driving force to become, in Scotland, a committed song-writer and performer in the vein of Violeta Parra and Victor Jara. I told Alberto that I was going to send to him all the material mentioned above. (I did so at Christmas, 2004 and he was very pleased!)

Alberto was delighted to know about me and as a friend of his parents. He said that my call came just at a time when he was very much in search of his parent's cultural roots and that he was pursuing his solitary personal quest to respond to the everyday challenge of confronting his life as a victim, like his parents, of the Pinochet regime.

I learned the story of his family, the Gallardo's, from him: His parents, he said, had been in the resistance against the regime as part of a splinter group from the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria).

On the early hours of the 18th of November 1975 Alberto, only 6 months old, and all the members of his mother's family (Gallardo's side): his grandparents (Ofelia and Alberto Recaredo), his aunt Isabel, his uncle Guillermo, his uncle's small daughter Viviana and Mónica Pacheco Sánchez, wife of his uncle Alberto Gallardo, were taken by Pinochet agents to a detention centre in a street called General Mackenna located in the centre of Santiago. (This was very near from where I used to live).

After a terrible humiliating ordeal at this Police headquarter detention centre, the Gallardo family were split up for ever: 'wee' Alberto, his grandmother Ofelia, his aunt Isabel, his uncle Guillermo and his daughter Viviana were all released at five O'clock of the morning of the 19th of November. Alberto's grandfather, Alberto Recaredo Gallardo Pacheco, his mother Catalina and Mónica Pacheco Sánchez were taken from General Mackenna Street to the notorious Villa Grimaldi detention centre where they were tortured, killed and taken to the area of Maipu. The Armed Forces put on a show here: an armed confrontation between them and Alberto's family. Maipu is in the outskirt of Santiago and it is famous for historical reason and because here there is a huge catholic temple.

"At General Mackenna detention centre", Alberto said – " I was in my mother's harms and just before she was taken away, she gave me to my grandmother. I never understood why my grand-dad was killed as he did not take any part in the resistance as my parents had. In his case, he had been a communist exiled to Argentina in the 1940s by Gonzalez Videla. We can assume that he was killed because he was a communist. At the Villa Grimaldi, my mother and my grandfather were tortured and killed".*

Señora Ofelia, a devout catholic person, is well-liked and a respected 'abuela' in the working class area of Renca in Santiago. She works hard on behalf of the poor people Alberto said. I have had the opportunity to hear her experiences on three hours recording session made for me in January 2006 by the musicologist, Jan Fairley who met señora Ofelia in her home in Renca.

When we hear Señora Ofelia** telling her story in such an articulate way, we do not fail to notice that this incredible woman, who raised Alberto Gallardo, displays not a hint of hatred in her voice. With dignity we hear her experiences and her sorrow at the horror what she and her family had to go trough. We heard from Señora Ofelia that during her detention she was forced to listen to a recording of her son Roberto Gallardo, killed by the Armed Forces on the 17th of November of 1975: *"While Roberto was being tortured he asked his torturers, whom he called cowards, to kill him".*

Señora Ofelia lost her husband Roberto Recaredo Gallardo, her married daughter Catalina Gallardo, her married son Alberto Gallardo, her daughter in law Monica Pacheco Sanchez, and her son-in-law Rolando Rodriguez Cordero.

* *Regarded in Chile as a President-traitor*: See Pablo Neruda's Memoirs. ('Confieso que he vivido')

** Listen to on this website, the testimony, in Spanish, of Señora Ofelia:

MEMORIES > THE GALLARDO FAMILY > "This is the story of a working class family"

The Rodriguez family, who I knew so well as devoted Catholics, thought it proper that 'abuela' Ofelia could take care of 'wee' Alberto. This generous gesture was very important for Alberto's grand mother: In her words:

"The prospective to raise my grandson brought my life back, something worth to live for as I am able to see in Alberto: the faces and the attitudes of those who are not longer alive in my family"

When I learned about the fate of my friends in the Mercurio newspaper, Glasgow become a distant place in the mist of my sorrow for the cold and unnecessary killing of these beautiful young people, who had taken the difficult decision to remain in Chile to fight against the fascist* Pinochet dictatorship.

