



Two women from Nueva Habana (formerly Ranquil)

LNS Photo

WOMEN'S STRUGGLES IN CHILE

Only in the past few months a small number of working-class women of southern Chile have been marching to the drumming of saucepan lids, despite the repression they could face at the hands of the junta. During Allende's government it was the women of the middle and upper classes who took to the streets of Santiago and other urban centres — pans in hand — to protest a shortage of consumer goods created, in part, by economic sabotage on the part of the bourgeoisie and by their own hoarding. As many as 40,000 of these women — some of them members of the CD or NP, others more directly linked to fascist organisations such as Patria y Libertad — were mobilized in Santiago alone during Castro's visit to Chile. Their chants were repeated in newspapers around the world, serving to bolster right-wing predictions of disaster in the Chilean economy.

The women who march today come from families who face unemployment and, in many parts of Chile, starvation. Since the Junta took power the everyday reality of working-class women's lives is shaped by privation and terror.

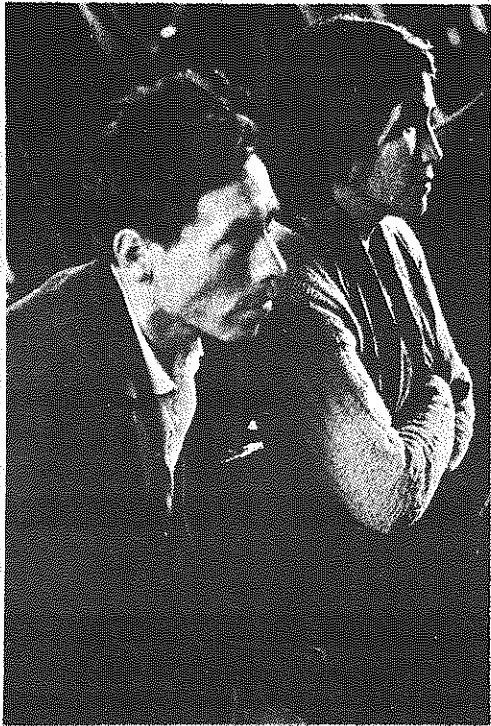
In Chile, in the years of the UP government, women of each class confronted each other from within classes locked in the struggle for power. The surge and counter-surge of class initiatives brought into motion all aspects of people's lives. School children attacked each other in marches and hissed teachers who displayed UP badges; the dinner parties of wealthy women were used as a centre for the passage of goods from the factories of their husbands to the wives of army officers; control of the Corporation of Mothers Centres, established during the Frei period, became the object of a long struggle between UP and right-wing women. The struggle over control of the means of production, which intensified dramatically with worker takeovers (*tomas*) of their factories and the creation of the industrial cordons was partial inasmuch as the control over the means of distribution still lay almost entirely with the large and small bourgeoisie. The issue of

food supply and distribution, as well as price controls, was crucial to the women's mobilization: While the women of the upper classes protested shortages of beef and coffee, women of the *poblaciones* marched to the presidential palace to demand government takeover of the trucking industry after the truck drivers had paralysed food distribution in the October '72 bosses' strike. Women in working-class areas organised vigilante squads which attempted to enforce the prices set by the JAP's (the supply and price control boards which received goods sent out to each area by DINAC, the National Distribution Agency, then distributed them to retailers.) Shops or homes suspected of hoarding were entered and the goods confiscated. The women of the U.P. — dominated Patriotic Women's Front took over distribution of food to the poorest areas during the October strike. But with less than half of wholesale trade controlled by the government, the power of the upper-class to squeeze the country's lifeline enlarged politics of distribution into the politics of life-support of the working-class, into class struggle. Women of both the right and the left were aware that what were ostensibly consumer demands were central aspects of class strategy.



Bourgeois women on the demonstration of pots and pans.

The mobilization of the right-wing women was not engineered, as some have claimed, by the opposition parties or fascist organisations. What brought these women onto the streets was the crudest identification of class interest, combined with a cult of personality developed around Allende. If the leadership of these women — mostly women of the opposition parties — were aware of the real causes of food and other commodity shortages, their followers probably believed the propaganda of economic collapse. And many of these petit-bourgeois women were suffering a certain amount of privation due to black market prices and general inflation. The class



interests of these women remained unobscured by liberal rhetoric, and they responded to the real threat to their property in their home and in their children, whose schools they believed to be threatened by eventual education reform. And their activities extended beyond lid-banging to red-baiting carried on over regular radio and television programmes, to the organisation of mass rallies and door-to-door whispering campaigns, and the calculated harassment of General Prats and other constitutionalist army officers previous to Prats resignation.

