

Day 9

“novena pata” (ninth leg)

The sense of loss in the life of a refugee

In many ways, the experience of exile, by definition, may evoke in people the idea of a great sense of loss in an individual and this is true to a great extent. *How can I describe this sense of loss as applied to our case?* I suppose, a strong sense of loss goes along with the idea of being conscious that something negative and unusual has happened in one’s life, which relates to the inner self, your perception of your country: its culture, its politics, and your personal perception about you fellow countrymen and your nationality*. One has the feeling of being displaced in terms of terrestrial space, in terms of time, in terms of rights, in term of power. In fact a strong sense of loss may have emerged, as I have explained before, in those Chileans exiles who may have regarded themselves as “middle class”- people with bourgeois background: educated to a reasonable standard, skilled and professional.

If I were to talk about my own sense of loss I would say that it was not only restricted to the idea of losing my country for ever, knowing that I might gain another, but to the bitter thought of my old mother being left alone in a country sunk in desperation and fear. I always felt tremendously guilty about this.

But where did begins the political loss for the Chileans in exile?

The spiritual and political loss of the Chilean refugees did not begin in Scotland. in my view, it began in our own country** as a result of a schism in Chilean society long before Allende came to power in the 1970s. We came to Scotland in defeat, politically and socially humiliated. For the many Pinochet’s supporters, which it may have included refugee’s family members and friends; we were the scam of society:

“We Allendistas dared to challenge politically, at the ballot box, the long established social order promoting in our country deep social and economic inequalities”

The Pinochet’s regime was, for us left-wing refugee, a serious attempt to exterminate us all physically once and for all. In this aim, the long established social order: the Chilean Armed Forces, the Chilean bourgeoisie and other forces scattered throughout the society were solidly behind Pinochet’s goal.

Many champagne bottles were opened when Pinochet deposed illegally Salvador Allende from power. Champagne means salud! to all of those just about to be tortured, killed or disappear or thrown into exile by the regime.

The refugee people were sad and angry at having to leave their country, their families, their friends and their material possessions, to the mercy of a bunch of people just about to take advantage of the circumstances. In fact, many assets belonging to the Chilean State were sold cheaply to supporter of the regime.

Pinochet and his family become immensely rich. Their millions of dollars, illegally acquired, were scattered and hidden away in banks accounts around the world. To do it Pinochet used another name: Daniel Lopez.

* See on this webpage: “MEMORIES” > “A detailed reflection of my neighbourhood”. Select **Chapter 8**. Here I discussed my notions about the meaning of country, nationality, citizenship etc.

** See on this webpage: “MEMORIES” > “A detailed reflection of my neighbourhood”. I wrote here my origins in Santiago. It showed that my exile begins in Chile excluded, for economic and social circumstances, from main stream education.

Who were the biggest loser in all of this?

We were all losers but at the beginning of our experience as a political exile I felt that those people who regarded themselves as middle-class were the biggest loser as they may have lost whatever social status they held in Chilean society at the time of the coup. The coup, therefore, may have represented to them a drop in their standard of living on the one hand and a stop to their intellectual or political development and aspirations on the other. Several of these people ended up in the working class area of Drumchapel and others working class areas of Glasgow and other cities of Scotland. *But did the exile experience represented for some “middle class”-bourgeois a drop in their intellectual or political development?* For some yes! No, if opportunism was part of their economic and political agenda once they were back in Chile. No, if they become good professionals with good British qualifications and aspiration to work in Britain.

Who were the opportunists?

All type of people. Perhaps I was one. In some way or another we all took advantages of coming to live in exile in a developed capitalist country. Nevertheless, I feel that the ones that were in a better position to take advantages of their situations as refugees were the more educated people found in our community of exiles. I am thinking in those who had merely academic aims in mind. *Why?* These people were better prepared to go through that social-political system that the refugees called pompously “to have contact” in order to achieve whatever goals they have in mind. As in Chile, it was essential for the academic-political minded refugee to have, as well as good social skills and academic knowledge, proper academic and political “contact” to go up in the political-social and academic hierarchy – that is to know and be able to motivate the right people in the right places:

“Although myself had arranged for him a WUS a research fellowship for three years with the help of great friends of his and mine specially from Dr Luis Weintein, and Alfredo Monza and an ex professor of ours when we both studied in Chile and who was in Buenos Aires The Director of CLACSO the Chilean Lawyer Ricardo Lagos”*.

I, and indeed, most Chileans exiles had not “academic or political contact” apart from our normal connections with the people working in the Chilean Solidarity Campaign.

How much some of this Chileans-academic owns their successful careers thanks to the fact of being political refugees?

I have no doubt that it help. Many British people involved in the first days of the Chilean Solidarity Campaign in Scotland, were academics people. Their knowledge of the academic world in this country and their sympathies towards the Chilean cause was invaluable to provide precious help to the Chileans exiles doing academic courses at Colleges of Further Education and Universities.

Many educated refugees in Scotland went back to Chile after the departure of Pinochet and “through their political and academic contacts” found fantastic job at executive levels in the Government of La Concertacion.

* “Extract taken from *Cronicas de una Libertad vigilada*” by Marta Zabaleta, an Argentinean academic refugee married ,at one time, to Chilean academic refugee Alberto Hinrichsen. Lagos an ex president of Chile.

In Glasgow we have as the head of the Chilean Solidarity Campaign, able academic people such as: Philip O'Brien, Jackie Roddrick, Mike Gonzalez, Susy Waisman and others. In Edinburgh we have a solidarity group called Academics for Chile and it was headed by Professor Peter Vandome, Professor Martin Pollock and others. The following article was taken from the Scotsman (Monday, January, 12, 1976).

