

Chile: 'The people will regain power'

Story by MELODY WARD
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Editor's note: The Chilean group Inti Illimani travels around the world singing songs that are forbidden in their home country. Since 1973, they have operated from a base in Rome. Last week they appeared at the University during a 13-city nationwide tour. Following the concert, group spokesperson Horacio Duran granted the Emerald an exclusive interview.

The record industry controls people's tastes, according to Duran.

"They select what they want the people to hear," he says. "The ideology presented to us through the media is a capitalistic and reactionary one. As an example in terms of Latin America, the popular music that has been most widely diffused is that which brings out the more negative values of our people."

Duran says the contemporary Latin American popular music is devoid of any "progressive" content. "Love is seen from a fatalistic point of view," he says. "It is music that calls out to the hopelessness of life; very superficial both lyrically and musically."

In contrast, Chilean folk music, traditionally has had a strong emphasis on politics. For that reason, Duran explains, much of it is banned by the present government.

"The music is forbidden because Fascism allows only that which is in agreement with its ideology," he explains. "Folkloric music and the New Chilean Song Movement have continued to develop in Chile. The junta (military government) has not been able to prevent this."

Duran said many folk groups continue to sing in Chile, although soon after the coup a decree forbade usage of many traditional Incan and other South American Indian instruments.

"The fascists do not want this, but they cannot stop it," he commented. "We know that some of our instrumental songs are played, without saying that they are ours. Right now there is a record of ours in Chile, although they wanted to prevent it from being produced and sold there."

The emergence of traditional folk music and the New Chilean Song Movement in the '60s played an important role in bringing about the social-democratic government of Salvador Allende. For singers like the Inti-Illimani, the rebirth of that cultural heritage was a basic way of fighting "cultural colonialism."

Duran observed that about 10 percent of the Chilean population is presently living outside the country for political and economic reasons. "Any person with a minimum amount of human sensitivity, even though they do not agree with us politically, should be concerned about this fact alone," he remarked.

He added that economic aid from the United States goes "to the hands of a few already enriched." In regard to Pres. Carter's human rights policy, Duran declared, "We ask him to put into practice everything he has said. We think that the mere existence of the



Horacio Duran



Photo by Erich Boekelheide

The exiled Chilean musical group Inti Illimani are now on tour in the United States. Members of the group

say they hope that the people of Chile will one day rise against the military forces now in power there.

junta in Chile is in itself a violation of the right of our people to elect their own representatives."

He stressed that the best way to restoring human rights to Chile is to stop sending the junta any kind of military or economic aid. "The people will not suffer because this economic help does not insure their well-being," he explained.

According to United Nations and Organization of American States (OAS) data, the junta has received more aid than any other Chilean government preceding the coup. But the poverty in Chile is greater than every before.

Duran said a Chilean worker earns from 50 to 60 dollars per month, with the cost of living quite similar that in the United States. "In Chile there is such control of information that people are completely unaware of this economic situation," he said. "We can forgive a person that agrees with the junta because of ignorance, but we cannot accept, in the face of this reality, that they should continue to agree with it."

The overthrow was supported by about half the population, according to Duran. "But not all of those who supported it were in agreement with what followed," he said. "Obviously, many people were misled."

The politics that predominated were those of ultra-right, linked to the fascist group that exists in Chile. These groups carry the policy of Chile today," he added.

"The political right manipulated the concept of defense of liberty and democracy before the coup," Duran recalled. "But in practice there had never been so much democracy and liberty in Chile as during the Allende government. Democracy and freedom existed to such an extent that the right had the liberty to organize the coup publicly, a mistake for which we will never stop repenting."

Duran affirmed that multi-national corporations operating in Chile supported the overthrow economi-

cally through the intervention of the CIA. "Historically, the national resources of Chile have not always belonged to our people," he said. "They have instead belonged to multi-nationals, principally those from the United States."

Duran said that the chances of overthrowing the junta were slim, but not impossible. "The junta will be overthrown by the people," he affirmed. "I cannot say how, the people of Chile will do that."

"It is a very difficult struggle because of the power of the multi-nationals," he said. "The fact that the junta has received more economic aid than any other government should have translated into greater popular

*Winds of the people speak to me,
winds of the people carry me.
They scatter my heart
and blow through my throat.
So the poet will go on singing
as long as my spirit breathes,
down the roads of the people
both now and forever.*

— Victor Jara

Though Victor Jara was publicly executed shortly after the coup, his music continues to relay the story of Chile worldwide through performances by groups like the Inti-Illimani. Jara was a laborer, folk song poet, and theater director. He frequently performed in concerts with Inti-Illimani and is considered one of the primary founders of the New Chilean Song Movement.

support for it. But at this moment 80 percent of the people are against the junta and want the situation changed."

He observed, "The poverty of the Chilean people means the profit of some people here."

Although the group's greatest desire is to return to Chile as soon as possible, Duran said there have been positive aspects to their exile. "We have become aware of the support of people in many countries for our people," he said. "We think new winds are blowing for humanity as people in far-off nations are becoming more aware of struggles in other nations. We move in this world of solidarity — a positive aspect of our work, although it's very painful to live so far away from our country."

Duran hopes people in the United States understand that the question of who should determine Chile's future is of paramount importance. "At least give us the right to choose our future," he requested.

"In Chile there was a coup. That is real," he concludes. "Thousands and thousands of people are now dead or political prisoners. There are economic and political facts showing that the multi-nationals supported the coup, though many people ignores them. These facts cannot be denied, particularly the involvement of the corporations."

*Here I say goodbye, returning
to my house, in my dreams
returning to the patagonia where
the wind pounds the stables
and the ocean spits ice.
I'm a poet, nothing more:
I love all of you.
I wander around the world I love:
In my country they send miners to jail
and soldiers order the judges.
But I love my small cold country
to its very roots....
I didn't come to resolve anything.
I came here to sing
and for you to sing with me.*

By Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, a fragment
from "Let the Rail-splitter Awake,"
CANTO GENERAL.

When Neruda wrote "Let the Rail-splitter Awake," he was evoking the image of Lincoln and what he believed to be the authentic spirit of the American people, says Enrique Lamadrid.

Lamadrid helped rework translations of Neruda to make them more dynamic and concrete for use in the Inti-Illimani concert last Sunday.

"Inti-Illimani's concert tour itself is kind of an appeal to the democratic spirit that they believe exists among the American people," he says.

People tend to forget that Chile's democratic tradition spanned 150 years before the military coup in 1973, according to Lamadrid.

"One of the purposes of the Inti-Illimani tour is to reach the real people in this country as opposed to the government," he adds. "In terms of victims, we also are sometimes the victims of our government."