These women were undoubtedly used by all the right-wing organisations — who also had a hand in whipping up hysteria over shortages among them — but it is inadequate to portray them as pawns. This was their *moment* in the class struggle; they came out from behind their husbands to become the most visible and voluble section of the bourgeoisie.

That something similar was true of the women of the *poblaciones* is important in understanding the nature of the limited, but very militant, mobilisation of proletarian and peasant women. For the number of women in Chile actually employed in industrial production is very low — about 3% of the working-age female population. Thus women were relatively isolated from struggles in the mines and factories, and from the political parties and trade unions which grew out of these struggles. This factor undoubtedly accounts for the low female vote for U.P. (in the last election U.P. got 28% of the female vote); there must have been many working-class families where the man voted U.P. and his wife C.D. or N.P. And the wives of the miners just didn't vote.

Faced with the necessity of mobilising greater female support, the U.P. created a National Office of Women responsible for

the administration of such reforms as an excellent creche programme in nationalised industries and the shanty towns, and after the October bosses' strike, the establishment of the Patriotic Women's Front. The National Office also developed a set of proposed reforms (legalisation of divorce, legal rights to illegitimate children, reform of the marriage laws) which were defeated by the right-wingers of Congress. With this defeat, what the U.P. was left offering women was a commitment to the expansion of their role in the waged sector, an expansion which was to be brought about by limited, top-down action on issues such as child-care, and a rhetoric of worker unity.

Working class women were not to be given the reforms they demanded. These things — decent health care, including contraception and safe abortion, universal child-care provisions, decent housing for their kids and the food to feed them — had to be taken. While the mobilisation of women around such demands was limited to certain shanty towns, the leadership of women in these areas is crucially important. The women organised takeovers of hospitals, they demanded direct distribution of food from either DINAC or the farms themselves to the "markets of the people" which they established in order to bypass the JAP bureaucracy and the small merchants, they were active in the popular justice tribunals which, despite Congress' opposition, provided a "people's law" in the working class areas. These women also participated in the factory takeovers. Where women worked in factories, particularly in the textile industry, they initiated certain takeovers — in one case, despite male worker opposition.

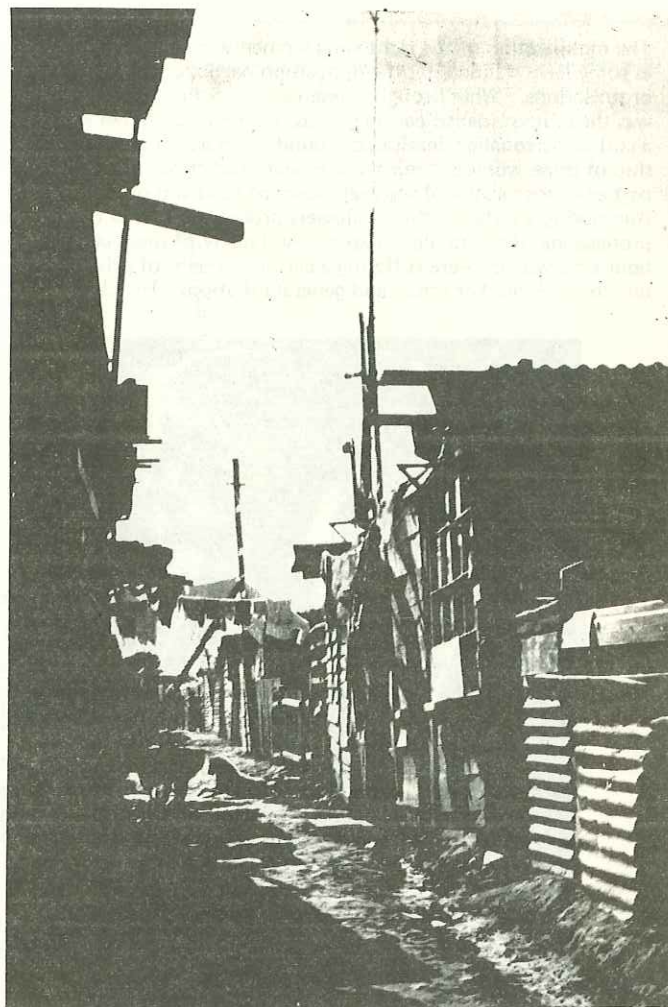
As one woman from MIR described it, this was the political mobilisation of women, as opposed to the "social mobilisation" partially brought about by U.P. in involving women in voluntary work (the MIR argued against "women's work" once again being seen as voluntary), in increased waged work, etc. In the shanty towns and cordons where the revolutionary left was the strongest, the militant action of the women was the most intense — although many of the proletarian U.P. women were also among the most militant sections of government support. But it was with the creation of the *commandos comunales* that the areas of women's struggle in both their



