

THE KIDNAPPED - MISSING PERSONS.

The most dramatic chapter in the Chilean tragedy.-

In violation of the UN General Assembly's resolution, the most heinous crimes are still being committed, even though more savagely in Chile. In concrete terms, this is manifested in arrests of leading workers and trade union personalities, and also employees and farmers, intellectuals and students whose names are known all over Chile. They are arrested by Pinochet gestapo agents - the Department of National Security, DINA. Not a trace of them is found since their arrest.

Vigorous actions are needed to stop this wave of violence.

Abductions have assumed particularly ominous proportions in the last few days. What is atrocious is that abductions have become part and parcel of everyday life in Chile. Urgent measures are required to save those abducted.

There are over 2 thousand cases of abduction on record of authoritative international organizations. These are cases of persons searching for their missing relatives with persistence and at the risk of their lives. What is important is that there are witnesses of the arrests. The real figures are much higher than those cited officially.

Since the Socialist party leaders Exequiel Ponce, Carlos Lorca, and Ricardo Lagos were arrested in 1975, nothing has been known about them. Since a deputy General Secretary of the Chilean Communist Party Víctor Díaz was arrested last May together with Mario Zamorano, Jorge Muñoz, Jaime Donato, and other communist party leaders, there has been no news about them. In the last weeks of December in Santiago, arrests were made of the prominent Chilean educator, historian, and former member of the Supreme Council of the Chilean University Fernando Ortiz, the Director of the Transport Enterprise at the Popular Unity Government Horacio Cepeda, leading trade union figures Edras Pinto, Waldo Pizarro, and Fernando Navarro, as well as scores of other citizens who have disappeared from the scene since then.

No one knows anything nor does anyone talk about anything.

The bulletin, published in Santiago by the Solidarity Vicariate of the Chilean Catholic Church, in its edition for the first half of December carried a commentary by a Santiago bishop assistant Jorge Hourton under the heading 'Epilogue to the fate of those who have disappeared. This commentary says in part:

"I know many families of those who have "disappeared". All of them have been telling me about their relatives with humility, courage, and unflinching hope. One elderly woman has told me she has been knitting gloves and a nose cover for her husband" because he was taken away what he had on and he might feel cold".

Others say: "If he has died, tell us about it. But do not keep us in ignorance for so long". Such are facts. And facts are stubborn things. If those who have disappeared are alleged to have committed some crimes, why not bring them to trial? No one says anything.

These are just a few of the facts. The Chilean Catholic Church has observed more than one religious service in prayer for all these wretched ones. At the same time it has accomplished important work to expose these crimes and exert pressure on courts and other official bodies. But so far these actions have brought no result.

Almost all "disappeared" detainees in Chile find themselves in the same position: they are arrested by DINA agents at home with witnesses present or in the street on their way to work or back home. In some cases, their whereabouts are found. In other cases, this is not possible. No official explanation is given on this score.

Here are a few of the thousands of cases of "disappeared":

On November 3, 1976, at noon, in the very heart of Santiago, a former member of the city council of Concepcion Carlos Contreras Maluje, who is 29 and pharmacist by profession, was hit by a bus that passed by. 30 witnesses saw carabineers and plain-cloth policemen come up to him as he was lying on the roadway his head wound heavily bleeding, took him up and dragged him a blue Fiat or Peugeot car. He has disappeared without a trace and there has been no news about him ever since.

Manuel guerrero, 27, a teacher, was siezed while he was walking with his wife in a Santiago street. Plain-cloth agents drove him in an unknown destination. That took place on June 14, 1976. When he tried to resist, he was shot at blank point. The "Habeas Corpus", given in his defence, was turned down since the Ministry for the Interior declared that he had not been arrested. His wife found him a few days after in a medical ward of the "Tres Alamos" concentration camp. It was good her girl friend reported her about his whereabouts. Otherwise she would never have found him. In November when 300 prisoners were set free, Guerrero was transferred to another concentratin camp and "disappeared" again. Nine days later, as a result of numerous requests by lawyers and leading personalities and also under pressure from the international public Guerrero was sent out of Chile.

