



## The People United? Australian solidarity with Latin America since Allende

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### Introduction

Australia's vibrant but largely-invisible history of international solidarity dates from the time of colonial occupation in 1788. The first documented experiences featured Irish political prisoners deported as slave labour to Australia—"convicts" in colonial terminology—linking up with Aboriginal warriors fighting native extermination to wage a guerrilla war against their common enemy, the land-hungry English colonialists.<sup>2</sup> Three iconic episodes capture this popular rebellious tradition: the Eureka Stockade, a miners' uprising at Ballarat against the colonial government in 1854<sup>3</sup>, which flew the Southern Cross flag later adopted by construction unions, the republican movement and solidarity brigades to the Cuban Revolution; popular rejection of military conscription and refusal to fight for British imperialism in World War I; and Australia's provision of one of the largest per capita contingents in the International Brigade which fought for the Republic against fascism during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Against that background, the transition to solidarity struggles fought at the political rather than military level came readily to the Left, once the Arctic winds of military dictatorship began to freeze the decolonization and socialist projects in much of Latin America, in the wake of US-sponsored military coups in Guatemala (1954), Brazil (1964), and Chile (1973).

To comprehend the rapidity and depth with which the Australia - Latin American solidarity (ALAS)

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<sup>2</sup>See for instance Raymond Evans, "The Country Has Another Past. Queensland and the History Wars", in Frances Peters-Little, Ann Curthoys and John Docker (eds.), *Passionate Histories. Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia*, Canberra, ANU E-Press, 2010, pp. 9-38; and Anna Haebich, *Broken Circles. Fragmenting Indigenous Families, 1810-2000*, Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2000, pp. 205-207, 425.

<sup>3</sup>C. M. H. Clark, *A History of Australia*, Vol. IV, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1978, pp. 61-83.

movement took root from the early 1970s, a brief retrospective may help; ALAS did not, as Hegel might have it, descend from the clouds. Evidence points to three historic phases. During the first, c.1850-1930, the embryonic colonial nation had modest socioeconomic relations with Latin America, initiated by Chilean wheat and later nitrate shipments to the starving colonies in the 1850s.<sup>4</sup> This period also embraced the white Utopian socialist colony established by William Lane in Paraguay in the early 1890s followed by significant emigration to Argentina in the early twentieth century, and the simultaneous arrival of the first militant Spanish and Argentine women workers in Northern Australia.<sup>5</sup> They were shortly to play a key role in establishing the Communist Party's strongest non-metropolitan base in the legendary "Red North" of Queensland, sugarcane land where organised labour won major victories against draconian bosses and their sometimes-lethal working conditions and rapidly developed a mature internationalism, inspired by "the presence of an anti-fascist working class group with a sense of involvement in the European situation."<sup>6</sup>

The second phase, c.1930-1970, begins with the Spanish Civil War and runs through to the end of liberal capitalism. In Spain, an Australian contingent spiced with Italian, Spanish and Yugoslav refugees from fascism joined forces with all manner of Latin American exiles and volunteers—"the heroic example of the solidarity and universality of democracy" in La Pasionaria's words<sup>7</sup>—to defend the fledgling republic against superior forces supported by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and numerous Western corporations. Spanish Relief Committees across the Australian continent publicised the imminent threat of fascism, and provided the International Brigade with financial and logistic support and a steady supply of nurses, support workers and militia volunteers.<sup>8</sup> In the global conflagration which followed, the highest-octane fuel available, from the super exploitation of oil workers in Trinidad and Tobago, saved London in the Battle of Britain—by giving British pilots superior manoeuvrability—and contributed handsomely throughout to the eventual triumph of the allied forces whose Left, in the Australian case, spoke not of World War but of the Great Anti-

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<sup>4</sup>Charles Pregger-Román, "The Origin and Development of the Bourgeoisie in Nineteenth-Century Chile", *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 10, Nos. 2-3 (1983), pp. 39 - 59; William F. Maloney, Osmel Manzano and Andrew Warner, "Missed Opportunities: Innovation and Resource-Based Growth in Latin America", *Economía*, Vol. 3, N° 1 (2002), pp. 111-167; John Bellamy Foster and Fred Magdoff, "Liebig, Marx, and the depletion of soil fertility: Relevance for today's agriculture", *Monthly Review*, Vol. 50, N° 3 (July-August 1998), pp. 32-45.

<sup>5</sup>Robert Mason, "Women on the march: radical Hispanic migrants in Northern Australia", *Labour History*, N° 99, November 2010, pp. 149-164.

<sup>6</sup>Diane Menghetti, *The Red North: The Popular Front in North Queensland*, Cairns, James Cook University History Department, 1981, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted in unknown author, "La Pasionaria Memorial", sighted 31 October 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/whereilive/coast/stages.shtml?walk=strathclyde&stage=7>

<sup>8</sup>Unknown editor, *Australians and the Spanish Civil War: Two historic war-time pamphlets to honour all those who struggled for freedom and democracy in Spain, 1936-1939*, Melbourne, Red Pen Publications, 1986.

Fascist War. Nonetheless Caribbean oil workers continued “working for the yanqui dollar”.<sup>9</sup>

During the 1970s—the first decade of the third and current phase—solidarity organisations arose across the world both in principled opposition to U.S. imperialism in Latin America, and as practical responses to its “collateral damage”. As Brown and Charlip have argued, Washington’s self-interested maintenance of repressive regimes across the region produced world-wide Latin American diasporas.<sup>10</sup> In Australia’s case, these included significant numbers of political and economic refugees, especially Salvadoreans, Argentines, Guatemalans, Chileans, Uruguayans and Colombians. The conjuncture of Latin American activists escaping authoritarian regimes and the broad-based coalition of Church, Left, labour organisations, human rights groups and Latin Americanists generated lasting solidarity with progressive and revolutionary movements which confronted and, in some cases, continue to confront U.S. intervention and ruling elites in Latin America and the Caribbean. These chapters of social, cultural and political history remain understudied and largely unrecorded in any organised conventional way. This article attempts to recover and rethink this area of hybrid popular struggle, tangential at best for ensconced academia and the political structures they frequent and represent, but vital to focus countries and heuristic for Australian’s future.

### **What is solidarity?**

The most common definitions emphasise a political union which arises out of common interests and responsibilities between members of a social group, a social class or people. In the English-speaking world, the song ‘Solidarity Forever’ may be its best-known trade union expression. But its best-known Left expression globally is “¡El pueblo unido jamás será vencido!”—“The people united will never be defeated!”—arguably of nineteenth century Spanish origin, and the battle cry of Latin American liberation struggles from Allende’s Chile (1970-1973) to exiled president Mel Zelaya’s triumphant return to Honduras in mid 2011.<sup>11</sup> But while solidarity tends to be associated with the political Left, capitalism and the ruling class also practice it, generally to consummate effect: to recognise this, one only need look at the solidarity among mining multinationals in

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<sup>9</sup>See Graham E. L. Holton, *State Petroleum Enterprises and the International Oil Industry: The Case of Trinidad and Tobago*, La Trobe University, Melbourne; unpublished PhD thesis, 1994.

<sup>10</sup>James N. Green and Julie A. Charlip, “Solidarity: Organizing Opposition to U.S. Intervention in Latin America”, Call for Papers (2003) for *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 36, N° 6 (2009).

<sup>11</sup>Carlos Aznárez, “El regreso de Zelaya y el futuro de la Resistencia hondureña”, sighted at [http://www.resumenlatinoamericano.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=2819&Itemid=48&lang=en](http://www.resumenlatinoamericano.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2819&Itemid=48&lang=en) (1 June 2011).

Australia during 2010, and their success both in defeating the proposed rent resources tax and replacing a serving prime minister for only the second time ever.<sup>12</sup>

Dedicated to optimal expropriation of rent and resources from the region irrespective of environmental, social or political consequences, the Australia-Latin America Business Council (ALABC) unites major players in late capitalism: the Spanish predator Banco Santander<sup>13</sup>, which also provides its chairperson; KPMG; Xstrata Copper, Genesis Minerals and De Grey Mining; Ludowici, a mining equipment firm; LanChile, the former jewel of Chilean public transport converted by Pinochet into current president Sebastián Piñera's cash-cow; and four severely-corporatised higher education institutions: the University of Melbourne, Curtin and Swinburne universities of Technology, and the Western Australian Institute of Technology; inter alia.<sup>14</sup>

Hegemonic oneness with the closely-linked Council on Australia Latin America Relations (COALAR), whose members include vice chancellors prone to determine university policy in accord with Murdoch press pronouncements, ensures that public taxpayers fund conjoint COALAR-ALABC political and economic interventions in the region, cloaked in the discourse of multilateral cooperation and the pretense of international relations in perfect equilibrium.<sup>15</sup> The Australian Hispanic Women's Business Network (AHWBC), whilst deploying the discourse of "Hispanic cultural promotion" and "camaraderie", is principally a coalition of politically right-wing and economically neoliberal Latin American and Spanish women.<sup>16</sup>

Transnational solidarity of the Left centres on supporting radical political and economic change in the focus country. In the Latin American case, this has largely meant revolutionary socialist change. Supporting such a project in turn implies a level of political consciousness roughly similar to that of the social movements being supported. So the "home and away" movements must be more or less

<sup>12</sup>See for instance Robert Austin, "Australia: Empate electoral y desencanto popular", at <http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=111830>

<sup>13</sup>See Pedro Ramiro, Erika González and Alejandro Pulido, *Las Mutinacionales Españolas en Colombia*, Madrid, Observatorio de Multinacionales en América Latina/Asociación Paz con Dignidad, 2007, pp. 10, 22, 30, 32; and Greenpeace (ed.), *Los nuevos conquistadores: Multinacionales españolas en América Latina. Impactos económicos, sociales y medioambientales*, Madrid, Greenpeace, 2009, pp. 7, 30, 43, 46.