factories and communities became organisationally linked to the struggles of the workers in the industrial cordons, with peasant mobilisations, and with the organised student and youth movement. This was "popular power". In a struggle which had many stages, sections of the working class had rejected the defensive posture of U.P. for the politics of the offensive — of takeover and armed mobilisation. The commandos involved only a small percentage of the Chilean working class, but they became "red bases" whose internal government, distribution system, organisations for self-defence health care, child-care, education, were the "embryonic organs of people's power at the local level." Class struggle, as the women had finally forced the men to recognise over the issue of food distribution, occurs in all sectors of working class life. Machismo rhetoric of women's marginality to the struggle was swept away in those areas and struggles where women's *power* became a crucial component, and this was the case in the commandos.

But as an autonomous people's offensive, the commandos were also seen by the revolutionary left as the social basis for a people's army. As the "peaceful road to socialism" reached its cul-de-sac, men and women of the commandos defended their homes and factories against right-wing military action, and demanded that U.P. abandon its politics of collaboration with the fascistic military. In response to the revolutionary left's demand for the arming of the workers, U.P. produced the slogan "No to Civil War" and attempted to mobilise women around it. In an appeal to women as mothers and peace-keepers, the U.P. organised demonstrations in which women marched with babies and anti-civil war banners. Meanwhile the women of the commandos established centres in the mountains where children could be taken when violence broke out. The sentimentality of the U.P. propaganda was as irrelevant to them as it was the right-wing women who smeared "Djakarta!" on city walls.

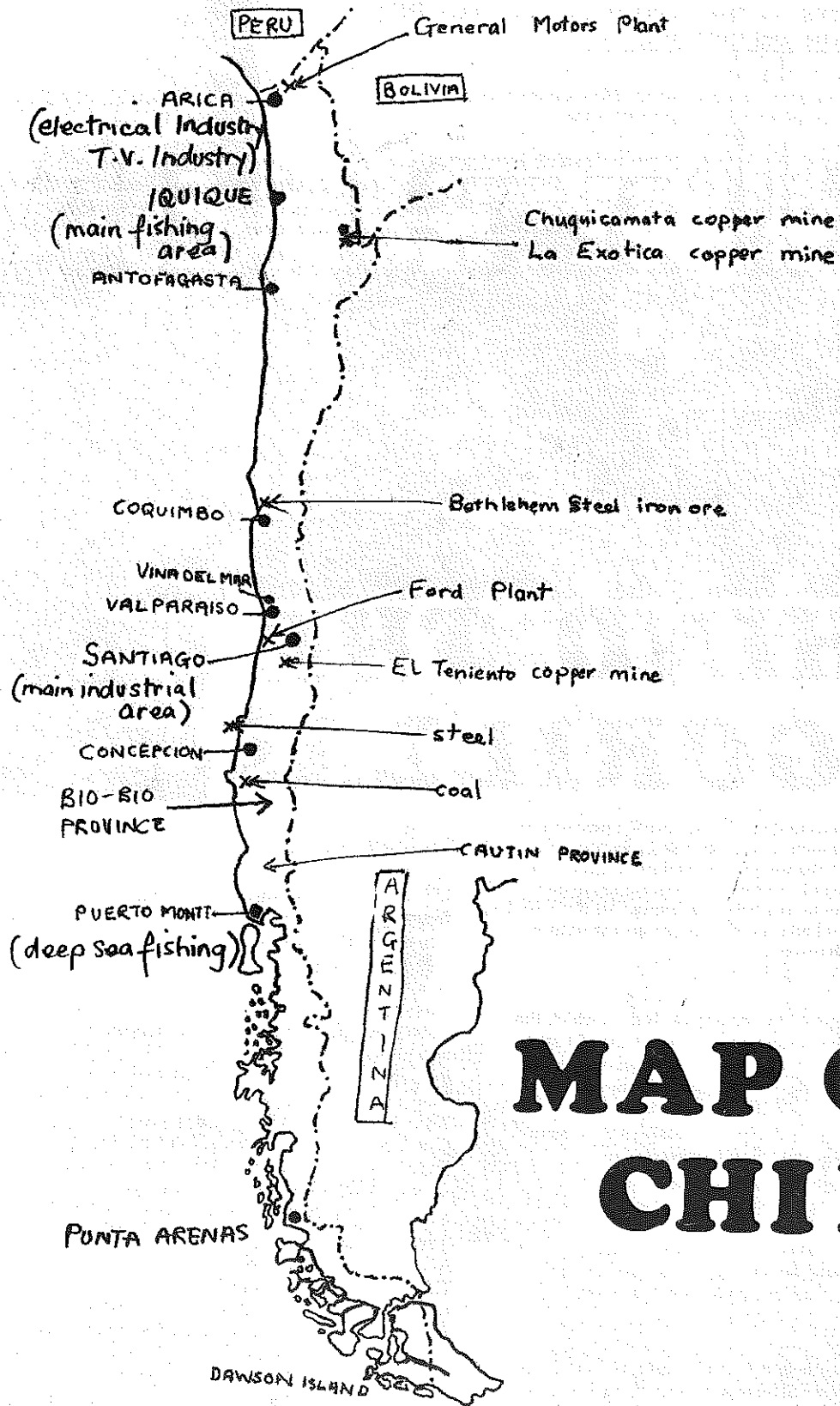
Today women are once again engulfed in cloying appeals to their role as mothers and moralists in the battle against "Marxism and atheism" The Junta, with virtually no social basis left for its regime, attempts to create an ideological one — and this it has in common with every capitalist state — within the presumed conservatism of women. But what the offensive of "popular power" meant was the



