

INTERNAL (for AI members only)

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To: All sections  
Campaign Coordinators, Press Officers  
Chile/CHAN coordinators  
Groups with Chile "disappearance" cases

ORIGINAL

From: Americas Research Department

Date: March 1988

CHILE CAMPAIGN CIRCULAR 7

POEMS ABOUT THE "DISAPPEARED" BY ARIEL DORFMAN

Summary

Attached is an external document containing ten poems in Spanish and English by Chilean poet Ariel Dorfman for use during the Chile Campaign. They are particularly suited to readings at public events but can also be used in publicity materials put together for the campaign. One idea would be to incorporate some of the poems into an exhibition with the photo-display, and with the drawings by the relatives of the "disappeared" which you have already received. You will find also that the poems contain a number of elements which may link into the different activities you organize. For example, one of the poems is in the form of a prayer and you may find it suitable for use if you are planning a religious event. Another refers to a "disappearance" in May, the month in which our campaign will be launched. One is about the "disappearance" of someone's mother and could be tied in with the theme of "disappeared" women for approaches to women's organizations.

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Ariel Dorfman owns the written copyright of the Spanish poems and of the performance rights of both the Spanish and English versions of the poems. Sections can therefore reprint the Spanish poems and also organize public readings of the English poems without restriction.

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EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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1 Easton Street  
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United Kingdom

March 1988

CHILE

POEMS ABOUT THE "DISAPPEARED" BY CHILEAN POET ARIEL DORFMAN

The attached poems have been selected from a collection by Ariel Dorfman about "disappearances" in Chile. They are a moving and personal testimony to those who went missing after abduction by government agents in the early years after the coup and to the families in their long search to find out what happened to their loved ones.

The poems are in the original Spanish text together with an English translation. The Spanish poems are reprinted by permission of Ariel Dorfman.

The English poems are taken from "Last Waltz in Santiago and Other Poems of Exile and Disappearance" by Ariel Dorfman. English translation Copyright (c) 1988 by Ariel Dorfman and Edith Grossman. Used by permission of Viking Penguin Inc. and Wylie, Aitken & Stone Inc., as representatives of the author.

## RED TAPE

find out check information go to the  
police station then to regimental headquarters hire lawyers  
sign petitions begin to knock on doors talk to relatives  
call up old girlfriends find people with influence petition  
in court talk to released prisoners listen to rumors  
petition again appeal attend meetings with other  
parents make copies of the photograph talk to a foreign  
reporter mail another letter wake up in the  
middle of the night when a car stops in front of the house  
hear the news that your fiancée is getting  
married re-read your composition book from junior  
high petition the supreme court look at the street

just  
to be able  
to bury your body,  
to have a place  
where your mother  
can go with  
flowers  
(you liked chrysanthemums  
but they cost so much)  
on Sundays  
and All Souls'  
Day.\*

\*All Souls' Day, November 1, is the day when Hispanics visit the cemetery  
to place flowers on the graves of their dead.

SHE'S LOSING HER BABY TEETH NOW

who's that who's that man  
with Uncle Roberto?

oh, honey, that's your father

why doesn't daddy ever come  
to see me?

because he can't

is daddy dead?  
is that why  
he never comes home?

and if I tell her that daddy  
is alive  
I'm lying  
and if I tell her that daddy  
is dead  
I'm lying

so I tell her the only thing  
I can  
that isn't a lie:

daddy never comes home  
because he can't.

HOPE

for Edgardo Enriquez, Sr.  
for Edgardo Enriquez, Jr.

My son has been  
missing  
since May 8  
of last year.

They took him  
just for a few hours  
they said  
just for some routine  
questioning.

After the car left,  
the car with no license plate,  
we couldn't

find out

anything else  
about him.

But now things have changed.  
We heard from a compañero  
who just got out  
that five months later  
they were torturing him  
in Villa Grimaldi,  
at the end of September  
they were questioning him  
in the red house  
that belonged to the Grimaldis.

They say they recognized  
his voice his screams  
they say.

Somebody tell me frankly  
what times are these  
what kind of world  
what country?  
What I'm asking is  
how can it be  
that a father's  
joy  
a mother's  
joy  
is knowing  
that they  
that they are still  
torturing  
their son?  
Which means  
that he was alive  
five months later  
and our greatest  
hope  
will be to find out  
next year  
that they're still torturing him  
eight months later

and he may might could  
still be alive.