EDINBURGH PROFESSORS TAKE UP CASE OF CHILEAN REFUGEES

"Seventeen professors at Edinburgh University have written to the Argentine Government asking for news of Chilean refugees who they believe may have been arrested and could be taken back to Chile and imprisoned.

The letter was organised by Professor Martin Pollock after being told by the Chilean Committee for Human Rights of reports that 11 refugees academics were being held incommunicado and might be forcibly returned to Chile where their lives and liberty could be in danger from the military junta.

Prof. Pollock claimed yesterday that *"there have been a number of cases in Argentine and Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia, where refugees thought they had got away safely and then by collaboration between the Chilean secret police and similar organisations in these other semi-fascist countries were arrested shipped back, and imprisoned"*

He described the attack on universities and other academic institutions since the fall of the Allende Government as *"the biggest attack on academic life since Nazi Germany. A high proportion of staff and students have been arrested and the junta have closed the social science faculties in every university in Chile, Military rectors have been installed instead of principals and one whole university, set up during the Allende Government specifically to give education to working-class students, has been abolished,"* he said.

Prof. Pollock has visited Chile twice. Two years ago he helped to found an Edinburgh branch of the Academic for Chile movement, who have been working to get students out of prison in Chile.

I must underline that they "the British academics" helped all the Chileans regardless of their social, academic status or political background. According to the World University Service's (WUS) sources * this "Academic for Chile" who meet for the first time in London on the 13th of October 1973, were far from being supporters of the Popular Unity Government but were united in revulsion at the brutality of the military dictatorship and its attacks on the lives, values, social and political institutions of Chile. Chileans being helped by the "Academic for Chile" solidarity group were found studying at universities in many places of Scotland: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, Dundee and Aberdeen.

I am one of those who feel an immense gratitude towards the people mentioned above for the job done towards us refugees and the solidarity movement with Chile as a whole. Of course, there were many other people in Scotland, outside the academic world, who did exactly the same.

* See on this webpage: "MEMORIES" > Manuel Lopez, "World University Service" (WUS)
We will find here a report about the WUS and their connection with the Chilean refugees in Britain.

Does it mean that the Chilean in exiles because they had British academic friends in the Chilean solidarity movement has to work less to get their diploma or their university Degree?

This was not the case! Nobody was entitled to do it and I am glad for it. Chileans in exile has still to work very hard to get what they wanted from the British academic world. It is also true to say that, some of these Chileans already had good academic background in Chile. In other words, these people were well prepared for academic life in Britain. (These Chileans may have been in need of support with their English for their written work). In this country nepotism is low in comparison with Chile. “El pituto” as a form of gaining a favour in our country, was out of question in Scotland. Any Master Degree, any PhD given to any Chilean refugee, and there were a good number of people in this league, had to be won with effort. I learned it many years latter when I too had to work very hard to get a Master Degree in Art at Edinburgh University.

How much were these academics- Chileans involved in the solidarity movement with Chile in Scotland?

I have a view on this: the more opportunistic elements tended to work for their political parties functioning in Britain but as little as possible for the Solidarity Campaign with Chile. The more conscious academic elements were normally at the helm of the solidarity work with Chile. Many not academic elements worked also very hard and I considered myself to be one of those. I was a full time Chilean cultural worker at the high of the Chilean Solidarity Campaign. This was because my services, as a musician and singer, were always in high demand from the Solidarity Campaign movement in Britain. This means that I have to allocate a lot of my free time to learn the musicianship required for solidarity work. I did not only have to play for the Chilean Solidarity Campaign but for the many events organised by the Chilean political parties in exile too. With the folk group I had organised in Glasgow in 1974 (with Tulio Bravo and Hugo Alvarez) we used to receive money from our presentation, however, as the Folk group was part of our committee of Chileans this money was given entirely to our committee. This money served at times to pay the travelling expenses incurred by our representatives in Glasgow at Chileans conferences in London and other areas of Britain.

What was the price paid by “the opportunists” to get to the top either in Britain or in Chile?

Many Chileans exiles did a lot of solidarity work during their period of exile in Britain. Other did very little and other did absolutely nothing. I know, however, that all of the Chilean, regardless of their opportunism, or personal situation, who came as exile to Britain during the Pinochet’s era had, in one way or another, to pay a very high cost for whatever type of success: I am sure that for any Masters Degree or any PhD gained by some Chileans refugee at any U.K.’s Universities it may have cost them their marriages. I have to contrast this cost, however, against those unfortunates chilenos y chilenas who came to live and died in exile in Scotland such as la Señora Anita Croveto in Falkirk, Mario Uribe, in Dundee, Tito Alvarez, Roberto Naduris, Moises Silva and Manuel Lopez in Glasgow. These last two lived like me in a council flat in Drumchapel and others.

Chilean academics

While many in Britain and Chile were fighting hard against the dictatorship, some academic-Chilean left-wingers were in their adversity, but with self-control, able to continue with their academic progression with bursaries from the World University Service (WUS) or local authority's bursaries. They knew well that one day, and that day arrived, they would soon go back to Chile. Here, perhaps unashamedly, they would try their chances thanks to their famous 'contacts' that he or she had made while in exile.

Some of these people have done quite well in the present political climates set out by the government of La Concertación, the political entity which came to power in 1990 after the departure of Pinochet. (Still in power today, March 2009) La Concertación which came to power under the dubious slogan "Joy is coming", favoured the economic system installed by the Pinochet regime. In this case, ex left wing political refugees who had in Britain WUS Scholarship, went back to Chile to take enormous advantages of the economic system installed in Chile which had no traces of socialist ideals, compassion for the needed or the lower classes. On the contrary, la Concertación encouraged great economic inequalities and the suppression of our more recent history under the Pinochet Dictatorship.*

The WUS report, about their Chilean refugee scholarship programme, said that in a period of 12 years it helped almost 1000 Chileans to continue with their higher studies. How many of them managed to finish their studies?, How many of those obtaining their degree in Britain thanks to the WUS programme went back to Chile to help in more democratic time those who had suffered at the hand of the Pinochet's regime?