In the Chile of today (2009) these people are the forgotten ones and they should not be! They were honest freedom fighters tormented by the ferocity of the dictatorship which had decided to turn its weapons against the Working Class People supporters of the Allende's socialist government.

Alberto said that after the killing of his mother his father, Rolando Rodriguez, decided to stay in Chile and although his father Rolando was offered the opportunity to leave the country by a friendly priest he refused:

"You should think of Alberto" he was told by the priest on more than one occasion, but Rolando always responded: *"I have to think of all the Albertos of Chile"*.

Alberto said that he understood that there was a pact between his parents: If one of them was killed, the other had to continue with the struggle against the dictatorship. *"My father was faithful to this pact"* said Alberto.

Who can blame these people for using firearms against the Chilean Armed Forces or who can condemn their angry words of disapproval against the regime? Today, as I write their story and knowing some of the circumstances of Alberto's existence, I ask myself the vile question:

Was it at all necessary for my friends, and many others young people, to give their precious life, in atrocious circumstances, for something that they thought that it was right? in this case to support, at the ballot box, an elected socialist government and then to fight the brutal Pinochet's dictatorship which came to replace it with the lost of our freedom and our democracy. In this solitary quest they gave away their irreplaceable lives.

I can feel in my mind their reverberating YES!! as an answer to my evil question: In this imaginary answer I can see my own failure as a person and in my friends' courageousness I am able to perceive the best that one can find in people: the act of being extremely generous with fellow human beings. This is a rare quality these days in a country. Rare because Pinochet initiated an era of profound cultural and political changes based on strict individualism and aggressiveness.

* According to the Logman dictionary: fascism is a right-wing political system in which people's lives are completely controlled by the state and no political opposition is allowed: In the Chilean case, Pinochet was God. Chileans lives were in his hands.

The death of my friends makes me to reflect that perhaps I was never brave or generous enough to give my own life for an ideal, in this case: to fight for the restoration of freedom and democracy in my country. During the dictatorship there were in Chile million of people fighting, in different ways and always in uneven circumstances*, the dictatorship.

I am not convinced that the only cause that led my friends to their death at the hand of the Pinochet's regime was their left-wing ideology. In my view, it was their unconditional generosity and love for their country.

When Rolando Rodriguez Cordero was offered to leave Chile for his own safety and poignantly he said to the priest: *"I must think of all the Albertos of Chile"*, then it makes me think that I am in front of an altruist, a generous man prepared to give his own life to fight a fascist dictatorship tormenting, as he said, all the Albertos of Chile. From Alberto and his family point of view, however, the self-sacrifice taken by his parents' may well represent conflicting emotional thoughts. I can only picture in my mind the idea of Alberto saying: *"Mum and dad you were engaged in a war against Pinochet but what about me, I was a six month old baby? What about the rest of our family? On this account, I am more than sympathetic towards Alberto, his family, and all the Albertos of Chile. Why?"*

Many people in our country will say today (2009) that "democracy" and "freedom" in our country owns nothing to people like my friends: I totally disagree with this view. Are they, the so called "democrat", "the moderates" telling us that the behaviour of a group of people fighting, with weapons in their hands, a horrifying dictatorship was out of character?, are they telling us that their actions were regarded as intolerable? or are they suggesting that their armed activities were a sort of unwelcome nuisance? This is painful! stuff for the victims and their families. We know that Chile, under the fascist Pinochet regime, was full of heroes and cowards and if I am to believe the Chilean judge Juan Guzman** taking about the role of Chilean Supreme Court during the Pinochet's years:

"The Chilean Supreme Court during the Pinochet's regime rejected 10.000 Habeas Corpus appeals".

If I interpret properly Judge Guzman, it means that The Supreme Court was not interested in saving peoples lives. It also means that Pinochet was above the law! and that the Judges were not doing their job: to offer justice when it was more needed. Those administrating the laws in our country become, under the dictatorship, an active element of what we call state terrorism. That is, the action of the Chilean Armed Forces bringing unnecessary terror, and for seventeen years, to the civilian population with the complicity of states institutions such as the Chilean Supreme Court***

* See on this website: MEMORIES > select: "Video documentary about Carmen Quintana".