Carlos Lorca Tobar, a doctor, a deputy and the General Secretary of the Socialist Youth of Chile, was arrested by DINA agents on June 25, 1975. The military government had repeatedly denied his arrest, but the Pan American Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States after carefully investigating this case established in its final 1958 decision for 1975 that the exposed facts should be considered and regarded as proven.

The Commission established that Carlos Lorca Tobar was arrested by the Chilean government agents on June 25, 1975, and since then nothing has been heard about him. The commission recommended the Junta to carry out an inquiry into the case and to punish those guilty. Marta Lidia Ugarte Roman was arrested, according to evidence by a working group of lawyers of the UN Human Rights Commission, on August 9, 1976. The 42 year-old Marta Ugarte was a teacher and a communist activist. Under the Popular Unity Government, she held a responsible post in the department of industry and trade of the Economics Ministry. On September 12, 1976 her corps with the broken vertebra and a wire tied around her neck was found on the Los Molles beach, 182 kilometers from the Pan-American North road.

It is impossible to name all those who have disappeared. Among them are trade union figures, such as Bernardo Araya and Exequiel Ponce, specialists Jorge Muñoz, Ivan Insunza and David Silberman, political leaders, for example Víctor Díaz, Mario Zamorano, and many many others. Only solidarity and pressure from the international public can save their lives.

Such are facts.-

In an interview given to the newspaper "El Mercurio" on December 19, 1976 in Santiago, the Chilean military regime leader, General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte alleged that Jorge Montes was the only arrested Chilean. Two days before that the General Secretary of the Chilean Communist Party Luis Corvalán had been sent out of the country. Since then another 18 political prisoners have left for other countries. The Junta listed them as "dangerous". Besides another 300 Chileans have left the "Tres Alamos" and "Puchuncavi" concentration camps.

However, official reports submitted by the Junta, carry no information about the cases of "disappeared" and "missing", a special category of Chilean citizens, invented by DINA.

A report prepared by a working group of lawyers and submitted by the UN Human Rights Commission to the UN General Assembly notes that the evidence the group has obtained from many reliable sources indicates that the trend, connected with the disappearance of people, prevailing in Chile since September of 1973, still continuing and all indicates that in many separate periods it has been growing in scale and intensity.

"Any person can be deprived of freedom without any order for arrest - the report reads furthermore - he can be brought to unofficial detention centres, where by implication he can stay as an arrested "officially". The people subjected to this form of arrest go through three different periods: sometimes they are released- in many cases without much ado they are thrown into the street or put them into a camp of official detention after an arrest order

is issued, in some cases, a few days after the arrest, thereby recognizing their detention and arrest. However, many people (a reliable source which provides only partial information puts their number since January 1975 at about 100) have never been released. Nor have they been transferred to official arrest centres and consequently they have been listed as "missing".

Paragraph 253 of the report prepared by the working group of the Human Rights Commission last September contains ample documentary evidence about reprisals in Chile. But actually the number of repressive actions is a few times greater than is indicated in the paragraph. A few days before the report was endorsed first at the Third Commission and then on December 16, 1976 at the UN General Assembly, the military regime had released 318 persons, and ~~then~~ Luis Corvalan. It was then that August Pinochet alleged that Jorge Montes was the only prisoner in Chile.

But undeliberately, the pro-Junta magazine "Qué Pasa", has refuted Pinochet allegation by reporting that "from among the people, connected with underground activity or the Popular Unity Government, 3300 are under trial or detention". And this is not counting the enormous number of "missing" which, according to reliable sources exceeds 2500. The seriousness of this problem makes it the gravest in Chile today.