## CORN CAKE

My old lady had nothing  
to do with any of it.

They took her  
because she was our mother.  
She knew nothing  
I mean  
nothing about nothing.

Think about it.  
Even more than the pain  
think how amazed she was.  
She never even knew  
there were people  
like them  
in this world.

Almost two and a half years  
and she hasn't come back.  
They came into the kitchen  
and left the kettle boiling  
on the stove.  
When the old man came home  
he found the kettle  
dry  
standing on the stove.  
Her apron was gone.

Think how she must have  
looked at them  
for two and a half years,  
how she must have...  
think about the blindfold  
coming down  
over her eyes  
for two and a half years  
and those same men  
who shouldn't be in this world  
coming toward her  
again.

She was my mother.  
I hope she never comes back.



## TWO TIMES TWO

We all know the number of steps,  
compañero, from the cell  
to that room.

If it's twenty  
they're not taking you to the bathroom.  
If it's forty-five  
they can't be taking you out  
for exercise.

If you get past eighty  
and begin  
to stumble blindly  
up a staircase  
oh if you get past eighty  
there's only one place  
they can take you,  
there's only one place  
there's only one place  
now there's only one place left  
they can take you.

\*"Compañero" is equivalent to both comrade and mate or friend in English

## HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

Forgive us, Lord, for sending  
 this petition  
 but we have no place else to turn.  
 The Junta won't answer,  
El Mercurio makes jokes and is silent,  
 the Court of Appeals will not hear  
 the defense appeal,  
 the Supreme Court has ordered us to  
 cease and desist,  
 and no police station  
 dares  
 receive  
 this petition  
 from his family.

Lord, you who are everywhere,  
     have you been  
     in  
     Villa Grimaldi  
     too?

They say nobody ever leaves  
 the Colonia Dignidad,  
 or the cellar on Londres Street,  
 or the top floor of  
 the Military Academy.

Have you?

If you have,  
 if you really are everywhere,  
 please answer us.  
 When you were there  
 did you see our son  
 Gerardo? Lord he was baptized  
 in your church,  
 Gerardo, the most rebellious, the sweetest  
 of the four.  
 If you don't remember him  
 we can send a snapshot  
 the kind you take in the park  
 on Sunday,  
 and the last time we saw him,  
 right after supper,  
 that night when they knocked  
 on the door,  
 he was wearing a blue jacket  
 and faded jeans.  
 He must still be wearing them now.

Lord, you who see everything,  
     have you  
     seen him?

I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE LIVES. WE AGREED TO  
SEPARATE BECAUSE WE WEREN'T GETTING ALONG.  
THE CHILDREN ARE WITH ME AND ONCE IN A  
WHILE HE SENDS ME A LETTER. NO RETURN  
ADDRESS. THAT'S ALL I CAN TELL YOU

As for me  
I have to sleep  
with your memory  
to find you  
    and sometimes  
    if I'm lucky  
    you'll come back  
        later  
    in what are generally  
    my dreams.

As for the secret police you can be certain  
    they don't look for me with dreams  
and if they find me  
one uncertain night  
    -the sound of brakes  
    of men who jump from  
    moving cars  
    and footsteps coming closer  
    will awaken me -  
you won't know  
you won't be here  
to protect me  
to look for me  
    - and they'll tell you they haven't  
    arrested me -  
later.

## LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

When they tell you  
I'm not a prisoner  
don't believe them.  
They'll have to admit it  
some day.

When they tell you  
they released me  
don't believe them.  
They'll have to admit  
it's a lie  
some day.

When they tell you  
I betrayed the party  
don't believe them.  
They'll have to admit  
I was loyal  
some day.

When they tell you  
I'm in France  
don't believe them.  
Don't believe them when they show you  
my false I.D.  
don't believe them.  
Don't believe them when they show you  
the photo of my body,  
don't believe them.  
Don't believe them when they tell you  
the moon is the moon,  
if they tell you the moon is the moon,  
that this is my voice on tape,  
that this is my signature on a confession,  
if they say a tree is a tree  
don't believe them,  
don't believe  
anything they tell you  
anything they swear to  
anything they show you,  
don't believe them.

And finally  
when  
that day  
comes  
when they ask you  
to identify the body  
and you see me  
and a voice says  
we killed him  
the poor bastard died  
he's dead,  
when they tell you  
that I am  
completely absolutely definitely  
dead  
don't believe them,  
don't believe them,  
don't believe them.