** See on this web-page: LINKS and from here see "The Judge and the General", a very interesting bilingual documentary (Spanish and English) about the judge Juan Guzman trying hard to bring to justice General Pinochet for the violation of human rights during his regime. His thought about the role of the Chilean High Court during the Pinochet regime.

*** Alejandra Matus fled Chile in 1999 after she published *The Black Book of Chilean Justice*, a chronicle of the "corruption, nepotism and abuses of power" in Chile's justice system. The entire print run of the book was seized and Alejandra charged under the State Security Law under which journalists could be jailed for five years for defaming senior officials.

It gave not pleasure to have mentioned all the above and to mention now the case of Alberto's aunt: Carmen Rodriguez one of his father sisters, detained for nine months in a concentration camp called Los Cuatro Alamos. Carmen, a good friend of mine from my childhood, never was a terrorist: She was just a woman enraged with the Pinochet's regimen for the unnecessary killing of some members of her family. She was lucky to come alive from this notorious place, as many people taken there were never seen again.

Right-wing ethics?, Augusto Pinochet (also known as Daniel López) - Mr Norman Lamont - Margaret Thatcher Juan Rodrigo Macleod, Maria Cristina López Stewart and Señora Otilia Vargas,

At the end of the year 2004, and when I learned about the existence of Alberto, Chile was in shock after learning, through news paper reports, that General Pinochet had managed to hide millions of dollars in the Riggs Bank in the United States all under the complicity and protection of the Riggs's executives. The news caused uproar in Chile among Pinochet's right wing supporters who had for some reason not grudged against his criminal activities against Human Rights.

Pinochet's supporters were happy to see him killing their opponent but unhappy to see him to conceal his fortune in the United States resulting, as a reward, from his enormous power as a dictator. In 1975, Pinochet said on a Chilean Television clip that he was not going to be in government to swindle the Chilean State. On the TV clip we could see Pinochet waving, in one of his hand, an envelope saying that Chileans should rest assured that when he retire from power, it happened 15 years later, he probably was going to be a poorer man. Pinochet failed to his word and was, of course, not ashamed of it! Many entrepreneurs supporting Pinochet helped themselves to the opportunity to loot the Chileans state of its assets belonging to all the Chilean people. These days, end of October 2006, some entrepreneurs are immensely wealthy Pinochet is under house arrest and charged, by Judge Alejandro Solis, with kidnap, homicide and torture.

Margaret Thatcher and the Scotsman Norman Lamont, her former Chancellor of the Exchequer (1990-1993), embraced with great enthusiasm the cause of General Pinochet in this country when he was arrested in London in 1998. I was never sure what they were defending: the General's integrity? his democratic credentials? his human right records? or the terrorism he took to the streets of Santiago, Buenos Aires, Rome and Washington?.

Were they defending the dictator because he helped Britain to defeat the dictatorship of General Galtieri in Argentina in their 1982 war for the control of the Falklands islands (las islas Malvinas)? or to thank him for helping them to impose in Britain monetarist policies* and free market implanted first in Chile by Milton Friedman?

When in 1998 I went to London to show support for the detention of Pinochet I had the opportunity to speak to Lord Lamont about my disappointment with him. I told 'wee' Norman, with all my respect, that I could not understand his behaviour in relation to Pinochet.

* See Andy Beckett' Pinochet in Picadilly, (faber and faber)

I told Lord Lamont of Lerwick that I was a protester with a saltire flag in my hands to remind him that two Chileans with Scottish ancestors were among the 3000 disappears of the Pinochet's regime: Juan Rodrigo Macleod and María Cristina López Stewart.

I also showed him the Chilean flag being held by some Chileans in front of the House of the Parliament. The flag was there to remind the world of the thousands of Chileans victims at the hand of his defender: General Pinochet. Lord Lamont showed not emotions and as far as I know he paid a visit to the so called "Fundación Pinochet" in Santiago.