<sup>14</sup>See <http://www.alabc.com.au/>

<sup>15</sup>On COALAR's composition and claims, see <http://www.dfat.gov.au/coalar/index.html> On COALAR councillor Gardner's deference to the Murdoch press, see Viviana Ramírez, 'Reflexiones en torno al Exilio: mito y realidad', in *Tensões Mundiais*, Vol. 4, Nº 7, 2008, pp. 196-234.

<sup>16</sup>Its former president, a Peruvian accountant serving big capital, refused to respond to requests to clarify claims made on the AHWBC web page, only asking about the purpose of the request after repeat approaches. See AHWBC, "La AHWBN entregó galardones a Mujeres Destacadas del Año", *Semanario El Español*, Nº 120, 11 de noviembre del 2011, p. 11; and Viviana Ramírez, emails to Isabel León, 20 October and 11 November 2011; Isabel León, email to Viviana Ramírez, 11 November 2011.

synchronised at the ideological level for the project to have any reasonable prospects of success. Solidarity organisations become integrated into a coherent international movement in an uneven and prolonged cycle of advances, retreats, defeats and victories.

Transnational solidarity of the Right shares the goal of supporting social change in the focus country. But across the globe it has meant counter-revolutionary capitalist change, sometimes extreme. So arguably in Latin America, Cuba approximates a mature revolution, Chile a mature counter-revolution. Until the New Chilean Spring—a nationwide student-led insurrection—erupted in mid 2011, a bus trip in Havana and Santiago graphically demonstrated this: Cubans enjoy exuberant conversation on all manner of topics, consistent with a transparent, organic socialism; Chileans are mostly silent, wary of strangers, permanently reserved, and deeply traumatised by dictatorship.

Solidarity movements are generally uneven, and in this they are matched by the social project underway in their focus countries. There is no guarantee that all who stand to gain from popular democratic social change will support it. Nor is it certain that there will be agreement within the solidarity movement about aims and methods: “those with whom we wish to be in solidarity are rarely fully united in their ideas about goals, methods for reaching them, or the structure and implementation of new models, and we who would express solidarity are equally diverse.”<sup>17</sup> Solidarity movements must also engage with the immigrant-national dynamic: that is, the pedagogical challenge of critical engagement with resident exile communities, and proselytization of related struggles in all manner of public spaces. This includes their cultural and political practice, the social pathologies of exile (often after torture), and sometimes tectonic disruption to career and social paths. A movement generally fares better when the new residents get an early chance to influence its direction and establish credentials.

Solidarity within and between groups has been vital to the development of continent-to-continent solidarity. A major inspiration for this is the historic project for Latin American integration, pioneered by Venezuelan Simón Bolívar and given a revolutionary aspect by Cuban independence leader José Martí. Its newest expression is the Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States: CELAC), comprised of thirty-three Latin American countries, purposely excluding the USA and Canada, symbolically launched

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<sup>17</sup>Margaret Power and Julie A. Charlip, “Introduction: On Solidarity”, *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 36, N° 6 (2009), pp. 3-9.

in December 2011, in Caracas. CELAC, of which Cuba is a founding member, stands in direct opposition to the quisling, Washington-based Organization of American States which, since the Cuban Revolution, has excluded the island nation. Endogenous models have modified the Bolivarian project for an integrated Latin America. Their features have included revolutions of national liberation; preservation and expansion of popular culture; projects for economic integration like MERCOSUR or the Banco del Sur; and projects for political integration such as the Parlamento Latinoamericano (Latin American Parliament), which has taken a strong pro-integration stance since its birth at the Declaration of Lima (1964), accompanied by an anti-imperialist and sovereignty-protection stance.

A similar position has been adopted by the Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones (South American Community of Nations: CSN, 2004) which in 2007 became the Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (Union of South American Nations: UNASUR), and the Alternativa Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our America: ALBA, Spanish for “the dawn”). ALBA is a project for economic, social and political liberation—as well as regional integration—instigated in 2004 by Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Dominica (aided by later members St Vincents and The Grenadines, Bolivia, Ecuador, Barbados and Antigua). It arose in direct opposition to ALCA (Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas/Free Trade Area of the Americas), the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), and varied parasitic trade treaties between the US and Latin American national bourgeoisies. Fidel Castro famously described NAFTA as a meeting between a shark and some sardines.<sup>18</sup> In effect, CELAC and its autochthonous precursors are instances of a dialectic between two models of integration, two centuries apart: the somewhat-elitist Bolivarian project, and contemporary alternatives constructed from a mass social base.

Solidarity and charity are opposites. Charity presumes the existence of a permanently privileged group which relates as benevolent donor to a permanently exploited one. This dynamic disempowers the recipient and creates dependency within it. Many of the most ruthless global corporations use high-profile charity, often in the form of philanthropy and increasingly through university intervention, as a political tool to deflect attacks on their feudal labour practices, stratospheric profits, and insidious links to the military industrial complex and, ipso facto,

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<sup>18</sup>For a sweeping survey of the power of these institutions, concluding with a call to arms under the banner of the new internationalism of twenty-first century socialism, see Samir Amin, “Seize the Crisis!”, *Monthly Review*, Vol. 61, No. 7 (2009), pp. 1-16.

imperialism.<sup>19</sup> Hence corporate intervention in curriculum modelled on U.S. lines becomes ever bolder, extending long-standing links between Australian universities and the US military-industrial complex. For example Dow Chemicals (a major US producer of chemical-biological weapons), Murdoch's demonstrably-corrupt News Corporation and the American Australian Association (a US-based cold war front) have been major financiers of the US Studies Centre since it opened at the University of Sydney in 2006.<sup>20</sup> Chevron Oil, whose directors include the neocon devotee Condoleeza Rice, now co-funds a chair in petroleum geoscience with Woodside Petroleum at the University of Western Australia. Through an orchestrated haze of "accountability", "performance indicators", "client focus" and a check-list of policies where stock market constructs are barely disguised—, shareholders become "stakeholders", "equity" replaces equality, vice chancellors become CEOs—the historic possibilities for a democratised, anti-elitist, solidarity-conscious university of the future have receded.<sup>21</sup>

Another instance of charity's demobilising tendency arose from the media exploitation by president Sebastián Piñera and celebrity elements of the Chilean bourgeoisie of the San José mine rescue in 2010.<sup>22</sup> Their same social class backed the infamous massacre of 3,000 miners and their families during peaceful protests in Iquique in 1907, the worker-decimating Pinochet dictatorship, and since 1990 has sold the immensely-rich Chilean mining sector to global corporations at fire sale prices. Chilean mines remain notoriously dangerous places to work; forty-plus miners were killed there in 2010 alone.<sup>23</sup> Yet in a single year, for instance 2006, the total profits of foreign mining corporations—20 billion US dollars—exceeded their total investment in the mining sector over the entire 32-year period from the 1973 military coup.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Mark Rupert, "Academia and the Culture of Militarism", in Peter McLaren, Anthony J. Nocella II and Steven Best (eds.), *Academic Repression: Reflections from the Academic Industrial Complex*, New York, AK Press, 2010, 428-36.

<sup>20</sup>Tim Anderson, "Hegemony, big money and academic independence", *Australian Universities' Review*, Vol. 52, Nº 2 (2010), pp. 11-17.

<sup>21</sup>Leonardo González and Rocío Newman, "Springtime for Sycophants", sighted 1 November 2011 at <http://users.tpg.com.au/f4ithles/html/SpringtimeforSycophantsIndymediahighres.pdf>

<sup>22</sup>The Australian Broadcasting Commission's *Four Corners* program "The Price of Freedom" (ABC-TV 1, 25 April 2011) portrayed the US-resident Chilean millionaire Leonardo Farkas as a charitable benefactor of the rescued miners, rather than a shameless media-savvy exploiter of their post-traumatic stress and related disorders to further his political-corporate interests. See <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/guide/abc1/201104/programs/NC1004H030D2011-04-25T203335.htm?program=Four%20Corners>

<sup>23</sup> See Daniel Núñez, "El movimiento de los trabajadores contratistas de CODELCO: una experiencia innovadora de negociación colectiva", in Antonio Aravena y Daniel Núñez (eds.), *El Renacer de la Huelga Obrera en Chile: El Movimiento Sindical en la Primera Década del siglo XXI*, Instituto de Ciencias Alejandro Lipschutz (ICAL), Santiago de Chile, 2009, pp. 37-74.