## SOFT EVIDENCE

If he were dead  
 I'd know it.  
 Don't ask me how.  
 I'd know.

I have no proof,  
 no clues, no answer,  
 nothing that proves  
 or disproves.

There's the sky,  
 the same blue  
 it always was.

But that's no proof.  
 Atrocities go on  
 and the sky never changes.

There are the children.  
 They're finished playing.  
 Now they'll start to drink  
 like a herd of wild  
 horses.  
 Tonight they'll be asleep  
 as soon as their heads  
 touch the pillow.

But who would accept that  
 as proof  
 that their father  
 is not dead?

The madness goes on  
 and children are always children.

Well, there's a bird  
 - the kind that stops  
 in mid-flight  
 just wings in the air  
 and almost no body -  
 and it comes every day  
 at the same time  
 to the same flower  
 just like before.

That doesn't prove anything either.  
 Everything's the same as it was the day they took him  
 away

as if nothing had happened  
 and we were just waiting  
 for him to come home from work.  
 No sign, no clue,  
 nothing that proves  
 or disproves.

But if he were dead  
 I'd know it.  
 It's as simple as that,  
 don't ask me how.  
 If you were not alive  
 I'd know it.



It's so simple after all,  
even a child could understand.  
those schoolbooks  
    let there be no doubt about it  
I'll buy those books

that's what I want to say  
    to the man who killed him.

he won't buy milk for my children.  
he will not buy milk  
    for my children  
that's what I want to say  
    and let him try to understand.

I want him to understand  
while I look him in the face  
while I keep on searching  
                    - calmly -  
the face of the man who killed him.





## TRAMITES

averiguar cotejar informaciones ir a la comisaria después al regimiento contratar abogados firmar peticiones comenzar a golpear puertas hablar con parientes llamar a viejos amores buscar influencias oficiar a la corte hablar con los ex-detenidos escuchar rumores oficiar otra vez apelar asistir a reuniones con otros padres sacar copias de la foto hablar con un periodista extranjero poner otra carta en el correo levantarse en el medio de la noche cuando para un auto frente a la casa recibir la noticia de que una novia que tuviste se va a casar releer alguna carta oficiar a la suprema mirar la calle

y todo  
para poder  
enterrar tu cuerpo,  
tener un lugar  
donde tu madre  
pueda ir a dejar  
flores  
-te gustaban los crisantemos  
pero están muy caros-  
los domingos  
y el primero  
de noviembre.

## A LA NIÑA SE LE ESTA CAYENDO LOS PRIMEROS DIENTES

y ése quién es ése  
al lado del Tio Roberto?

ay, niña, pero si ése es tu padre.

y por qué no viene el papá?

porque no puede.

está muerto el papá  
que nunca viene?

y si le digo que el papá  
está vivo  
estoy mintiendo  
y si le digo que el papá  
está muerto  
estoy mintiendo.

Asi que le digo lo único que le puedo decir  
y que no es una mentira:

no viene porque no puede.

## ESPERANZA

para Edgardo Enriquez, padre  
para Edgardo Enriquez, hijo

Mi hijo se encuentra  
desaparecido  
desde el 8 de mayo  
del año pasado.

Lo vinieron a buscar,  
sólo por unas horas,  
dijeron,  
sólo para algunas preguntas  
de rutina.

Desde que el auto patió  
esa auto sin patente  
no hemos podido

saber

nada más  
acerca de él

Ahora cambiaron las cosas.  
Hemos sabido por un joven compañero  
al que acaban de soltar,  
que cinco meses más tarde  
lo estaban torturando  
en Villa Grimaldi,  
que a fines de septiembre  
lo seguían interrogando  
en la casa colorada  
que fue de los Grimaldi.

Dicen que lo reconocieron  
por la voz, por los gritos,  
dicen.

Quiero que me respondan con franqueza  
Qué época es ésta,  
en qué siglo habitamos,  
cuál es el nombre  
de este país?  
Cómo puede ser,  
eso les pregunto,  
que la alegría de un  
padre,  
que la felicidad de una  
madre,  
consista en saber  
que a su hijo  
lo están  
que lo están torturando?  
Y presumir por lo tanto  
que se encontraba vivo  
cinco meses después,  
que nuestra máxima  
esperanza  
sea averiguar  
que ocho meses más tarde  
seguián con las torturas  
y puede, podría, pudiera,  
que esté todavía vivo?