The case of Pablo Lira

"Pablo Lira"*** as we knew him in Glasgow, is an economist and today's (Nov.2006) the head of the Empresa Nacional de Petroleo (ENAP). We may assume rightly or wrongly but with clarity, that for this Mapucista*** the act of being a leftwing-exile doing academic studies in Glasgow at the height of the solidarity work with Chile, meant effectively a spring board to enhance his professional and political career once he was back in Chile. Lira is today earning good money for the job he does. The question is: *How much is Lira putting back into that part of society which had been neglected in today's Chile by successive government of la Concertación?*

As Chile does not have oil for its industries, we can argue that Lira's job is about trying to obtain oil for Chile anywhere in the world; therefore, we may conclude that he is working on behalf of Chile's interest. We assumed, on the other hand, that for the job he does the type of payment he receives for his services, including responsibilities, is at the current rate (2006) allocated for high flyer executives working in the Chilean Public industry and we know that it excessively high.

* It was thanks to the action of the Spanish Judge Garzón, trying in 1998 to extradite Pinochet from London to Spain, that Chile under "La Concertación" began to look timidly towards the bloody Pinochet era and what had happened.

** "Pablo Lira" is a pseudonym for a Chilean economist from the University of Concepción. During the Allende period he worked in the copper industry. He is presently doing study on foreign capital in the Chilean industrialization process at the University of Glasgow. (Allende's Chile, edited by Philip O'Brien, Praeger Publishers, 1976).

*** MAPU a left wing party of the 1970s and a member of the Popular Unity who brought to power Salvador Allende

According to Patricio Orellana Vargas*, the executive of a Chilean company earns the salary of their American counterpart and the wages of a Chilean worker is approximately fifteen times less of a worker from the United States.

The economic policies of successive governments of La Concertación has been about to let a restricted number of people to earn an awful lot of money for the work they do while allowing the majority to earn very little. The result has been catastrophic for the ordinary working people because they have to live in an unfair economic system. Professor Patricio Orellana, who once worked for the Vicariate of Solidarity, explained to me (Nov 2006) that: the present income distribution in Chile is one of the worst in the world. The case of the person that you know he said can be multiplied for a thousand times in the present Chilean political leadership:

“Almost all the left and centre political class took advantage of their exile to educate and take centre stage in the government of La Concertación. Unfortunately these people built an even more unjust economy from the one which existed before. The only improvement was tackling the situation dealing with human rights abuses but there was a policy to forget past human rights violations.”

La Concertación, a disappointed democratic political expression** in the post Pinochet era from a working class perspective: forgot to show political vision for the working classes of Chile. Some of its members were in exile, forgot about it, forgot about their political commitment with the working classes, la clase trabajadora”, as Salvador Allende used to call them.

I sincerely desire that what I am saying about Mr Lira and the Government of La Concertación is speculative and wrong. What I know is that when I was in Santiago in 1985, I contacted Lira over the phone to say hello. Philip O’Brien*** suggested to me that I should call him to say “hello”. When I did it Lira dismissed me very quickly - I smiled! I never forgot: his fake name in Glasgow, his real name, his face, the name of his former wife, the names of their children, and above all, that we have been members of a common story about Chilean exiles living in Glasgow – in Drumchapel. I am saying this without any reproach. I am just the writer of a story dealing with Chileans exiles in Scotland.

Sectarianism and opportunism

We left-wingers from the Allende era know well that inside the UP, sectarianism and opportunism in all side of the political spectrum, was part of the political life. It may well follow that many left-wing militants who showed traits of sectarianism and opportunism during the time of Popular Unity in our contry, the same feature would have surfaced during their time in exile in Scotland. Cases of sectarianism and opportunism will live for a long time in the collective memory of the Chileans who came to reside as exile in Scotland and other part of the world.

* Profesor de la Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, Universidad ARCIS, Universidad Central y Universidad de Chile.

** Maintain in our country a laughable type of democracy, detached from the working classes realities. – 2009 - Young Chileans recognised this and refused to engage in politics. They do not vote.

*** Philip the chairperson of the Chilean Solidarity Campaign in Glasgow - October 1974.

Solidarity with Chile was the work of so many people and so many organizations. Why Chileans came to Scotland?

The Chileans arrived in Scotland as a product of the solidarity of the People of Scotland towards the Chilean case. I am thinking here of all the members of the Chilean Solidarity Campaign: The Joint Working Group in London, the left-wing political parties, members of the Labour Party, many MPs of the Labour Party, the STUC, Church members, workers, Amnesty International, Human rights Organisations, Academic for Chile, artists, individuals etc. Dr Douglas Charmers from the Glasgow Caledonian University said that in the case of Dundee:

“The society of friends, the Quakers and the Labour Party were very very useful”.

In the words of Philip O’Brien, Madame Judith Hart MP was also instrumental in providing money for the World University Service which helped to arrange a whole series of scholarship for Chilean Refugees. In Stirling I am told that the Chaplain of the Stirling University father Murray, The academic for Chile, The Stirlingshire Chilean Action Committee under the guidance of the great socialist Roland Sheret all worked very hard in their solidarity with The People of Chile and the Chileans refugees in this city.