<sup>24</sup>Orlando Caputo and Graciela Galarce, "Allende, el Cobre y el Movimiento de Trabajadores y Estudiantes", [http://www.marismoeducar.cl/correo/Allendecobre\\_caputo.pdf](http://www.marismoeducar.cl/correo/Allendecobre_caputo.pdf), sighted 21 June 2011.

Relations of solidarity presume equal rights and equal status between solidarity organisations and focus areas, for the global citizenry. Latin America itself has been exemplary in this regard. Witness Fidel Castro's explanation upon Cuba's despatch of volunteer troops in solidarity with Angola's anti-colonial struggle in 1976: it was "no favour, simply an obligation ... a people which is not prepared to fight for the freedom of others, could never be ready to fight for its own freedom."<sup>25</sup> The theoretical measuring stick since 1948, though not unproblematic, has been an amalgam of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with various labour charters, especially those of the International Labour Organisation. Solidarity implies that both parties to a struggle are humanised, enriched and empowered by it. Pseudo forms which promote paternalism, cultural imperialism, or chauvinism of any kind (including its common forms of sexism, racism and nationalism) are by definition contradictory, and ideologically coterminous with charity.

Finally, solidarity implies an ethical dimension. We are the lesser as human beings to the extent that we countenance inhumanity and exploitation. According to UNICEF, some nine million children still die of preventable diseases annually.<sup>26</sup> These deaths occur almost exclusively in the Third and Fourth Worlds, arguably as a direct result of First World imperial practice.<sup>27</sup> In Latin America, Che Guevara's is probably the best-known call to ethical solidarity in the face of such horrors: "If you tremble with indignation at every injustice, you are a comrade of mine." In the West, perhaps the most misquoted call is from the anti-Nazi pastor Martin Niemöller:

First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist, so I said nothing.

Then they came for the Social Democrats, but I was not a Social Democrat, so I did nothing.

Then they came for the trade unionists, but I was not a trade unionist.

And then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew, so I did little.

Then when they came for me, there was no one left who could stand up for me.<sup>28</sup>

In its work then, Left transnational solidarity should integrate five aspects: classless social relations

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<sup>25</sup>Cited in Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui and Moisés Wong, *Nuestra historia aún se está escribiendo: La historia de tres generales cubano-chinos en la Revolución Cubana*, New York, Pathfinder, 2006, p. 81.

<sup>26</sup>UNICEF, "Survival", at <http://www.unicef.org.au/Discover/What-We-Do/Survival.aspx> , sighted 1 November 2011.

<sup>27</sup>The Third World which exists within the First World is often termed the Fourth World.

<sup>28</sup>Niemöller was hanged by the SS days before the Twelve Year Reich surrendered. In *The Holocaust in American Life*, US-Jewish historian Peter Novick has documented how Cold Warriors and Zionists have distorted Niemöller's statement. For instance, when *Time Magazine*, Al Gore and a speaker at the 1992 US Republican convention quoted it, they all moved the Jews from penultimate to prime place ("First they came for the Jews"). At the same time, all three erased communists and social democrats. Gore omitted trade unionists as well. All three wrote in Catholics. The Holocaust Museum in Washington also omits the communists. Quoted in "Another little lie", *Seeing Red*, Issue 1.



with both political and ethical dimensions, and against both misery and alienation as Che Guevara sought<sup>29</sup>; recognition that political exiles have had their most basic rights violated; comprehension of the political economy at home and in the focus country; a broad political project common to both country of origin and focus country, which confronts the deceits of corporate media and corporatised education through popular education and the Left press; and grounded confidence that the project can be achieved coupled with a commitment to achieve it, either by legal, illegal or a-legal means, or their combination in struggle. In other words, to misquote Gramsci, optimism of the intellect *and* optimism of the will.

Such processes are complex, formidable, sometimes frustrating and not prone to show quick results. They depend on long cycles of persistent planning and revision, trial and error, developing often distinct strategies based on national variants, and the movement's credibility in the focus country. They also require that participants understand the difference between the transient features of a regime and the permanent features of the state.<sup>30</sup> The clearest failure to do this recently in Australia was the translation of the euphoria which followed the collapse of the Pinochet regime in Chile in 1990 into the simultaneous closure of each Chile Solidarity Committee across the country. The election of a president 20 years later whose political and economic fortunes are directly linked to the dictatorship, Sebastián Piñera—"Berlusconi con poncho"—eloquently demonstrates the ALAS movement's failure to grasp this theoretical and practical imperative.<sup>31</sup>

## Methodology and Sources

Participant-observation is central to the anti-hierarchical, dialectical, transformative paradigm known as action research, pioneered by Colombian intellectual Orlando Fals Borda and developed through insurrectional popular education programs across postwar Latin America, themselves based on a less well known history in Latin America extending from the nineteenth century.<sup>32</sup> Its action-reflection dynamic—the constant movement between the abstract and the concrete—has taken the

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<sup>29</sup>Néstor Kohan develops Guevara's revolutionary morality-revolutionary politics dyad in *Ni Calco ni Copia: Ensayos sobre el Marxismo Argentino y Latinoamericano*, Havana, s/e, 2005, p. 18.

<sup>30</sup>James Petras and Morris Morley, *Latin America in the Time of Cholera*, New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 148.

<sup>31</sup>Piñera recently named Sergio Romero Pizarro as ambassador to Spain, with the consent of the Spanish government. Pizarro was Pinochet's deputy minister for Agriculture for five years, and a notorious public defender of the dictator, even as Pinochet's billion-dollar hidden bank accounts surfaced in his final days.

<sup>32</sup>Orlando Fals Borda, "The Challenge of Action Research", *Development*, Vol. 23, N° 1 (1981), pp. 55-61; Carlos Núñez H., *Educación para Transformar, Transformar para Educar*. Guadalajara, Mex.: IMDEC, 1992, pp. 53-71; Gabriel Salazar V. "Los Dilemas Históricos de la Auto-educación Popular en Chile. ¿Integración o Autonomía Relativa?" *Proposiciones* N° 15 (1988), pp. 84-128.

form in our case of four decades of protagonism in broad revolutionary struggles, including but not limited to Latin American, combined with collective reflection upon them.

To relevant section: Documented surveillance of our work from the early 1970s by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and Chilean secret police respectively, both linked to the CIA via Australia's integration in the UKUSA Cooperative Intelligence Agreement (1948), suggest that it has not been in vain.<sup>33</sup>

Based on action research, the authors conducted sixteen participant interviews and received forty-nine written replies in a total of sixty-five responses to the questionnaire in Table 1 (below), circulated in Spanish and English among ALAS organisations and activist networks between 2004 and 2011. Around 150 questionnaires were distributed, either directly by the authors or via third parties, so the response rate was slightly better than forty per cent. Non-responses sometimes followed promises to participate; this accounted for no more than a further twenty per cent. So around forty per cent of requests drew no response. Interviewees generated around 15 hours of recorded data, ALAS mementos, and copious author notes.

We have given considerable weight to the responses of participant-observers. Around two-thirds (45) were Latin American; the remainder were Portuguese Goan, Spanish, New Zealander, US, and Australian. Women respondents, principally Latin American, numbered 29, slightly less than one half. Given the reluctance of some participants to give anything other than short responses on the record, the use of aliases or anonymity by others, and a number of firm refusals for political reasons, we have chosen to keep the respondent record confidential. Most responses were in the public domain, and are cited as “(Lucila Flores, interview, 2011)”; anonymous responses are cited in the format “(AR1/2010)”. The most common reason for refusal has been the potential danger for relatives, families and/or compañeros/as who live in Latin America. We can hardly ignore such circumstances: our cousin Carlos Canivilo is a “detenido-desaparecido”, one of around 20,000 political deaths at the hands of the Pinochet dictatorship.<sup>34</sup>

Our research has two birth dates. As a daughter of the Unfinished Chilean Revolution, Viviana Ramírez participated from childhood in the struggle for democratic socialism and Latin American

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<sup>33</sup>Nation Archives of Australia, Series A6119, Control symbol 5264, Item barcode 12862969, Location: Canberra; Ramírez, ‘Reflexiones en torno al Exilio’; John Pilger, *A Secret Country*, London, Vintage, 1992, p. 160.