## PASTEL DE CHOCLO

La vieja no tenia nada que ver  
con todo esto.

Se la llevaron  
porque era nuestra madre.  
No sabia lo que se dice  
nada  
pero nada de nada.

Te la imaginas?  
Más que el dolor,  
te imaginas la sorpresa?  
Ella no podía sospechar  
que gente  
como esa  
existiera  
en este mundo.

Ya van dos años y medio  
y todavía no aparece.  
Entraron a la cocina  
y quedó hirviendo la tetera.  
Cuando papá llegó a casa  
encontró la tetera  
seca  
y todavía hirviendo  
El delantal no estaba.

Te imaginas cómo los habrá mirado  
durante dos años y medio,  
cómo los estará,  
te imaginas después la venda  
durante dos años y medio  
descendiendo  
sobre los ojos  
y esos mismos hombres  
que no deberían existir  
y que otra vez  
se acercan?

Era mi mamá.  
Ojalá que no aparezca.

## DOS MAS DOS

Todos sabemos cuántos pasos hay  
compañero de la celda  
hasta la sala aquella.

Si son veinte,  
ya no te llevan al baño.  
Si son cuarenticinco,  
ya no pueden llevarte  
a ejercicios.

Si pasaste los ochenta  
y empiezas a subir  
a tropezones y ciego  
una escalera  
ay si pasaste los ochenta  
no hay otro lugar  
donde te pueden llevar,  
no hay otro lugar,  
no hay otro lugar  
ya no hay otro lugar.

NO HA LUGAR

Señor, perdona que te mandemos  
 esta petición,  
 pero ya no nos queda otra alternativa.  
 La junta no nos contesta,  
 El Mercurio se burla y calla,  
 la Corte de Apelaciones no acepta  
 el recurso de amparo,  
 la Suprema dictamina no procede,  
 y ya no hay comisaría  
 que se atreva  
 a recibir  
 esta petición,  
 a nombre de la familia.

Señor, tú que estás en todas partes

habrás estado también  
 en la Villa Grimaldi?

Dicen que nadie sale  
 de la Colonia Dignidad,  
 del sótano de la calle Londres,  
 de los altillos de la Academia  
 Militar.

Lo habrás logrado  
 hacer  
 tú?

Si es así,  
 si la ubicuidad te acompaña,  
 contéstanos por favor.  
 Viste ahí por acaso a nuestro hijo?  
 Gerardo? Bautizado, señor,  
 en una de tus iglesias.  
 Gerardo, el más rebelde, el más dulce también,  
 de los cuatro.  
 Si no le recuerdas,  
 te podemos enviar una foto  
 como esas que se sacan en las plazas públicas  
 los días domingos.

Para más señas, la última vez que lo vimos,  
 un poco después de la cena,  
 esa noche en que golpearon  
 a la puerta,  
 llevaba un chaleco azul  
 y unos blue-jeans desteñidos.  
 Todavía los debe llevar.

Señor, tú que todo lo has visto,  
 lo has visto a él?

NO SE DONDE VIVE. NOS HEMOS SEPARADO DE COMUN  
ACUERDO PORQUE NO NOS LLEVABAMOS BIEN. YO ME QUEDE  
CON LOS NINOS Y DE VEZ EN CUANDO RECIBO UNA CARTA  
SUYA SIN REMITENTE. ES TODO QUE PUEDO INFORMARLES.

En cuanto a mi  
para encontrarte  
debo dormirme  
con tu recuerdo

    y sólo a veces  
    si tengo suerte  
    reaparecerás  
                    más tarde  
en lo que suelen ser  
mis sueños.

Te aseguro que por su parte la policia secreta  
no me busca con sueños

    y si llegan a encontrarme  
    en una noche incierta  
        - me despertará el ruido  
        de frenos en la calle,  
        de hombres que bajan  
        de un auto en marcha,  
        de pasos que se acercan -  
tú no estarás acá  
para saberlo  
o para protegerme  
o para buscarme  
    - te dirían que no me han detenido -

    más tarde.