Juan Rodrigo Macleod, a young Chilean Scottish actor, was arrested with his mother-in-law Maria Julieta Ramirez on the 30th of November 1974 when both went together to pay a visit to his wife, Maria Antonieta and his brother in law, the actor Oscar Castro detained at the notorious concentration camp Tres Alamos. After their arrest were never seen again.

Oscar and his sister, Juan's wife, were eventually released and left for France and in Paris Maria was hit by car and died. I had the opportunity to speak on the phone to Oscar Castro and from him I learned how proud Johnny, as Juan was known to his friends in Chile, had been of his Scottish roots. He was fond of wearing his kilt Oscar said to me.

María Cristina López Stewart was a revolutionary and a poet and, I am told that, her personal dairy of 1963 could easily be the Chilean version or the equivalent of the Dairies of Ana Frank. Maria was a 22 years old geography student when she disappears at the hand of the Pinochet's secret police.

Señora Otilia Vargas, a former teacher, suffered one of the worse human right abuses committed by the Pinochet regime. Between 1974 and 1976 Mrs Vargas, a 80 years old lady, lost five of her six sons. Three of them were assassinated and two made to disappeared by the DINA¹ agent. "*How does Mrs Vargas tolerate day by day this horror?*". This is one of the questions asked to Señora Otilia by MUJER² in a long article which appeared on the 12/12/04:

"I do not forgive the killers of my sons. Nobody approached me to say sorry. I have never been able to accept their death. They were noble people. They were prepared to give their lives for the poor. They never harm anybody".

While the dictator's family will enjoy the immense fortune left to them once their infamous relative is dead, Pinochet's victims will enjoy a different type of human experience: a very sad one! Chile is in debt to Sra Otilia and her family. Chile is in debt with her sons. After all they had been generous with the people in need. Some British politicians have a moral debt with all the Chilean people tortured, killed and disappeared under the Pinochet's regime.

¹ DINA Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional(Pinochet's secret police)

² Magazine from the Santiago right-wing tabloid La tercera.

During our exile many political and cultural events took place in Scotland to support the people in needs in our country. These activities were expressed in a variety of ways.

While living in Glasgow, I took part in a political concert at the old Traverse Theatre for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1974. (The Scotsman's review of this concert is available) Many Chileans like me were already promoting the music of Victor Jara, Violeta Parra, Quilapayun and the Inti-illimani. Not only this, but inside the exiles's luggage one could find, along the music of the new song movement, cumbias, Salsa and tango music. "Salsa music" was brought to this country by the Chileans exiles from Perú where it was already known. These cassettes were played at political cultural events and party time.

Our "Chilean Folk Group" played in many cities and towns of Scotland and England in the 1970s: London, Liverpool, Newcastle, Durham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, Aberdeen, Dundee and Cumbernauld. This is because in those days there were many events organised by groups promoting solidarity with Chile.

We played in Renfrew on the 19th of June, 1976 and I particularly remember it because, it was a Labour Party meeting and Michael Foot was one of the guest speakers.

As a folk group, we often were invited to play at the Glasgow Star Folk (social Club) where we saw the wonderful Scottish-Irish folk group: The Laggan headed by the excellent bearded singer Arthur Johnstone. Songs like *Work of the Weavers*, *the Railwayman*, *The Band Played Waltzing Matilda*, *I am the Common man*, *Rosa Luxemburg*, *Joe Hill*, *Jarama*, *Bandiera Rossa* and *The Wild Rover*, are all songs which I remember fondly because I relate them to the Chilean solidarity movement in Glasgow. Their songs mixed very well with the songs of Victor Jara and Violeta Parra, played and sung by us: "The Chileann Folk group"! It is not surprising to find in my record collection: The Laggan's 'I am the Common Man' and Arthur Johnstone's: 'Generation of Change'.