erosion of the social basis of women's de-mobilisation, and the weapons forged in the struggles of late '72 and '73 in Chile have not been lost.



And giving birth will no longer bring anguish . . .



MAP OF CHILE

NOTES ON THE CAPITALIST STRATEGY IN LATIN AMERICA 1945-73.

left to right: Pinochet (army), Merino (navy), Leigh (air force), Mendoza (police), and spiritual adviser.



BEHIND THE GORILLAS

These notes are to help us understand the current position of the Chilean resistance which sees its struggle as part of a continental struggle against the forces of imperialism—which also has a continental strategy. In this context we can understand the joint initiative taken by the ERP (Argentine) MLN (Uruguay), ELN (Bolivia), and the MIR, to set up a structure to co-ordinate their offensives.

1945-1955

This is the period dominated by the Korean War, in which the need of the Imperialist economies for the products of Latin America meant the possibility of a very fast growth of most L.A. economies. This led to the setting up of 'democratic' governments in L.A. that were able to raise the standard of living of the people and introduce social reforms; the governments of Goulart (Brazil) and Peron (Argentina) are good examples of this populism.* With a slowing down of the imperialist economies, the imperialist forces had to intensify their exploitation of L.A. economies and the economic basis of which these 'populist' governments rested disappeared; Peron was exiled to Spain, Goulart was 'forced to commit suicide' and the US. invaded Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

1955-65

Between 1950-65, U.S. investment in L.A. grew by 250%; this was mainly done by large multi-national manufacturing companies that took advantage of the low wage-rates. What they produced was either exported to the Western economies or consumed by the (small) middle-classes of L.A.; the people watched the fruit of the labour being shipped out of the

country, whilst T.V. commercials egged them on to buy goods they couldn't afford. For the people of L.A., there were daily reminders that they were trapped in a vicious system; disease, kids dying of malnutrition, no houses, no jobs, peasants forced to migrate to shanty-towns etc. Then came the liberating lesson of the Cuban revolution with its very clear lesson; that a small elite band of dedicated revolutionaries can (if it gets some breaks) unleash the revolutionary desires of a whole people. As the struggle in the Cuban mountains developed the Cuban peasants and industrial-workers organized with increasing militancy. The forces of 'law and order' were attacked throughout the country and Batista was unable to concentrate his forces to try and smash the guerillas. The victorious battle of Santa Clara was the signal for a mass uprising and general strike that made the revolution. And the lesson for the Imperialists was clear; they needed to intensify the struggle against guerillas, and they needed to try to convince the people of L.A. that 'democracy' could be in their interests.