Early last year the Solidarity Vicariate of the Santiago Archbishop office sent a special request to the Chairman of the Supreme Judiciary Organ. It set a number of problems connected with human rights in Chile. The 3 chapter points out that not counting the disappearance of the people as a result of clashes with Armed Forces, there is a record of numerous arrests of the people in the period from 1974 to 1975. These people subsequently disappeared and at present nothing is known about their whereabouts! All the attempts that have been made so far to find our disappeared countrymen who were earlier arrested have been futile" - the request reads.

Silence surrounds their fate even now when the top authorities and President declare that the government will conduct an inquiry.

The request by solidarity Vicariate of the Catholic Church declares that "as long as there is no protection against arrests, interrogation and isolation, practiced by DINA and as long as due to the absence of civil rights because of the effective stage of emergency any Chilean can be arrested without charge, there is no doubt that society will be a victim of fear and anxiety. Uncertainty and risk build up when the organization, making arrest, is guided by the principles of "security", which are never made public, and under the cover of secret norms, the content of which the citizens tries to grasp by intuition."

Charges, concrete examples, and cases of missing are dangerously growing. In their address to Ministers who arrived as delegates for the Sixth General Assembly of the Organization of American States in June 1976, five outstanding Chilean lawyers, including Jaime Castillo Velasco and Eugenio Velasco Letelier, both deported from the country in early August 1976, proved that the number of arrested and missing was growing from day to day in Chile. The whole world was shocked when reports appeared in the Argentine and Brazilian press that 119 Chileans had been killed or had been reported missing as a result of clashes between guerrillas and Armed Forces. Those were false reports. Because actually, that number of killed and missing included the young people who had been detained by the Chilean authorities or their representatives. Their detention was illegal and the place of their detention has never been made known to the families of the arrested. Requests to report their whereabouts have been turned down. In its inquiry, the Ministry of the Interior stuck to the instruction of DINA, which is responsible for the illegal arrest and the life of these people. The problem remains unresolved since the government, despite its official promises, has given no explanation, admission nor evidence of its inquiry. Today, the number of those missing is much higher. The Supreme Chamber, exercising judiciary power, has refused to appoint a minister to investigate charges of mass disappearances.

During 1976, the situation with disappearances worsened dramatically. The incalculable number of refuge proposals made to tribunals gave no result. And this was despite the mounting international movement, charges and actions by the Catholic Church and all bodies and institutions, which have anxieties over the trampling of civil rights.

In the last two months of 1976, no less than 300 persons were reported as missing. As a report by the United Nations pointed out, some appear after recovering from brutal torture in a concentration camp, like Jorge Montes for instance. Others are found mutilated on a beach or in other deserted places, like Marta Lidia Ugarte or Carmelo Soria, for example. And still others, there are several thousand of them have never been found so far.

The list of missing are limitless. As a rule, the Ministry for the Interior denies any detention. And when it is pressed for an inquiry, it declares it does not know the fact of the existence of many people and then says a mistake has taken place.

When the International Commission Investigating Crimes committed by the Junta in Chile gathered in Nuremberg in the last week of November 1976, it accused the Junta of making illegal arrest of the people to declare them missing afterwards. Acting on the Gestapo pattern, DINA makes arrests without informing relatives of the arrested and taking them to secret places. All attempts by relatives or lawyers to learn their whereabouts bring no result as a rule. In cases of granting an assylum, the Junta authorities

reply to tribunals that the persons concerned does not figure out as an arrested.

Such is the method of the chilean secret police. At the meeting of solidarity with chilean democrats in Moscow on January 4, the General Secretary of the Chilean Communist Party Luis Corvalan says: "this is the most dramatic chapter in the chilean tragedy. The fate of those missing is unknown. Their mothers, wives, and children go from one place to another, resort to all means available to learn at least something about their relatives. Their grief and suffering are beyond description. In these conditions, no one has the feeling confidence at home.

Luis Corvalan then made a special request: "I want you and all the peoples that fought for my freedom reveal the same strenght and determination to save the lives of all those arrested by DINA and to get the release of all prisoners".

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