We also played several times at the McLellan Galleries, the Citizens' Theatre and the Third Eye Centre where in 1976 there was a wonderful exhibition of Chilean arpilleras. The event was organized by the art critic Guy Brett and the playwright Tom McGrath, the director of the Centre (1974-77). Tom, whom I remember with a lot of affection, sent me in those days a letter and from this, we can read the following extract:

"I look forward to the Chilean week happening at the Third Eye and I would like to express my solidarity with the Chilean People in their present suffering"

The arpilleras, were colourful "popular" art works, sewn from scraps of clothing fabric and wool. They were made by women living in shanty towns and by relatives of the disappeared people. Some arpilleras were even made in prisons. These pictorial works represented a powerful symbol of resistance in Pinochet's country. They depicted a variety of themes linked with the sad reality of the people under the dictatorship: concentration camps, prisons and prisoners, soup kitchens, military people in tanks patrolling the streets etc.

There was also an exhibition of this patchworks exhibition in Edinburgh in 1978 at the Demarco Art Gallery.

As time went on, I could see the solid solidarity work with Chile. Many well known Scottish singers/musician, poets and bands, such as Dick Gaughan, The Boys of the Lough, The Laggan, The Whittlebinkies, Aly Bain, Matt McGinn, Hamish Imlach, Adam McNaughtan, Hamish Henderson, The 7:84 Theatre Company, The Battlefield Band. Liz Lochhead, the story teller Mick Broderick (Donald was a Piper, 1983), Leftturn, Nancy Nicholson, Sprangeen and many others artists were always available to express their solidarity with the People of Chile.

I personally developed a very good relationship with the Scottish composer Edward McGuire and his Glasgow-based band The Whittlebinkies. Edward always supported my artistic work in this country. It was Eddy who recommended me to work with John McGrath's 7:84 Theatre Company. I worked with the actress Liz MacLennan, John's wife, in two 7:84 Theatre projects: "The Baby and the Bathwater" and "The Albannach". We did a lot of travelling in Britain and Canada and we did a lot of solidarity work for the miners during the Thatcher's years.

On the 19th of February, 1989 I helped to organise in Edinburgh a cultural event in support of alternative theatre in Pinochet's time, represented by Teatro El Telon, operating in the **Centro Cultural Mapocho** (not far from where I used to live). Appearing in this event were myself, Liz Lochhead, Christine Kidd, Nancy Nicholson, Comunicado Theatre Company, Catherine Boyle, the Witches' Tuesday and the poet, John Gillies.

A German overview of us, Glasgow, Chile and solidarity during the years I was in Glasgow.

I thought that it was a good idea to put here a personal letter addressed to me from a German friend. He mention some interesting insight of Glasgow at the time when I and many other Chileans were living in this industrial city.

Banbury, Nov. 19th, 1975

Saludos, Carlos!

No sé mucho Español, porque intento lo estudiar.

Por eso, escribo en inglés.

(To write the above sentence, it took me 10 minutes.)
Sorry, that I did not write before. I do not know, why
one reason is, that I had to think about these
holidays I spent in Great Britain this summer;
I saw so many things and met many nice people.
(particularly the Chilean people were very very kind
to me) - and all that made a strong impression on me.

At first, I must ask you, how did you spend the
day at Newcastle, where you had a performance?
Did you have a big audience and a good echo?
Did you manage this evening alone or in cooperation
with a Chile-committee of Newcastle? Did they make
any more actions? I hope and I am sure that you
had good success!

If you are going to write back to me, please write
something about yourself and about other Chileans
who came to England! I am very interested in those
things to learn about your situation and to compare
with Chileans living over here. Write, what you were
doing in Chile, where did you live there, how and why
did you leave it and what about your actual situation?

It's a pity that I could not meet you neither in
Glasgow nor in Newcastle. I should have liked to
listen to your songs (do you make them yourself?)
because I'm playing the guitar, too. But I had to
leave Glasgow, because I had a round-about
ticket for the British Railway until the 15th of
September. On that day, I had to be in Edinburgh
to meet a German to go back to Germany by air.

Since that day, time became quite short for me
and it started to rain (as it does very often in

On the one hand, I'm looking forward to München, because the training (study) is told to be good. But on the other hand, I am afraid of this gigantic town. Big cities are so anonymous.