Many of these Chileans arrived in Scotland because it was dangerous for them to live in Chile or in any other part of Latin America such as Argentina. We are talking here about people being politically persecuted, people who had been in prisons and concentration camps where they had been tortured and then subsequently expelled from Chile. Patty in Stirling said to me that her own life owed much to the International Solidarity movement with Chile. The only way for her to get out of Pisagua, the concentration camp in the far north of Chile where she was detained and tortured, was to find an organisation abroad to help her. The British Government offered her the right to stay in Britain and the people of Stirling involved in solidarity work here did the rest.

I was not part of this group and many were not part of this group either. Any of us, however, who came to Scotland as refugees had valid reasons to leave the country and I cannot deny the fact that we may have incurred in opportunistic practices. Pinochet’s Chile was an unsafe place for people opposing his dictatorship. Many of those who came directly out of prison to live in Scotland served the purpose of motivating people like me and others to work hard with the Solidarity Campaign. I remember Angelica and Javier who came to Edinburgh direct from prison in Chile. They had married in prison.

“Chilean exiles” and “conscious Chilean exiles” a fine line divide.

Any Chilean once in this country was free to do whatever they like with their lives. To work with the Chilean Solidarity Campaign with Chile in Britain was an option. For me it was a political responsibility, as well as a moral and cultural duty, to join the solidarity work.

It is in this context where we find a divide line among the Chileans in exile: those who were inactive were simply Chileans exiles and those who were active were

conscious Chilean exiles. Most Chileans, including myself, in my view, belonged to the last category.

I know very well that many supposed to be “apolitical persons”, mostly wives of refugee men, took also a very active role in the many activities related to the solidarity work with Chile. I have a good recollection in my memory of the many events for Chile organised by Chileans and British organisations in the 70s and 80s. I and our Glasgow based Chilean folk group was in high demand to perform for these solidarity events taken place in many part of Scotland and England including London.

How many were the opportunists in Scotland? or was sectarianism spread among the community doing solidarity work with Chile? (Bizarre questions)

In my view, not many and as far as I can remember opportunism was not the norm among the Chilean community in exile in this country. We can assume that the act of being a left-winger exile was for some people a sort of “carte blanche” to economic and political success and power at a later stage. Sectarianism, on the other hand, was an unjustified norm among some political elements of our community of Chileans exile and for the record, sectarianism was also present in some of the British element dealing with the solidarity campaign with Chile. Many Chileans like me suffered this intrusive and abusive political behaviour which hampered our spirit and the solidarity work with Chile. There are many Chileans and British names and surnames associated with sectarianism in the collective memory of the exiles Chileans. Certainly I have my own names and surnames to remember.

In those days people, and indeed the left-wing parties, had their own political agenda in relation to the solidarity work being organised in Britain. We Chileans had plenty of evidences to suggest that some members of left-wing political parties during the Allende’s period had the tendency to be sectarians.

Based on these evidences it was predictable that old sectarian practices present in Chile were to survive in Scotland among our community of political exiles. It was a sad fact that the tone of the Solidarity movement with Chile in Scotland run, at time, along the sectarian line - this was not good news for the British Solidarity Campaign with Chile. If I were to justify sectarianism, I would dare to say that the sectarians did valuable work for the cause of Chile. I may conclude by saying that it was an individualistic cultural manifestation in order to survive a very difficult political situation about Chileans in Scotland.

Why for some “Chilean exiles” the political commitment with Chile was not there?

If I were to be fair to them, perhaps, in the case of those with academic responsibilities, their university work loads were so great that they did not have the time to work with the Chilean solidarity campaign. I have to contrast, however, their actions against those Chileans who also had academic and personal responsibilities, people with children, who still managed to take a very active role in the Solidarity Campaign for Chile in Britain. In Scotland there were a number of these people.

What was the type of studies that these academic people carried out in Scotland? and what had been of their lives?

Some of these people studied social and economic sciences dealing with Chile and Latin America. Some, of course, went to do other things: I.T. and computer related technologies. Some of them become experts in their field; some becomes tutors and professors at British Colleges and Universities. Others have gone to work in other European countries, other have gone to work in the industry. Some people went back to work in Chile and other areas of the world. Some of these people tend to publish regularly papers in specialist publications and specialist books, some regularly published their own specialist books, and many are quoted by their friends in the academic's world.

To become an exile, it means to take advantage of the situation? or it involves responsibilities as well?

My experience in Scotland does not lead me to conclude that we, Chileans in exiles played at any time the role of victims for personal gain. (Theme discussed when talking about opportunism) Most of us Chileans in exiles were proud of our left-wing roots, proud and aware of our culture and conscious of our political delicate position in Scotland.

Whatever thing we did in those days, was in order to survive in sadness and in happiness a difficult and a unique situation. I can testify that most Chileans in Scotland did their best to respond to the challenge of being an exile person in the best way possible and with dignity! Many Chileans tried to carry their political duties in this country firmly, with humbleness and correctness. No Chilean terrorist about!

The notion of exile and responsibility went hand in hands in our community. There were, of course, a few Chileans in Scotland who disengaged completely from the solidarity work with Chile preferring instead to concentrate on their personal activities. Nobody in our community was in a moral position to judge their behaviour: we were all responding to our situation in the manner we feel more convenient. I personally responded with responsibility if I have to consider the fact that I was not a militant of any political party. I can testify that a number of people who had said that had been members of political parties in Chile did not responded to the solidarity work. I saw in them a lack of commitment. Even then, I think, we are not in a moral or political position to judge their action. *Who were we to do so? Who am I to do so?*

An exile person was, in my view, entitled to start a new life, especially if that person has been in a concentration camp or put in a prison or tortured. The bulk of Chileans in exile responded, in my view, very well to the solidarity work required from them either from their organisations in Chile or from the British solidarity Campaign.