<sup>34</sup>Robert Austin & Graham Holton, “Was there a Chilean Holocaust? Concentration Camps, Political Genocide and the Pinochet Dictatorship”, *Tensões Mundiais*, Vol. 3, Nº 4, 2007, pp. 345-390.

independence, notably during the Popular Unity government (1970-1973). So one date of origin was 11 September 1973, when US imperialism and the Chilean bourgeoisie overthrew the democratically-elected Popular Unity government led by President Salvador Allende and installed the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Along with a global multitude, Viviana then began to work with the Chilean Resistance, both within Chile (until 1979) and then in Australia, a career-limiting occupation as her autobiography documents.<sup>35</sup>

The second date of origin was in 1978, when the authors began cautious work together from La Legua, the working class suburb of Santiago recently immortalised as the centre of armed resistance against the fascist dictatorship.<sup>36</sup> One year later we moved to Australia, and became immediately involved in the Chile Solidarity Committee, en route to broader ALAS participation. What followed has been over 30 years' work in Australian-based solidarity organisations, principally focussed on numerous organisations in Table 2 (below), commencing with those which support the Cuban Revolution, the anti-fascist struggle in Chile, and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

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<sup>35</sup>See Ramírez, 'Reflexiones en torno al Exilio'.

<sup>36</sup>See Mario Garcés y Sebastián Leiva, *El Golpe en La Legua: Los caminos de la historia y la memoria*, Santiago de Chile, LOM, 2005.

Table 1: Questionnaire

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### Research for a short history of Australian Solidarity with Latin America

During the 1970s, national and international solidarity organisations arose in opposition to U.S. imperialism in Latin America. Washington's support for repressive regimes across the region produced world-wide diasporas of Salvadoreans, Argentines, Guatemalans, Chileans, Uruguayans and Colombians, inter alia. In Australia's case, these included significant numbers of political and economic refugees. The conjuncture of Latin American activists escaping authoritarian regimes and the broad-based coalition of Church, Left, labour organisations, human rights groups and Latin Americanists generated lasting solidarity with progressive and revolutionary movements which confronted U.S. intervention and ruling elites in Latin America and the Caribbean. We invite you to contribute to our research in this area, to preserve its history. Please find below a questionnaire which seeks your views on the development of the solidarity movement in Australia, particularly following the military coup in Chile on 11 Sept. 1973.

#### Questionnaire:

1. What have been the main Australian solidarity groups with Latin America since the 1970s?
2. In what ways did the solidarity movement build from previous experiences? Did this movement generate new ways to challenge U. S. and Australian foreign policy?
3. In what ways did solidarity groups work with Latin American exiles? How successful were the coalitions that were built?
4. What impact has Latin America popular culture had in Australia since the 1970s?
5. Has the establishment of Latin American Studies in Australian universities made an impact on solidarity with Latin American social or revolutionary movements?
6. What influence have Latin American social or revolutionary movements had on Australian progressive or Left politics? Has this influence been reciprocal?
7. How did popular movements and political parties in focus countries respond to international solidarity, and Australian solidarity in particular?
8. What has been the impact of post-1990 changes in the global political economy on the Australian solidarity movement with Latin America?
9. What activities have been conducted in Australia by intelligence organisations from countries such as Argentina, Uruguay or Chile, or others you may know?
10. Please add any comments you consider relevant.

We would appreciate your response of a maximum 400 words per question *by 15 March 2011*. Our aim is to have this work published by an international journal asap. If resources become available, we will consider publishing a book. We would also appreciate any pamphlets, newspapers, magazines or literature which you would be happy to contribute. When this study is complete, we plan to donate our solidarity archives—including contributions from many people over 3 decades—to the library at the University of California (Riverside), in the archive dedicated to the socialist political scientist Ronald Chilcote: [see http://library.ucr.edu/?view=collections/spcol/universityarchives/u012.html](http://library.ucr.edu/?view=collections/spcol/universityarchives/u012.html) They will join a major research collection on Latin America and be available to students and scholars from around the world. Responses by email to: [vrcañibilo@gmail.com](mailto:vrcañibilo@gmail.com) y/o [rwaustin64@gmail.com](mailto:rwaustin64@gmail.com) If you can offer material, we can meet, or you can post it. Thank you in advance, Viviana Ramírez & Robert Austin.

A second component of our research has been the mobilisation of the substantial solidarity archive

we have developed since the 1970s, embracing contributions from many organisations and activists over four decades. It has had a growth spurt since the ALAS project became known nationally, and includes a vast array of pamphlets, posters, artwork, diverse forms of literature, rare music recordings, radio programs, detailed correspondence, ASIO files, Left and corporate press, two theses and substantial electronic files. Solidarity archives—once socialised—provide an organic connection to historic and ongoing struggles. Inevitably their production is social by nature, an embodiment of collective work and noble ideals, albeit tempered by complex politics and too frequently hidden from public view or undervalued, including by those who once inhabited the ALAS movement but have found late capitalism more profitable and political amnesia more comfortable.

A third research component has been the our presentation of three public forums in 2011, two in Sydney and one in Brisbane, which rehearsed this work as it developed. A rich debate among around one hundred participants, most with a history in the ALAS movement, led us to re-think aspects of the research, including the inspirational role of Spanish immigrants in the first half of the twentieth century (discussed above), the hitherto-unknown extent of the ALAS movement, and the most viable location for archives generated by the ALAS experience (discussed presently). Iconic and committed Latin American musical ensemble Papalote wound up the larger Sydney forum, while an exiled Guatemalan duo ended the Brisbane forum with haunting Quiché laments.

#### *Australian-based solidarity with Latin America since the 1970s*

Table 2 (below) divides the one hundred-plus groups documented into three categories. Category 1 covers those with a regional focus, usually Central America and the Caribbean, or a continental focus: those which address the entirety of Latin America. Category 2 covers those with a specific country focus. This does not isolate them politically, given the common practice—both of the countries themselves and of the ALAS movement—of international alliances. Category 3 covers feminist and gender-focussed groups. Again, these tend to reflect the historic continental and international solidarity of feminist groups in Latin America itself, dating from the nineteenth century.

In view of the ephemeral nature of some groups and the absence of verifiable information as to their composition, focus and history, the table necessarily reflects omissions and is, like the ALAS movement itself, is a work-in-progress. In all such cases we have made as wide a search as our resources permit, and normally draw the line at three attempts to resolve an issue. We welcome substantiated additions, corrections and criticisms. For lovers of acronyms, Latin American solidarity provides a smorgasbord!

Table 2          Australia-Latin America solidarity organisations, 1973-2011

<p><i>CATEGORY 1: REGIONAL OR CONTINENTAL FOCUS</i></p>
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<i>Group &amp; Location</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Principal Focus; Publications (italicised)</i>
ANTORCHA (Centro Cultural Solidario Latinoamericano/Antorcha de la Libertad), Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, Wollongong	1973 - 1976	Broad front of Latin Americans and Spaniards in solidarity with Latin American and Spanish anti-fascist struggle. Ovular ALAS group. Bulletin: <i>Antorcha</i> .
Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament (AICD), national	1960s, 1970s	Global peace, peoples' solidarity. Convened inaugural meeting of Chile Solidarity Committee (CSC), Sydney, September 1973. Occasional bulletins, pamphlets.
Catholic Commission for Justice & Peace (CCJP), national	1960s - 1980s	Promoted liberation theology; solidarity with exiles and touring exiles (eg Chilean). Columbans and Dominicans prominent. Replaced under John Paul II by right-wing Australian Catholic Social Justice Council.
Centro Cultural Latinoamericano/Latin American Cultural Centre (Sydney)	1970s	Uruguayan Left initiative; education for children of exiles in Latin American popular culture; developed library.
Latin American Information Centre (LAIC), Melbourne	1980 - c. 2004	Party-independent; social movement oriented. Arose from Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Cuban solidarity groups, esp. CISCAC, ACFS (this table). Emphasised Latin American popular culture & struggle. <i>Solidaridad; Latin American Newsletter</i>

Latin American Coordinating Committee (LACC), Melbourne	1987 - c. 1992	Linked 20 solidarity groups around country.
Latin American Action Group (LAAC), Sydney	2002 - 2006	Promoted solidarity action focussed on Latin America; organized Latin American contingent at Sydney WTO protest, 2006.
Latin American Co-ordinating Group for Human Rights, Sydney	1989	Coalition of Chile Solidarity Committee, Group in Solidarity with the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, Committee for Human Rights in Guatemala & Committee for Human Rights in El Salvador; organised Human Rights Day activities (10 December)
Churches' Central American Support Network (CCASN), Melbourne	1980s	Coordinated church solidarity with region. Promoted theology of liberation. Affiliated with LACC.
Casa Latinoamericana, Sydney	1990s - cont.	Broad coalition of solidarity groups, funds direct in-country solidarity (eg Chile, 2010 earthquake-tsunami). Human rights orientation. Destroyed by suspicious fire c. 2008; since rebuilt. Promotes popular culture (cf La Peña, this table).
500 Years of Indigenous, Black and Popular Resistance Working Committee ("500 Years Committee"), Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane	1992 - 1994	Solidarity with continental opposition to quincentenary celebrations of Spanish occupation of Latin America. Political economy of quincentenary in pamphlets, posters, literature for research & teaching.