What do you think about Glasgow? To me, it is ~~far~~ fascinating, but, seen as a whole, not really "beautiful". Maybe, there are fine places to be found. And another factor will be ~~if you know~~ some friends to talk to, but looking at the misery which exists in Glasgow, it is really depressing.

In 1970, AJ used to spend my holidays in Scotland: partly, to make holidays on the small island of IONA, which still is completely unspoilt and idyllic; and partly, to work in the slums of Glasgow. They are some of the worst of Europe. I was working in the garbals and in the Barrow Fields, trying to built up adventure-
playing grounds for the children, whose parents were both working all the day, and there is nobody looking after them. This favours the development of crime, neglect and demonization, and soon. Though we succeeded in one case, I doubt if we really ~~that~~ were effective, because misery was so big. The families, of whom many had six and more children, and who had an alcoholic as a father too often, were and ^{still} are living under bad conditions - in very old houses, of some of which did not have a top. Unemployment, even for youngsters, is another evil. Violence and crime are spreading, there are "gangs" growing: groups of youngsters and even of young children coming from an area - (one street for example) who are occupying a certain territory ~~and~~, defending it against other gangs, using rather rough methods.

This year, I went to the garbals again: Everything seemed to have changed. The streets mainly did not look as dirty as ~~they did~~ ^{5 years} ago, and the decayed houses had disappeared.

Scotland ---) so we had to hurry. On the way, I passed London again and went to the Solidarity Campaign at Seven Sisters Road. You know this organization. I think, they are quite a good work, don't you?

At Brighton, I came to know Suzanne Pe and Ruth, who are working in the Chile-cc there. They gave me your address and ~~the~~ Max and Oscar, and that one of Thomas. She wrote a letter on the back of the paper. Unfortunately, I lost this letter after having telephone-call with Max & Oscar from the station. So I was very astonished soon to be accepted and integrated, being treated so friendly was very funny, because Max & Oscar had a "international" party when I arrived.

To tell you something about me, just this

I am 20 years old (if you are curious to know I used to live in Hannover (headquarter of the Army in the North of Germany) until I finished school. As it is very very difficult to study many, especially subjects like pharmacy, chemistry, biology, psychology etc, you have a place - if you really get one - wherever I tried for medicine, and the central ordered me here, to Regensburg, in the South 600 km from my home. It is a nice city (about 2000 years old), not too big, but with new, modern university outside the town. At the moment, there are 9000 students here. I am now since 2 years, and I like it very much. I have to pass an examination and to go because at Regensburg, there still is no I am sure you have heard of München, it

Instead of them, skyscrapers of cement concrete were erected, quite impersonal, anonymous - But I doubt, if social misery did change as well?

I am curious to hear what you are thinking about this town which is quite interesting.

Here, in Regensburg, I joined a new Chile-Committee some months ago. I felt that it is still necessary to inform the people about the truth about Chile and to contribute something to the general fight against fascism. I think that this should be particularly the task for the German people because of our dishonourable history, which ought to have us taught about fascism. Nevertheless, you can feel a strange trend concerning this problem, which seems to lead us back some 25 years...

though it is ~~shown~~ shown in another outer appearance... - As there are not many Chilean refugees in this town, our work consists of actions of information and instructions about the actual Chilean situation. We are showing films, making a bazaar from time to time, where we are selling things made by prisoners of the camps. The next event will be on December, 16th, when we'll invite Juan Miranda (did you hear of him?) to sing some songs, in connection with the bishop Frenz who was not allowed to return to Chile after being in Europe for some weeks. He is one of the leaders of the Comité para la paz and we hope that he will come to tell us about that. One boy of our group just returned from a 3-months-stay in Chile.

Well, I'll finish now as it is very late. I am always writing letters at night, so please excuse my many mistakes. I hope you understand most of my letter. Maybe, somebody can help you reading it. Please, write back soon, and if you like, do it in Spanish, but then make simple sentences! If you meet Max, Oscar, Tito(?), Hugo, Lino, Thomas or anybody else, tell my regards to them! Good bye for now, yours, Helga.