## TESTAMENTO

Cuando te digan  
que no estoy preso,  
no les creas.  
Tendrán que reconocerlo  
algún día.  
Cuando te digan  
que me soltaron,  
no les creas.  
Tendrán que reconocer  
que es mentira,  
algún día.  
Cuando te digan  
que traicioné el partido,  
no les creas.  
Tendrán que reconocer  
que fui leal,  
algún día.  
Cuando te digan  
que estoy en Francia,  
no les creas.  
No les creas cuando te muestren  
mi carnet falso,  
no les creas.  
No les creas cuando te muestren  
la foto de mi cuerpo,  
no les creas.  
No les creas cuando te digan  
que la luna es la luna,  
si te dicen que la luna es luna,  
que ésta es mi voz en una grabadora,  
que ésta es mi firma en un papel,  
si dicen que un árbol es un árbol,  
no les creas,  
no les creas  
nada de lo que te digan  
nada de lo que te juran  
nada de lo que te muestren,  
no les creas.

Y cuando finalmente  
llegue ese día  
cuando te piden que pases  
a reconocer el cadáver  
y ahí me veas  
y una voz te diga  
lo matamos  
se nos escapó en la tortura  
está muerto,  
cuando te digan  
que estoy  
enteramente absolutamente definitivamente  
muerto,  
no les creas,  
no les creas,  
no les creas.



## PRUEBAS AL CANTO

Si estuviera muerto,  
yo lo sabría.  
No me pregunten cómo.  
Lo sabría.

No tengo ni una prueba,  
ni un indicio, ni una clave.  
Ni a favor,  
ni en contra.

Ahi está el cielo,  
del mismo azul  
de siempre.

Pero eso no es una prueba.  
Seguirán las barbaridades,  
y el cielo siempre igual.

Ahi están los niños  
Terminaron de jugar.  
Ahora se pondrán a beber  
como una horda de caballos  
salvajes.  
Esta noche se dormirán  
apenas su cabeza  
toque la almohada.

Pero quién aceptaría eso  
como evidencia  
de que su padre  
no está muerto?

Las locuras continuarán,  
y los niños siempre niños.

Hay, eso sí, un pájaro  
-de esos que se paran  
en pleno vuelo,  
sólo alas en el aire  
y casi sin cuerpo -  
que vuelve todos los días  
a la misma hora  
a la misma flor  
igual que antes.

Lo que tampoco prueba nada.  
Todo está como el día en que lo llevaron.  
Como si nada hubiera pasado  
y sólo tuviéramos que esperar  
su retorno del trabajo.  
Ni un signo, ni un indicio,  
a favor o en contra.

Pero si estuviera muerto,  
lo sabría.  
Así de simple, no me pregunten cómo.  
Si no estuvieras vivo,  
yo lo sabría.

## COSTO DE VIDA

Para Isabel Letelier

y ahora me lo quieren matar por decreto,  
 habría que iniciar los trámites de viuda.  
 que no siga paseando mi mirada por las calles  
 mostrando su foto, dicen, a cada transeúnte.

como si hubiera caído en una guerra lejana  
 me sugieren que pida una pensión de gracia,  
 me sugieren que solicite ahora el dinero  
 para ir a comprarles cuadernos a mis hijos.  
 eso es lo que quieren:

que guarde su foto con calma  
 al lado de la foto de mis padres,  
 y que salga a comprar la leche  
 cada día  
 con el dinero de la pensión de gracia.

pero parece que no entienden.  
 quisiera guardar su foto con calma,  
 es cierto que eso

lo deseo hacer  
 y lo haré.  
 y no es que sobren los cuadernos  
 en esta casa,  
 ni la comida sobraría cada vez.

hay otra cosa antes  
 antes de guardar la foto,  
 me pregunto si lo podrán entender.  
 no es nada del otro mundo,  
 es algo bastante normal:  
 sólo quiero verle la cara al hombre  
 al hombre que lo mató.  
 no es por venganza, no tengo rencor.  
 bastará con verle la cara al hombre ese  
 o verle la cara al hombre  
 que compró las balas  
 con las que lo mató.

es tan simple después de todo,  
hasta un niño lo puede entender:  
esos cuadernos  
para que no quede una duda  
esos cuadernos los compro yo.

quiero decirle esto  
al hombre aquel que lo mató.

él no les comprará la leche a mis hijos.  
él no les comprará la leche  
a mis hijos.

quiero decirle esto  
y que lo trate de entender.  
quiero que lo trate de entender  
mientras yo le mire la cara,  
mientras yo siga paseando mi mirada  
con calma  
por la cara del hombre que lo mató.