Trade Union Committee on Central America (TUCCA), Melbourne	c. 1980 - 1990	Linked Food Preservers' Union, BWIU, BLF, FEDFA, WWF, Seamen's Union & teachers' unions, inter al, on Central American projects; sent trade union delegation to El Salvador & Nicaragua (1984). LACC affiliate.
Trade Union Migrant Workers' Centre, Melbourne	1980s	Affiliated with LACC.
Committee for Trade Union Rights in Central America, Sydney	1980s	Founded on El Salvadorean refugee initiative by Amalgamated Metal, Foundry & Shipwrights Union (AMFSU); Building Workers' Industrial Union of Australia (BWIU); Administrative & Clerical Officers Association (ACOA); Plumbers & Gasfitters Employees Union of Australia (PGEU). Campaigned for workers' rights in the region, liberation of political detainees.
Unión Latinoamericana/Latin American Unity, Sydney	1992 - 1995	Organised family reunions from all countries, then social services, focussing on solidarity once families were settled.
Committee in Solidarity with Central America & the Caribbean (CISCAC); originated from Committee for the Reconstruction of Nicaragua (CRN, Sydney, below): most capital cities	1981 - c. 1990	Nicaraguan Revolution; FDR-FMLN El Salvador; RUOG (United Representation of Guatemalan Opposition). Bulletins, booklets and pamphlets; <i>Central America and Caribbean Newsletter</i> ; ¡Venceremos!



Resource & Action Committee on Latin America (RACLA), Sydney. Formed by foundation CISCAC members after national takeover of CISCAC by Socialist Workers' Party (SWP)	1982 - 1990	Nicaraguan Revolution; FDR-FMLN in El Salvador; RUOG in Guatemala. Linked to La Peña Latin American Cultural Centre, Sydney. Major archive donated to University of NSW c. 1990 but evidently disappeared en route c. 1990. <i>Latin American Update</i> .
Committee in Solidarity with Latin America & the Caribbean (CISLAC), national	c. 1990 - cont.	Continuation of CISCAC with inclusion of South America, esp. Cuba & Venezuela (post 1998); since 2005 has operated as mailing list only.
Australia-Latin America Solidarity Network (ALASN): national alliance of non-CISCAC groups from all cities, based in Adelaide	c. 1983 -1990	Promoted Esquipulas Peace Agreement & Arias Accords for Central America; Nicaraguan Revolution; Pinochet boycott; popular culture exchanges.
Tools for Peace & Justice in Central America, Sydney	1985	Nicaraguan Revolution; Committee of Mothers of the Disappeared and Assassinated of El Salvador (CMDAES, also Melbourne); Mutual Support Group of Guatemala. Pamphlets, bulletins.
Canto Coro: Melbourne, Brisbane	1993 (Mel) 1995-cont. (both)	Greek & Latin American peoples' choir. Works with Pablo Neruda Association, CISLAC, Chilean Support Committee, ACFS.

<p><i>La Peña</i> Latin American Cultural Centre, Sydney</p>	<p>c. 1980 - 1990</p>	<p>Latin American popular culture through performance &amp; exhibition, inspired by iconic musical group Papalote (b. 1980). Linked with various groups &amp; artists in Sydney (eg, Café Sur, Los Barrosos, Sonido de Los Andes), Melbourne (eg The Conch), Brisbane (eg Jumping Fences), Perth &amp; Wollongong. See also Café Carnivale.</p>
<p>Gaviota, Majawil-Q'ij (“New Dawn” in Quiché language), Ernesto Villaseñor, Brisbane</p>	<p>c. 1985 - cont.</p>	<p>Exiled Guatemalan musicians &amp; singers, Latin American popular culture through musical performance. Linked to URNG-MAIZ and ASLA (below, this table).</p>
<p>Latin America Centre (LAC), Brisbane</p>	<p>c. 1986 - 89</p>	<p>Solidarity campaigns with Latin America.</p>
<p>Australian Solidarity with Latin America (ASLA), Brisbane</p>	<p>1987 - cont.</p>	<p>Economic &amp; political support for struggles in Haiti, Central America, Cuba, Venezuela and Southern Cone.</p>
<p>Latin American Social Forum (LASF), Sydney</p> <p>Latin American Social Forum (LASF), Canberra</p>	<p>2009 - cont.</p> <p>2011 - cont.</p>	<p>Coalition of groups (this table), eg: FDR-FMLN, Sydney; FSLN, Sydney; Committee for Human Rights in Guatemala; Ibiray Solidarity Group (GSI) - Raúl Sendic Foundation (Uruguay); AVSN; Socialist Alliance; C'tee in Solidarity with Honduras.  <a href="http://latinamericasocialforum.blogspot.com/">http://latinamericasocialforum.blogspot.com/</a></p>

Melbourne Latin America Forum (MLAF)	2009 - cont.	Similar composition & agenda to LASF: monthly public forums, protest actions, fundraisers. Co-organised solidarity brigade to Bolivia, 2011. Publishes <i>Foro Social Latinoamericano</i> in <i>Green Left Weekly</i> (6 p.a.) with LASF - Sydney. <a href="http://www.latinamericasolidarity.org/">http://www.latinamericasolidarity.org/</a>
Latin American Support Committee (LASC), Adelaide	1970s & 1980s	Continental focus.
Latin American Solidarity Network (LASNET), Melbourne	1990s - cont.	Links grassroots anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist struggles in Asia Pacific Region; non-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, non-patriarchal. ¡Viva Latinoamérica! <a href="http://www.latinlasnet.org/">http://www.latinlasnet.org/</a>
Community Aid Abroad (now Oxfam-Community Aid Abroad), national	1980s	Solidarity with Central American struggles. Financed Australian tour by Edwin Zablah, Sandinista representative (1989). <i>Community Aid Abroad Review, Horizons</i> .
Amnesty International	1961 - cont.	Publishes documented detention, torture & disappearance in region; organises publicity campaigns based on Universal Declaration of Human Rights. <i>Amnesty International Newsletter</i> ; <a href="http://www.amnesty.org.au/">http://www.amnesty.org.au/</a>

Renascentismo Latinoamericano/Latin American Renaissance, Melbourne	2010 - cont.	Grass roots solidarity with continental labour, cultural & environment struggles. <a href="http://www.latinamericanrenaissance.com">http://www.latinamericanrenaissance.com</a>
Centre for Latin American Studies & Solidarity (CLASS), developed from Bolivarian Circle, Melbourne	2006 - cont.	Education forums on Latin American liberation struggles, emphasising gender, popular culture and class.
<i>CATEGORY 2: COUNTRY FOCUS</i>		
Argentinian Democratic Group, Sydney and Melbourne	1976 - 1983	Opposed “Dirty War” of Argentine Dictatorship (1976-1982).
Chile Solidarity Committee/Comité de Solidaridad con Chile (CSC), national	1973 - 1990	Broad range of solidarity activities supporting democracy & anti-fascist resistance in Chile under Pinochet dictatorship. Strong support from unions. <i>Chile Libre/Free Chile</i>
Comité de Apoyo a la Resistencia en Chile/Support Committee for the Chilean Resistance, Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney	1985 - 1988	Solidarity activities focussed on militant anti-fascist resistance in Chile under Pinochet dictatorship.
Memoria Viva Sydney (MVS)	2006 - cont.	Agenda designed to preserve memory of Pinochet dictatorship victims; human rights oriented; formed by cross section of Latin American exiles

Agrupación por los Derechos del Pueblo (ADEPU - Chile), Sydney	1990 - 2005	Solidarity with indigenous struggles in Chile, in collaboration with extant solidarity groups & projects like LASF.
Centro Cultural José Carrasco/José Carrasco Cultural Centre, Canberra	1987 - 1995	Named in honour of journalist slain by junta. Solidarity through popular culture.
Chile Solidarity (ex Red Chilena Popular e Indígena), Melbourne	1996 - cont.	Solidarity with popular, indigenous, workers', women's, students' and environmental organisations in Chile.
Grupo de Apoyo al MIR/Left Revolutionary Movement (MIR, Chile) Support Group, Melbourne	1980s	Support for MIR armed struggle against Pinochet dictatorship. Distributed MIR bulletins published in exile.
Comité en solidaridad con el movimiento democrático y popular (MDP) en Chile/ Committee in Solidarity with the Chilean Popular Democratic Movement: national	1986 - 1989	Solidarity actions directed at pending 1988 plebiscite and electoral pact to remove dictatorship and replace it with limited "transitional" democracy.
Grupo de Apoyo a la Juventud Rebelde Miguel Enriquez/Support group for the Miguel Enriquez Rebel Youth: national	1986 - 1988	Named in honour of Miguel Enriquez, Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) leader assassinated by junta (1974). Solidarity with armed youth resistance.