The exile community in Scotland and in Britain was advocated to promote, as much as it was possible, the Chilean case and conscious that the solidarity work was not about to promote their own cases as refugees.

On a personal level, I spent years and years supporting the political and cultural work of the Chilean political parties operating in Scotland and the solidarity work done by the British Solidarity Campaign with Chile including the work of Amnesty International. I hope that I am entitled to say that I have dozen of letters supporting my claim.

I have an interesting recording* in which I and my wife, on the 1st of June of 1982, were invited to sing at Bellahouston Park in Glasgow for nearly 300,000 people from all over Scotland who came to see the Polish Pope John Paul II. For the record: we did not sing in front of the Pope. We were part of the official programme to receive the Pope. We did not sing a Victor Jara song instead we sang, La resfalosa: Doña Javiera Carrera not before, I gave a short speech to the multitude about the situation in Chile. This is part of what I said, and just in case there is a recording available, in the English language:

*“Good afternoon to everybody,
We also live in Scotland but it is not our home land. We are here living in exile because you, the people of Scotland, has made us welcome and because Chile, our home land, become a land of fascism, terror and corruption. The Chilean army, like other armies of our continent in order to defend the interests of a few, thousand and thousand of people has been killed...”*

Taking Advantages?

As I have said before, I do not recall as being the norm of the Chilean in exiles taken advantages of their political situation for personal gain. As I have said before, I do not believe that the Chileans refugees came to Scotland to profit from their condition. By the same token, as I have said before, I would no deny the fact that more than one member of our community of Chileans in exile embarked on activities which were detrimental to our exile community. It would be very unwise from me here to mention names and circumstances. I can say that I have at least one piece of written evidence showing how a member of our Edinburgh group of exile behaved, in my view, in a rather appalling way against a Scotsman interested in the solidarity with Chile.

Many Chileans once in exile began to re-build their life to make up for the sense of loss.

As Pinochet had been ousted from power by the ballot box at the end of the 1990s, a good number of Chileans began to return to a new Chile where everything was a bit different. Those of us who decided to remain in Scotland already had begun the process of re-building our lives and making steady progress in many directions. In this process, not only did some people obtain a good education, a good job or valuable material things. In addition, Chileans were able to gain an extraordinary and valuable human experience. It has been my case and I am sure, the case of several Chileans still living in Scotland – 2009.

* See on this webpage: "MEMORIES". > J.Paul II visit to Bellahouston Park, 1982 > Pope Gallery>Playing for the Pope

Once in Scotland I had no alternative but to transform my sense of loss into a positive experience. I will dare to say that most Chileans did the same. (There were exceptions of course). It was difficult to adapt, not only to a new country very different to Chile but to become accustomed to the experience of being a political exile. It was hard to absorb the assimilation processes, of integration for example. We cannot forget that most Chileans refugees being settled in Scotland were forced to leave Chile and this fact has on us some unwelcome psychological consequences.

Can we regard the theme of exile as part of Chilean history?

The story of the Chilean in exiles in Scotland, as a human experience, has to be told. This is why I write about it. But who must tell the story?: a historian?, a journalist?, a sociologist?, a politician? a Chilean exile?. I think anybody who was an active or a passive protagonist of the story of the Chilean exiles in Scotland. Certainly, and this is my belief, a Chilean person is in a much better position to qualify for this. It does not mean, of course, that a foreign historian, a foreign journalist, a foreign sociologist, a foreign politician cannot do it. An exile will be put the extra dimension to the story. What I am interested here is about the treatment of that story and every Chileans knows that our story in this country is saturated with small and big particulars. The theme of exile continued to permeate, with strong emotions, my own life and the lives of others.

We all learned that our story is about living as a group a unique situation in a unique place. I could not write the story of the Chileans in exile in England. I know little about it. However, we can say with certainty that Chileans in Scotland shared many things with the Chileans in exile in England.

Certainly, the experiences of thousand and thousand of Chilean citizens being in exile in many countries of the world make this a worthy subject of study for Chileans and foreigners alike. It becomes part of Chilean history on its own right. Of course, it is another matter if the Chilean people regard “Chilean in exile” as part of the history of Chile. Of course, it is another matter if the Scottish people regard “Chilean in exile in Scotland” as part of the Scottish history. Professor Rebolledo* seems to assert that it is a subject that not many in Chile are prepared to speak about it in public:

“It caught my attention that during many years, the theme of exile of a good number of men and women, who had lived the experience of exile, was not a topic to be discussed in public places”.

Rebolledo wrote the following in the prologue of her book: *Memories of Desarraigo*:

“To publish this book is to rescue from the silence something that was dispersed and accumulated in a diversity of conversations. It was these facts that lead me to want to preserve the information and the emotions which surfaces from these conversations. It was a matter to avoid that everything was going to end up in the oblivion; this is because I believe that it is legitimate to want to make the silence speaks about history to differentiate it from oblivion”.

*Loreto Rebolledo, Universidad de Chile, Profesor asistente, Escuela de periodismo, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales,

Can we regard the theme of Chilean exile in Scotland as part of Scottish history?

I would argue that the arrival of a good number of Chileans in Scotland since 1974 marked an event worth of a “wee” entry in the Scottish history books. I wonder what the libertarian Scotsman Lord Cochrane would have thought of the behaviour of the Chilean Navy, he helped to organised in the 19th century, which in the 1970s and 1980s was using its ships, most of them built in Scotland, to torture Chileans.