Comité Salvador Allende de solidaridad con Chile/Salvador Allende Committee in Solidarity with Chile, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra	1987 - 1989	Partido Socialista de Chile (PSCh: Socialist Party of Chile)-driven solidarity work, split from Chile Solidarity Committee.
Committee in solidarity with the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR-Chile), Canberra, Wollongong, Brisbane, Melbourne	1988 - 1993	Support for MIR opposition to limited electoral accord between Pinochet dictatorship and mainstream reformed-Left and Christian Democrat Party.
Centro de Estudios y Solidaridad Lumi Videla/Lumi Videla Study and Solidarity Centre, Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney	2004 - cont.	Named in honour of Chilean resistance heroine & MIR leader assassinated by junta; pedagogical-cultural activities.
Colectivo de Solidaridad Bautista van Showen - Australia/Bautista van Showen Solidarity Collective - Australia: Melbourne, Sydney	2004 - cont.	Named after Chilean MIR & resistance leader killed by Pinochet junta. Cross-organisational work with cultural, indigenous & feminist focus, esp. Chile & Colombia. <i>Boletín Nortino Rebelde</i> .
Casa Chile (Sydney)	c. 1975 -1985	Coalition of Popular Unity parties; solidarity projects. Major trade union solidarity archive collection, lost when <i>Casa</i> destroyed by suspicious fire.
Centro Cultural Pablo Neruda/Pablo Neruda Cultural Centre/ Committee/ Association (Communist Party of Chile: PCC): various cities	1980s - cont.	Political & cultural activities. Influenced by youthful armed struggle of Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front: FPMR) against dictatorship. Affiliated to LACC.

Comité de Apoyo al Pueblo Mapuche en Chile/Committee in Support of the Mapuche People in Chile: Melbourne, Sydney	1992 - 1995	Solidarity with Mapuche resistance to neocolonial repression and dispossession of ancestral homelands.
Comité por los Derechos Humanos en Chile/Committee for Human Rights in Chile, Melbourne, Sydney	1991 - 1998	Support for families of citizens detained-disappeared by the Pinochet military dictatorship.
		Chilean Popular and Indigenous Network, national
Comité de Apoyo al Movimiento Democrático Popular en Chile/Support Committee for the Democratic Popular Movement in Chile, Melbourne, Sydney	1970s -1980s	Solidary assistance to the popular democratic struggle against military dictatorship, 1973-1990. Affiliated to LACC.
Committee for the Chilean September 11 (CCS11), Brisbane; comparable groups in most capitals	2003	Organised unusually-large protests and fora around 30 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of US-backed military coup in 1973.
Movement for Justice and Peace, Brisbane	2011 - cont.	Organise political support for Chilean student insurrection, 11 Sept '73 event.
Colectivo Solidario Australia (national)	2011 - cont.	Organise political support for Chilean student insurrection

Australia Cuba Friendship Society (ACFS). All capital cities except Darwin, plus Newcastle, Albury-Wodonga, NSW Central Coast	c. 1980 - cont.	Solidarity with Cuban Revolution; eg. work brigades, exchanges; cultural-political tours & protests (Australia). <i>Newsletter; Cuba Today; Cuba News; ¡Venceremos!</i> <a href="http://www.sydney-acfs.org/">http://www.sydney-acfs.org/</a>
Friends of Cuba (Australia)	2005 -ongoing	Solidarity with Cuban Revolution. <a href="http://friendsofcuba.and.com.au/SCRIPTS/MAIN.ASP">http://friendsofcuba.and.com.au/SCRIPTS/MAIN.ASP</a>
Grupo Amigos de Cuba, Western Sydney	1992 - cont.	Solidarity with Cuban Revolution, esp. among Spanish-speaking community. Concerts, public meetings, pamphlets.
Free the Five! Committee, Melbourne	c. 1998	Solidarity with 5 Cuban political prisoners wrongly jailed since 1998 in US. Monthly newsletter. <a href="http://freethefive.org/">http://freethefive.org/</a>
Free the Five! Committee, Brisbane	2002 - cont.	Also see FFCs above. Pamphlets, bulletins, internet.
Free the Five! Committee, Sydney	c. 2004 -cont.	Also see FFCs above. <a href="http://freethefive.org/">http://freethefive.org/</a>
Free the Five! Committee, Perth	c. 2004 - cont.	Also see FFCs above. <a href="http://freethefive.org/">http://freethefive.org/</a>



Cuba-Venezuela Solidarity Clubs, Australian National University (Canberra), University of Sydney, University of Western Sydney, Griffith University (Brisbane)	2009 - cont.	Student-staff solidary network; organises Venezuelan & Cuban activists' tours, forums, film & documentary, educative presentations, student solidarity brigades, protests, fundraising, social events. <a href="http://www.solidarityclubs.net/">http://www.solidarityclubs.net/</a>
Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad (APHEDA): Australian Council of Trade Unions overseas aid program, national	1984 - cont.	Cuban Children's Hospital Fund; natural disaster relief in Cuba. <a href="http://www.apheda.org.au/">http://www.apheda.org.au/</a>
Frente Democrático Revolucionario - Farabundo Martí Liberación Nacional, El Salvador/Revolutionary Democratic Front-Farabundo Martí National Liberation (FDR-FMLN), most capitals	c. 1980 - cont.	Solidarity with armed struggle (1980-1992), then peace process. Promotes Left electoral candidates (eg Schafik Handal, 04 & 08 presidential ballots) & grassroots projects. LASF & MLAF affiliate.
Comité por el Cambio/Committee for Change, Brisbane	2003 - 2008?	Promote Left electoral candidate Schafik Handal in presidential ballots, El Salvador, 2004 and 2008.
Comité de Solidaridad con El Salvador/Committee in Solidarity with El Salvador, Sydney	1970s	Anti-fascist, pro liberation; AMWSU-supported, initiated by Latino/a exiles; pamphlets, meetings, conscientisation.
El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, Sydney	1988	Collaborative work between CISCAC, RACLA, CISES and El Salvador Information Office to support FDR-FMLN.

El Salvador Support Network Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane	Mid - 1980s	Solidarity projects in support of FDR-FMLN.
Committee in Solidarity with El Salvador (CISES), Sydney, Melbourne	1987 - 1990s	Solidarity projects in support of FDR-FMLN.
Equipo de Apoyo a la Solidaridad con El Salvador (EASES), Melbourne	1980s	Affiliated with LACC.
Comunidades Eclesiales de Base de El Salvador/Ecclesiastic Base Communities of El Salvador (CEBES), Melbourne	1980s	Grass roots Catholic Church organisation, promoted theology of liberation. Affiliated with LACC.
Comité de Refugiados de El Salvador/Committee for Salvadoran Refugees (CORES), Melbourne	1980s	Support network for Salvadoran refugees. Affiliated with LACC.
Comité en Solidaridad con Honduras/ Committee in Solidarity with Honduras, Sydney	2009 - cont.	Formed after US-backed military coup 2009; solidarity with Honduran Resistance Front & restoration of democracy; public meetings nationally; pamphlets. Affiliated to LASF (Sydney).
Honduras-Australia Solidarity Coalition, Melbourne	2009 - cont.	Comparable to Committee in Solidarity with Honduras, Sydney.

Comité en Solidaridad con Nicaragua/Committee in Solidarity with Nicaragua (CSN), Sydney	1970s	Grassroots opposition to Somoza dictatorship, AMWSU-supported, initiated by Latino/a exiles; pamphlets, meetings, conscientisation.
Committee for the Reconstruction of Nicaragua (CRN): Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth (Nicaragua Solidarity Committee, New Zealand - linked to CRN)	1979 - 1980	Range of solidarity projects with Sandinista Nicaragua (1979-1990); instrumental in formation of CISCAC and RACLA (see section A, above). <i>Nicaragua Newsletter</i> .
Nicaragua Support Group (NSG), Perth	early 1980s	Support for Sandinista-led Nicaraguan Revolution and government, 1979-1990.
Grupo de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos de Guatemala/Group for the Defence of Human Rights in Guatemala, Sydney	1985 - cont.	Since 2009 affiliated with Latin American Social Forum (LASF), Sydney.
Students' International Society (SIS), University of Wollongong	1989	Support struggle for Human Rights in Guatemala.
Committee in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (CISPOG), Sydney	1980s	Support for Guatemalan resistance movement against US-backed dictatorship.
Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG-MAIZ)/Guatemalan Revolutionary National Unity, Brisbane	1990s -ongoing	Support for Guatemalan revolutionary, incl. electoral struggle. Distributes radio programs, newsletters, pamphlets; promotes Latin American popular culture.

Proyecto Viveros de la Paz - Guatemala (Tree Nurseries for Peace project-Guatemala), Brisbane	2010 -ongoing	Financial support for Guatemalan children, linked to URNG-MAIZ.
Comité por los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala/Committee for Human Rights in Guatemala, Sydney	1980s - cont.	Broad collaborative political & cultural work in solidarity with Guatemalan liberation and independence.
Comité de Derechos Humanos por Guatemala/Committee on Human Rights for Guatemala, Melbourne	1980s - cont.	Monitored and publicised military & para-military atrocities during civil war. Affiliated with LACC, Melbourne.
Comité de Derechos Humanos por Guatemala/Committee on Human Rights for Guatemala, Brisbane	1986 - cont.	Support for Guatemalan revolutionary struggle. Similar program to URNG-MAIZ.
Comité por el Respeto de los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala (CDHG)/ Committee for Respect of Human Rights in Guatemala: various cities. Precursor for similar groups	1985 - 1990	Solidarity with human rights struggles and organisations in Guatemala. Established close ties with Church groups, Amnesty International, trade unions & broad Australian-based solidarity community.
Grupo de Solidaridad con Madres de la Plaza de Mayo de Argentina/Group in Solidarity with the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, Sydney, Melbourne	1988 - 2005	Support group for ongoing protest by mothers and families of children born to victims of Argentine “Dirty War” (1976-1982), and illegally adopted out by military dictatorship in secret.

Comité de Solidaridad con Argentina, Sydney	Mid 1970s - early 1980s	Opposition to military dictatorship 1976-1982, worked with other Southern Cone solidarity groups.
Uruguayan National Workers' Convention (CNT), Australia	mid-1970s - 1990	Labour movement solidarity with anti-dictatorship forces in Uruguay. <i>Revista CNT</i>
Frente Amplio de Uruguay (Australia)/ Uruguayan Broad Front (Australia), national	c. 1973 - ongoing	Collaboration with CNT & Frente Amplio de Uruguay in armed anti-dictatorship struggles in Uruguay & Southern Cone.
Movimiento Independiente "26 de marzo", Sydney	1970s - 80s	Linked to Tupamaros; supported armed anti-dictatorship struggle, Uruguay; cultural diffusion, eg Luis Olivera's music.
Grupo de Solidaridad con la Lucha en Uruguay (GRUSLU) & Latin American Aid Committee; founded La Casa de Cultura, Sydney	1973 - c. 1988 1970s	Collaboration with CNT & Frente Amplio de Uruguay (Australia) in anti-fascist armed struggles in Uruguay & Southern Cone. <i>Solidaridad; Frente Amplio.</i>
Committee in Solidarity with the People of Uruguay (COSPU), Melbourne	1970s	Linked to Movimiento de Liberación Nacional [Tupamaros - MLN (T)].
Movimiento de Liberación Nacional [Tupamaros - MLN (T), Uruguay], national	1961 (Uruguay) 1973 - 1988	Anti-dictatorship, armed guevarista urban guerilla movement. See also COSPU, Melbourne. Affiliated with LACC.

Grupo Solidario Ibiray (GSI)/Ibiray Solidarity Group - Raúl Sendic Foundation (Uruguay), Sydney	2004 - cont.	Solidarity activities with ex political prisoners in Uruguay, & Left electoral project. Affiliated with LASF, Sydney.
S.E.S. Uruguay, Melbourne	c. 1985 - 1990	Affiliated with LACC. Unspecified anti-dictatorship solidarity activities.
Uruguayos Unidos, Sydney.	1989 - cont.	Aid for post-dictatorship reconstruction of public schools, hospitals and polyclinics in Uruguay; similar projects in migrant-populous cum working class Sydney. <a href="http://www.uruguayosunidos.com/inicio.htm">http://www.uruguayosunidos.com/inicio.htm</a>
Comité Perú, Sydney	1980s	Support social welfare groups in Peru: eg fundraise for childcare centre, Lima barrio.
Comité por la Paz y la Justicia en Colombia/ Committee for Peace and Justice in Colombia, Sydney, Melbourne	2000 - cont.	Support for trade union struggles, political prisoners, peace and liberation; exposés of narcoparamilitary state crimes, US regional military 'Plan Colombia'.
Comité de Exiliados Colombianos, Sydney	c. 1980	Solidarity with Colombian liberation struggle; pamphlets, fundraising through "solidarity bonds".

CISColombia: International Committee of Solidarity with Colombia, Sydney	1988 - 2005	Anti-imperialist, continental & Colombian foci. Fraternal links with national & international solidarity organisations, incl. Amnesty International, to denounce Colombian terrorist state, promote return to popular democracy & prosperity.
Comité de Solidaridad con Colombia/Committee in Solidarity with Colombia, Melbourne	2001 - 2003	Support for peace & liberation; exposés of narcoparamilitary state crimes, US regional military 'Plan Colombia'.
Colectivo Colombia Demanda Justicia/'Colombia Demands Justice' Campaign Collective, Melbourne	2002 - cont.	Organising committee for Colombian national liberation campaign, freedom for 7,500 political prisoners, peace process.
Committee in Solidarity with Chiapas-Mexico (EZLN: Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional), Melbourne, Sydney	1996 - 2002	Solidarity with Chiapas indigenous uprising on 1 January 1994 against repressive Mexican regime, racism, gender oppression and poverty. Led by Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN).
Mexico-Australia Solidarity Network (MASN), Sydney, Melbourne	2002 - cont.	Various activities linked to anti neocolonial struggles in Mexico.
Bolivarian Circle - Sydney	c. 2005 - 2008	Public fora on Cuban & Venezuelan revolutions; support for 2005 Australian delegation to 16th World Federation of Youth & Students conference, Venezuela.

Australia-Venezuela Solidarity Network (AVSN), national	2004 - cont.	Information campaigns. Aid Projects for grassroots communities. Brigades, Exchanges & Tours. Political action in support of Bolivarian Venezuela. Broadsheets, pamphlets. <a href="http://venezuelasolidarity.org/">http://venezuelasolidarity.org/</a>
<i>CATEGORY 3: FEMINIST AND GENDER-FOCUSSED GROUPS</i>		
Comadres Support Committee, later Friends of Comadres, Women's International Network for Development and Democracy in El Salvador (WINDS), then Las Dignas, Melbourne, later national	1989-1994	Affiliated with LACC. Raised support funds & awareness of human rights abuses in El Salvador, sponsored visiting Salvadoran women, opposed state terror. Friends, WINDS & Las Dignas were feminist, with reduced Salvadorean presence.
Latin American Women's Group (LAWG), Brisbane	1995 - cont.	Feminist solidarity projects (eg tour by iconic junta MIR political prisoner Miriam Ortega, 1995).
'Fresia Amancay' Women's Group (associated with CSC), Brisbane	1986 - c. 1988	United Chilean & Australian women around feminist and broader solidarity struggles in Southern Cone countries.
Colectivo Mujer/Women's Collective, Sydney	1988 - 1994 1999 2010 - cont.	Response to lack of feminist initiatives in Latin American community. Grassroots forums, radio programs, exhibitions, women's concerts, t-shirt printing, banner-making, women's self-defence classes. <i>Voices of Latin American Women.</i> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=115187841896786">https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=115187841896786</a>



Sydney Action for Juárez	2009 - ongoing	Publicises mass sexual assaults & murders of women, esp. <i>maquiladoras</i> in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Film screenings, discussion groups, IWD activities.
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*Sources:* Latin America Solidarity Network (LASNET), Melbourne; Justo Díaz Gómez, *La Peña: The Politics of World Music*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2010; Gustavo Martín Montenegro, *La Campaña de Solidaridad con Chile en Australia, 1973-1990*, MA Honours thesis, University of New South Wales, 1993; AR-1; Lynda Hansen & Julie Webb-Pullman, “Campaign launched for ‘political prisoners’”, *Green Left Weekly*, Issue 494 (29 May 2002) at <http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/27395>; Belarmino Sarno, *Inmigrante Feliz en Afortunado País: Impresiones ficticias de un Machista-inconformista*, Sydney, El Faro, c. 1980; Joan Coxsedg, correspondence with authors; authors’ archives; solidarity organization founders, activists & web sites; personal correspondence; interviews based on Table 1 (above); Beryl Langer, ‘Mothers of the Disappeared in the Diaspora: Globalization and Human Rights’, in Anne-Marie Hilsdon (ed.), *Human Rights and Gender Politics: Asia-Pacific perspectives*, London, Routledge, 2000, pp. 188-204; public forums at the University of Queensland (May 2011), Macquarie University and NSW Teachers Federation (September 2011).