It is true that our community of Chileans is small. This small community, however, has begun to produce professionals at different levels and to work in a variety of fields in Scotland. In doing so, they are contributing to the development of this country. (Chilean loss was a Scottish gain). Here we have Oscar:

From the Scottish Government news we read

Charity regulator appointments

“Minister for Community Safety Fergus Ewing today announced the appointment of three new members to the Board of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Welcoming the new Board members, Mr Ewing said:

“I’m pleased to appoint Fiona Ballantyne, David Hughes Hallett and Oscar Mendoza to the Board of OSCR. These appointments will help to strengthen the Board as it faces important challenges and continues to drive forward the objective of building public confidence through effective, fair and proportionate regulation of charities in Scotland.

Oscar Mendoza - a Social Scientist with post graduate qualifications in Social Research Methods who works as Assistant Director of Operations for the Big Lottery Fund, where his remit includes planning, resourcing, budgeting, performance management and internal communications. Formerly, he managed the overseas projects section of the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF), and has been a Board member of VETAID UK and Management Committee member of the Scottish Churches World Exchange. He has worked extensively with charities focussed on human rights in Chile and Central America, acting as General Council member for the Chile Committee for Human Rights and treasurer for Central America Network Scotland and Chile Democratico (Scotland). He does not hold any other Ministerial appointments. These appointments will be for 4 years and will run from 9 June 2008 to 8 June 2012 “.

Chile has its own history of immigration too, with many people from Scotland settling throughout the years in our country. Greta Mackenzie’s book: *Why Patagonia?* (Stornoway, 1995) is a brief but a valuable contribution to the subject about those Scots who emigrate to South America in the 19th and 20s centuries.

Why Patagonia? It is a good attempt to inform us, here in Scotland, about the Scottish emigrants to Chile and Argentina. I know that their contribution is much appreciated in those countries. Greta’s book is a good effort to try to show from which part of Scotland these emigrants came from, why these people had to emigrate to Patagonia, what trades these emigrants were involved with, what are some of their stories as emigrants and what has been their contribution to the development of Chile and Argentina.

At least we can say that the Scottish element* in our culture has not been ignored in the narrative of the magnificent Chilean writer Francisco Coloane and the wonderful Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges (El Informe de Brodie). Of course not all has been good. According to Mr Arnold Morrison, there was one person, Alexander MacLennan, who was notorious for helping to exterminate the Onas, a group of indigenous people who used to inhabit Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego.

A million Chileans left their country.

It is estimated that about one million Chileans left the country as casualties of the Pinochet regime. Many of them, however, also left their country as a result of the neo-liberal economic policies of “la Concertación”, the post Pinochet almost democratic regime which since taken power has put effort and emphasis on neo-liberal microeconomic policies neglecting systematically, important social reforms which would have helped to reduce economic inequality in Chile.

“60% of the Chileans are poor or extremely poor. Meanwhile, banks registered a historic record of profits in the current financial year. These are the paradox of this segregated Chile” (Sunday 29th of October, 2006, La Nación of Santiago of Chile)

The “fortune” or the “misfortune” of these one million people raised such questions as: *what have been the social, the psychological, the political and the economic impact on the lives of the exiles after they left their country?*

What have been the psychological, the social, the political and the economic impact on their families left in Chile?

What have been the social, the economic and the political impact on Chile as a result of so many of its citizens, many of them highly qualified people, having to leave their country?

How much do we know about the negative response felt in Chile towards those exiles who have returned there?

How much money Chile receive from its emigrants living and working abroad?

Many in today’s Chile ask the question why we, did not remained in Chile “*to fight against the Dictatorship*”. According to Professor Loreto Rebolledo this challenge, from a Chilean to another Chilean, brings up the theme dealing with treason in the memory of many of those who remained in Chile “to fight” against the dictatorship.

Chilean exiles” had proved to be a good subject for Chilean writers and others

I have noticed that with the passing of time “Chileans in exiles or “refugees”, as we were called in Britain, become a recurrent theme in the imagination of many well known Chilean writers: Isabel Allende, José Donoso, Luis Sepulveda, Antonio Skarmeta, Roberto Bolaños, Roberto Ampuero, Alberto Fuguet, Marcela Serrano, Jorge Edwards, Ariel Dorfman to mention a few.

* Visit Duncan Campbell’s website at Patbrit. The British presence in Southern Patagonia.

I have also heard Coco Legrand, a sophisticated and well known Chilean comedian, as good as Billy Connolly, making jokes about the exiles people. We are under their focus and exposed, for bad or for good, to their own intellectual manipulation of a drama which affected thousands and thousands of Chileans living in all corner of the world.

30 years after the coup event, a Glasgow Caledonian University still find the subject of Chile as something worth to talk about.

I, along with other people, was invited by Glasgow Caledonian University to take part in a seminar and in an open forum called the other September 11th 1973*. The following extract was taken from the Glasgow Caledonian University web page:

Research Collections Witness Seminar and Open Forum- 29 November 2003. As part of Research Collections ongoing Witness Seminar and Open Forum series, Chile and Scotland: 30 years on took place on Saturday 29 November 2003.

On this dark and extremely wet morning in late November a disparate group of around 40 people came together in Glasgow Caledonian University to collectively remember and bare witness to a terrible but defining event of the 20th century. That event, the overthrowing of Chile's democratic government by a brutal military coup, ranks with the Spanish Civil War for its traumatic effect not only upon those directly embroiled but also on people throughout the world.

Many in Britain recall, as this seminar and forum testify, exactly where they were (much like the assassination of John F. Kennedy) when they heard the news of the Chilean coup and Allende's death. Particular thanks are due to Sandy Hobbs who chaired the seminar panel both effectively and compassionately. Sandy himself was a member of the Chile Committee for Human Rights and did much as an individual to help refugees from the Chilean coup and its aftermath including opening up his home to a Chilean family.