## Research Findings and Challenges

1. The complexity, diversity, and sheer number of solidarity groups suggest a major if loosely-coordinated social movement. Of the 100-plus groups and organisations identified, a majority took root in the time frame from Allende to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. Some were ephemeral; most have been vibrant, productive and sometimes convulsive. A handful like the ACFS and CISCAC have stayed the course, in one form or another. Some groups were initiated by Latin American exiles and run principally by them, others were initiated by Australian residents, others by both. A few have carried out and/or inspired solidarity work although it has not been, in formal terms, their brief. For instance Amnesty International, as a subset of its global focus, has consistently published high-profile documented cases of detention, torture and disappearance in the region, marshalling evidence with which committed intellectuals and journalists can ground their analyses of imperialism and its attendant barbarism<sup>37</sup>. Given Amnesty's claim to non-political status, its reports have tended to gain traction even among liberals, providing immunity—unwittingly or otherwise—from the kind of establishment attacks systematically directed at the organised and Left-inspired solidarity movement. The AICD is another group which helped create the preconditions for focussed groups by subsuming the Latin American solidarity struggle into a global agenda, as have political parties of the Left—contingent upon their theoretical approach—like the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), Socialist Workers' Party (SWP), Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), International Socialists (IS), Freedom Socialist Party (FSP), Socialist Alliance (SA) and Socialist Alternative (SALT), all within the current and third phase of ALAS.
2. Note also from the table above the weakening of the solidarity movement from the early 1980s, a process generally expressed through splitting, re-grouping and fractionalising. After a lull similar to that which much of the Left experienced in the first years of the post Soviet era, a new wave began with the detention and imprisonment of *The Cuban Five* (1998) and the election of Hugo Chávez Frías to the Venezuelan presidency in the same year.
3. The last table also hints at the generous flow of popular culture between the two continents. Exiles from other parts also gave solidarity with Latin American struggles a sense of urgency. For instance, the Greek and Latin American peoples' choir *Canto Coro* began in Melbourne in 1993 and Brisbane in 1995. As its director recalled, its origins lay “within progressive Greek organisations such as the GPYA (Greek Progressive Youth of Australia) and the Democritus League since the late 70s. During that time, there were strong fraternal links between the Greek left and the Latin American left in Melbourne.” Indeed, “most of the migrants shared a common experience of exile from military dictatorship. As a result, we were often involved in common political and cultural work, including festivals, seminars, concerts, rallies and the like.” *Canto Coro* in Melbourne has worked with the Pablo Neruda Association (linked to the Chilean Communist Party), CISLAC, and the Chilean Support Committee.
4. In Brisbane, the choir built on links with CISLAC, The Pablo Neruda Association and the

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In an enormous historiographic literature on theme, and bearing in mind its historic spread, see for instance Christopher Harman, *A People's History of the World: From the Stone Age to the New Millennium*, London, Verso, 2008; and **America, The New Imperialism: From white settlement to World Hegemony**, London, Verso, 1978; both passim.

Australia Cuba Friendship Society. In both cities, even the mainstream press felt obliged to give rave reviews to performances of such iconic works as the “Cantata de Santa María de Iquique” and “Canto General”, written by two Left artists from Greece and Chile (Theodorakis and Neruda) performed for the first time in Australia.<sup>38</sup> Such promotions of popular culture have served the parallel function of popular education, developed by solidarity groups since the seventies. RACLA, for instance, held regular public forums on various liberation struggles across The Americas throughout the 1980s in Sydney, featuring Latin American and local figures. It extends historic gains made by resident Latin American groups like Papalote and visitors like Daniel Viglietti (Uruguay), various Cuban groups, and New Song Movement groups such as the Quilapayún and Inti Illimani. A vibrant popular theatre in 1980s Brisbane also linked with the broad solidarity project, actors-actresses overlapping with various solidarity groups.

5. *Resources:* Although this research project has been in the public domain from 2004 and more visibly so over the last few years, we have had no direct funding of any kind. Indirectly however, many citizens locally and overseas have contributed. The Spanish and Latin American Studies (SLAS) community has been aware of the project from 2005, when some high-profile scholars responded to the questionnaire. There has been tacit opposition from university funding bodies, and a refusal to provide resources for this project when asked directly. The peak SLAS organisation AILASA (Association of Iberian and Latin American Studies of Australasia) refused to distribute an email circular about our forums in 2011, and both the University of Melbourne and self-proclaimed Australian National Centre for Latin American Studies (ANCLAS) at the Australian National University have refused to host public forums. Censorship, by any other name. Bearing in mind the absence of any broad historical work on theme, its importance to both Latin America and Australia, and that around fifteen universities have SLAS programs of one kind or another, only two have offered forums—La Trobe and Macquarie—and the History department at a third, the University of Queensland, organised a successful forum in May 2011.
6. *Reprisals:* There has been a palpable fear of reprisals from the Right or pseudo Left, both in Australia and in Latin America. Some responses were only given on condition of anonymity. This fear is well-grounded: there have been two suspicious fires in Sydney which destroyed the Casa Latina, a major Latin American solidarity venue; the Australian Federal Police, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, state Special Branch police and some *Operación Cóndor* countries’ agents have been active in Australia; phone taps on us have been confirmed to us by a former Federal Labor minister; our own solidarity archives have been burgled; and there has been at least one assassination of a Latin American political leader and two cases of serious injury on Australian soil since 1970. We ourselves were the subject of a mafia-style assassination attempt at home in 2009 after the local tabloid headlined our Left tendencies, and that doyen of national television’s shock-jock reporting *A Current Affair* defamed us, according to a prominent Sydney barrister.<sup>39</sup>
7. *“Todos quieren salir indemne”:* The distinguished Chilean historian and former exile Sergio Grez, interviewed in 2007, remarked that in testimonial research, “everyone wants to emerge undamaged”. In our research to date the clearest example of this has been an attempt by one senior solidarity activist to suppress information in our table of solidarity organisations which reflects negatively on the role of a Left political party. But a letter from that person’s own archives, volunteered in January 2011, confirms our interpretation of the

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<sup>38</sup>See press reviews at <http://www.cantocoro.websyte.com.au/>

<sup>39</sup>Stuart Littlemore QC, Memorandum of Advice re Dr Robert Austin, 15 October 2009.

events in question, in which we were also participant-observers.<sup>40</sup> The point is that History is also the Department of Unexpected Results. We have a duty as historians to be faithful to the facts, whether they allow us to “emerge undamaged” or are inconvenient. Myth-making should be left to others.

8. *The structure of the questionnaire:* Three of 54 respondents criticised it constructively, saying that it was either too complex or wrongly focussed. For instance, a person we understand to be a founding member of the FARC in Colombia argued that Question 2 overstates the purpose of the solidarity movement.<sup>41</sup> Some people we approached and who declined to respond, gave fear of reprisals to comrades and/or family either in Australia or Latin America as their reason. One Chilean respondent whom we knew as a PC member in the 1990s told us by email on 3 May 2011: “please don’t send any more rubbish”.<sup>42</sup> At the level of everyday political practice, the subtext here also goes to the effect which prolonged exile in a wealthy capitalist society has on popular memory and the priority which actors accord to ongoing solidarity.
9. *The “private collection” mentality:* When this study is complete, we plan to donate our substantial archive—including contributions from many organisations and people over three decades—to a major public library, either national or university and either in Australia or The Americas.

But there has been a reluctance to contribute original material to the common archive. This reluctance—though consistent with the individualist culture of late capitalism—undervalues the historical origins of all such material, *which has grown out of the blood and sweat of the many millions of Latin Americans who have fought against colonialism and imperialism in all their forms for the last five centuries.* Without demeaning the current custodians’ contribution to those materials, nor to the struggle which is generally woven into them, they are arguably *public archives* and should be available to all. *That is, they should be socialised, not privatised.* There is a magnificent legacy at stake here. It is ironic that the neoliberal capitalism and attendant horrors which precipitated exile and worse should imbue solidarity activists with the privatisation mentality directly generated by that same system. Our choice of a well-run public library was not desultory. The disappearance or non-arrival of the substantial RACLA archive some time after 1990 at the agreed location, the library of the University of UNSW (former home of one of the two major SLAS programs in the region) plus the apparent disappearance of similar material from West End library in Brisbane, are salutary lessons. Moreover, there is a general disinterest from corporatised universities in the history of popular struggles, *unless they’re dead.* Living history can be inconvenient to a university system where student militancy and academic freedom are largely dormant.

10. Global solidarity movements with Latin America have been undergoing a renaissance, tied to the new wave of anti-imperialist social projects in the region: in particular Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina, Bolivia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Brazil and now Chile. Arguably the Cuban model has been receding in influence in the post Soviet era, and its

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<sup>40</sup> Anne Ash, Kate Cooper et al, “To Newcastle CISCAC”, undated memorandum 1982.

<sup>41</sup> Anonymous, Respuestas al cuestionario, interview, 9 March 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Claudio Alejandro Gallardo, email to authors, 3 May 2011. According to former AMWSU organiser and Uruguayan Tupamaro Alberto Revelo, Gallardo was one of a number of Chileans brought to Australia during the Pinochet dictatorship by the union, when their lives or families’ lives were threatened (Revelo, interview with the authors, 7 May 2011).

current reforms will to a large extent preserve or weaken its international influence. Whatever our analyses, re-taking the past can only position us better as social actors to re-think the future.