Jan Fairley's contribution was valuable on two counts, firstly she gave a first hand account, through the eyes of a young woman living in the Chile of the early 1970s, of the tense buildup to the coup, the coup itself and its appalling consequences. Secondly, Jan in her role as a documentary maker was able to offer an optimistic insight into the current political and social climate of post-Pinochet Chile.

Carlos Arrendondo a Chilean born musician and singer-song writer who has lived in Scotland since the coup described what for him remains the 'authentic' Chile, that of the poor working class barrios of Santiago. Carlos also emphasized that even under the present 'democratic' government the gulf between extreme wealth and extreme poverty remains and that many issues and grievances accumulated under the military dictatorship remain to be adequately addressed.

Sociologist **Philip O'Brien** spoke, from personal experience, about the UK and Scottish response to the needs of Chilean refugees. Philip mentioned the positive contribution of the incoming Labour government, trade unions, churches, local councils and concerned individuals.

* See on this webpage: "**MEMORIES > LINKS** and see those links starting with "The following links..."

Touching on possible parallels with today's refugee crisis Philip was both pessimistic and optimistic. While he thought that traditional structures which played an important role in the 1970's were now largely moribund he felt that new dynamic social forces were beginning to emerge. Retired Factory Convenor of Shop Stewards (Rolls Royce, East Kilbride)

Robert Somerville explained how and why he and his fellow workers (both of left and right) refused to work on eight engines belonging to Chilean Hawker Hunters jets. Robert also movingly told of a Chilean exile still resident in England who visited Rolls Royce to express his gratitude for the solidarity of the East Kilbride workforce. As a prisoner in Pinochet's Chile news of the Scottish workers exploit brought him new hope.

Oscar Mendoza who fared badly at the hands of the military after Allende's fall, including being held in the infamous 'National Stadium', has over the past 28 years built a new life for himself in Scotland. Oscar in an attempt to put in context his treatment after the coup described his relatively conventional and privileged childhood. He then told of his radicalization as a student and of his informal access to the circle around President Allende. Regarding present day prospects Oscar expressed the cautiously optimistic view that the current Chilean government was more complex and open to change than some pessimists thought. After a short break the discussion was opened to the floor. In an often very moving series of contributions the concern was repeatedly expressed that today's refugees were being made rather less welcome than their Chilean predecessors.

One contributor pointed out that Glasgow and Scotland had a long tradition of giving a new home to exiles, most notably during the 1930's. Another spoke of how the outlook and strategy of the British left was changed for ever by the events in Chile. The point was also made that the Chileans who fled here in the 1970s have made a valuable and unique contribution to the economic and cultural life of Scotland. Comments and testimony came from Chileans and Scots alike each adding a distinctly personal dimension to the 'cold' facts of history.

Those in attendance ranged in age from present day teenagers to people who were young or mature adults at the time of the Chilean coup. Despite the sadness inherent in many of the individual reminiscences, and the inclement weather outside, people felt that the event was extremely valuable and participants left in a very positive and upbeat frame of mind.

Getting news from Chile

I think most Chileans had great difficulties getting news from Chile. When we came the internet was not a common thing to have and the mobile phone did not exist. Most Chileans wanted desperately to know what was going on in Chile.

Radio news played a great part in keeping us informed about the situation in Chile and about the many activities of resistance against Pinochet outside Chile. What I did, like many Chileans, was to listen to short-wave radio. In this case, to try to tune into broadcasts from some eastern European countries like the Soviet Union, East Germany and countries like Cuba.

I was desperate to tune into Chilean radio stations and, from time to time, I was able to tune into one of them - it was a matter of having a good radio. I went to London to buy one. I remember so well that on the 21st of March, 1980, I was listening enthusiastically but with great difficulties to a Chilean radio broadcast when I heard

that Pinochet, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and on his way to the Philippines to meet the Dictator Marcos, received the news that Marcos had invented an excuse in order not to see him. What I heard on the radio was the shock and irritation of the speaker, saying that what Marcos had done to “the President of Chile” was an affront to the people of Chile. Years later, Imelda Marcos confessed that ‘they’ had been directly pressured by the U.S. government to leave Pinochet “in the air”.

From those days I still have a neat table which I drew up. It is a lists of some international radio stations I could tuned in to receive news about Chile.

Radio :	<i>Habana,</i>	<i>Moscow,</i>	<i>Lisboa,</i>	<i>Spain,</i>	<i>Suiza internacional,</i>	<i>Nacional</i>
Country:	Cuba	URSS	Portugal,	Madrid,	Suiza,	Chile
Language,	Spanish,	English,	Portugues,	Spanish,	Italian,	Spanish
Time of reception:	@7,30	@ 10pm.	@ 9,10	@9 pm	@17pm	@11,30pm
Location in meters:	16m	31m	31m	13m	13m	19m
Quality of reception:	no good	good	good	good	good	at times ok!
Comments	*p on the 8	p.on the 2	p on 10	p on 10	p on2 from Berna	p on the15

I was also able to get news of Chile via Brazilian radio, Radio Tirana in Spanish (Albania), The Voice of Vietnam (in English), Radio Berlin International (German Democratic Republic) in English at 1700hours on 41 m, very good reception.

My name has been mentioned in a couple of books

As far as I know my name has been mentioned in two books: “Song in High Summer” by Paul Baker, published in the U.S.A. by KNI in 1989 is one of those and it deals with the Pope’s visit to Glasgow in 1982.

“Astonishingly, for Scotland, the sun was blazing down. The crowd, gathering since morning, stood at 300,000, the largest ever in Scotland’s history. Bellahouston Park, Glasgow, June 2nd 1982: Pope John Paul II was concluding his first ever visit to Britain with an open air mass. From the stage the scarves and banners and faces stretched away for ever, swaying slowly to the massed singing of “We shall overcome”. On stage we were as motley a collection of nominal Catholics as he would ever meet. Sheila was a “traveller”, a singer from the wondering people of Scotland; Frank, unemployed, had just out walked us all as we carried three huge crosses the 40 miles through from Edinburgh, his feet toughened from pounding the pavements in search of work. Giovanna and Carlos were on the run from Pinochet’s torturers in Chile. Each was to sing and speak, of their experiences of injustice... the music of Carlos and Giovanna especially set us on fire,”... the gigantic crowd was captivated: somehow, from their dreadful experiences - far worse than anything we were ever likely to endure - these lone Chileans brought us comfort, laughter and life. Afterwards, they were in great demand. We did several concerts together. And from them I began, above all, to learn Victor’s music, he of the gentle hands and lovely songs”

The 7.84 Theatre Company

During my time in Scotland, more than 30 years, I have had many interesting artistic experiences and one of those marvellous experiences was with the 7.84 Theatre Company**.

* pointer on

** my website. **Culture** from here selects: 7:84 Theatre Company.

To work with John McGrath and his wife Liz MacLennan, John's political compañera, was a fantastic experience for me because I could see in John and Liz not only two politically committed people who had put theatre at the service of good social and political causes but two highly professional people: a playwright and an actress.

I worked with Liz and John in two plays: *The Baby and the Bathwater* and *The Alabannach* and, as a result, I travelled extensively in Britain and abroad. In both plays, my role was as a musician but in the first one I helped John to organise pieces of music and songs as well as performing them on stage. John and I wrote songs for this one-woman show with a strong Latin-American flavour and Liz and John persuaded me to sing in English which is something I do not enjoy doing.

The Baby and the Bathwater was used for a lot of solidarity work: for the miners' strikes, the Nicaraguan Health fund and to help to promote the book "I Rigoberta Menchu". Rigoberta has dedicated her entire life to publicizing the plight of Guatemala's indigenous peoples during and after the Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996), and to promoting indigenous rights in Guatemala. She was the recipient of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize and the Spanish Prince of Asturias Award in 1998.

In 1990, Elizabeth MacLennan wrote "*The Moon Belongs to Everyone*" published by Methuen, London, 1990. The book is Liz's account of the artistic development of the 7:84 Theatre Company, of which Liz was a co-founder with John. In this book, Liz generously speaks at some length about me and the things we used to do together as committed performers, navigating in solitary through the rough times of the Thatcher years:

"By now, Carlos Arredondo had joined us to play and sing the songs - some traditional from the Chilean Araucano Indians, some from Nicaragua today, some with new lyrics by John and music by Carlos. Carlos grew up and worked in Santiago, and fled via Peru to Glasgow in 1974 when the military coup overthrew Allende... Carlos, new to theatre, but not to committed activism, beautiful voice, fine guitar player, was to become the best of comrades. We struggled to make the show happen. For him to sing in English was difficult, especially pronunciation of 'Nobody's backyard', a song John wrote for him about the 'ordinary' US citizen's paranoia about preserving the 'hemisphere' from 'communism'...on a personal level Carlos is one of the most supportive people I've ever worked with; we made friends on our travels, by no means always 'the converted'...During the last week of evenings in the Lyceum studio we went during the day to some of the strike centres within reach of Edinburgh and did sections of the show for the miners and their families - usually after their lunch time in the canteen.

We joined the picket at Bilston Glen Colliery and watched the scab shift coming off duty get their dues from the women's support group. We made a lot of friends. Carlos got a warm welcome for his stories about miners in Chile and his haunting Nicaragua songs...that Christmas, the STUC and Alex Clark ran a huge benefit for the miners' families and children at the King's Theatre in Glasgow. Carlos and I were on the bill along with Anne Lorne Gillies, John Cairney, Wildcat and many others..."

My own participation in solidarity work

My involvement in solidarity work has been through my own music. I must say that I have been constant throughout the years. I am glad to say that, still today, in the year 2004 (30 years later) I continue to be involved in anything related to my country. With the Chilean classical guitarist Galo Ceron, whose family came as refugee to

Dundee, I have been presenting in Edinburgh concerts to celebrates the works of Violeta Parra and Victor Jara (2009)

As I said, in (Nov. 2003), Glasgow Caledonian University invited me, along with others who were involved in the Chile Solidarity Campaign of the 1970s and 1980s, to be part of a discussion panel to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the coup. Not only this, but the same university also invited me to do a concert for them. BBC Radio Scotland recorded my concert as part of a half-hour program about me called “The World in Our Streets” which the BBC broadcast on two occasions in December 2003.

Without being conceited I have to say that I have been more militant than many of my compatriots, including those who belonged, or say that they belonged, to political parties. A very important day was when we were invited to the Rolls Royce factory in East Kilbride to give a well-deserved musical serenade to its workers who, at the time, were having their own personal battle with Pinochet’s regime. The Rolls Royce workers had simply refused to repair the Roll-Royce engines fitted to Hawker Hunter jets belonging to the Chilean Air Force. The Hawker Hunter jets were the ones involved in the bombardment, on the 11th of September, 1973, of La Moneda, the presidential palace with the elected President of Chile, members of his family and many other people inside. (From these pages I would like to thank the East Kilbride workers for their courage, sacrifice and solidarity)

Another interesting day for me was when I took part in a Victor Jara Song Festival held in London. I was voted the best performer, with my song *Latin America does not belong to North America*.