1965-present

Both these things were done. Horrific hardware was used by U.S. trained 'counter-insurgency' forces throughout L.A. Even before Vietnam, napalm, 'pacification programmes', and electric-shock torture were extensively used in Latin America and go a long way to explaining the failure of the guerilla.* At the same time, in certain countries, the Imperialists supported 'democratic' regimes whose function was industrialize the economy and to favour the multi-national companies at the expense of the land-owning class. Where these regimes existed (Frei in Chile, Betancourt in Venezuela, Peron in

*See glossary.

*This does not mean that the strategy was wrong, only that the forces of repression were stronger.

Argentina, Torres in Bolivia) they raised the expectations of proletariat without being able in any way to satisfy these raised expectations. From 68 onwards, there are strikes and urban and rural riots throughout L.A.; Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia are the countries most affected but even in Brazil, where the technology of repression (what the *Financial Times* calls the 'Brazilian Miracle') is at its 'highest' form, dustmen, subway workers, and General Motors workers have been on the move. In these conditions the strategy of revolutionary organizations has changed and groups like the Tupamaros (Uruguay), MIR and ERP have developed forms of organization that link rural and urban offensives and relate mass, overground political activity to clandestine, military actions. At the first sign of these 'democratic regimes' losing control, the Imperialists intervene and put faithful army officers in command.

CHILE

Politically, there was another stage in Chile, Divisions amongst the ruling-class, allowed the election of a left-wing president. But economically, Chile is no exception to the rule; as like other L.A. countries it has no national bourgeoisie**.

In Chile, U.S. investment doubled in the '60s until by 1970 over 100 multi-national companies were operating there, producing goods that less than 25% of the population could think of buying which were mainly for export. Between 1967-70, the standard of living in Chile went down, inflation was 25% a year and unemployment was 30%, (and that is only of those Chileans that registered as wanting a job, thousands didn't bother to register) . . . in the same period, the rate of profit of US-owned companies with branches in Chile doubled and most of it was sent back to the US.

When the UP was elected its economic strategy was to drive a wedge between 'national' capital and 'imperialist' capital. By raising wages and so raising the demand for goods, the UP hoped to win for itself the support of those capitalists that could produce for the internal (Chilean) market. But no sector of the capitalist class accepted this offer of the UP, the capitalist class united as a whole and acted in its *long-term interest* which was the destruction of the UP which they correctly saw as reflecting a situation of stale-mate in the class war. In the first year of the UP government, production rose by 8%, which was a record; the consumption of condensed milk rose by 9%, that of spaghetti rose by 30%, that of sugar by 81%, sales of tellyes and trannies rose by 25%. And interest rates were lowered to get the capitalists to invest.

And it is at this point that the UP plan began to collapse. The capitalists did not invest, they refused to increase production, they refused to produce these things that the proletariat wanted. Because of the capitalists' *refusal to produce*, there were shortages, so prices rose, a black market was set up and the right-wing was able to begin mass organization around the shortages. In the meantime the agricultural products to Argentina and killing off herds of cattle rather than sending them to the meat-markets. Between '70-72, the cost of the food Chile has to import rose by 140% because of the sabotage of the agricultural capitalists. Inflation was 140% in '72 and 300% in '73, since there was so little to buy, the prices of what was available soared. At the same time the rich could get what they wanted through the black market. Inside Chile,

**An internal document of the MIR makes this clear: 'Power in Chile is in the hands of an alliance that brings together the Imperialist forces and the industrial, financial, and agrarian bourgeoisies. There is no "anti-imperialist" or "national" sector of the bourgeoisie that will enter into an alliance whose aim is the revolution. Therefore our revolution will be both anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist, that is socialist . . .'

The legal superstructure of the bourgeoisie will have to be smashed and a revolutionary government of workers and peasants set up that will immediately establish the basis for the building of socialism

.....In Venezuela I got the point with even greater force. With a local friend I had managed to walk about La Charneca, one of those ugly Caracas slums surrounding gigantic sky-scrappers, interconnected by huge multi-storied concrete highways. We were able to start a conversation with a small mild mannered man of 40 odd years. He told us that three families - 16 children - lived in his one room shack made of discarded or stolen planks. It was a hot and humid day, and almost automatically we began to stare with him at a 50 foot wide Coca Cola advertisement that stood out at the foot of the slum hill.

"None of us in this house has ever drunk Coca Cola," he said softly. "One day we will kill those who make them."

from John Gerassi,

The Great Fear in Latin America.



this ruling-class sabotage of production is combined with right-wing terrorist acts of blowing up nationalized factories and the sabotage of distribution; the truck-owners strike of October '72 and the closing of shops by shop-owners during the strike; the aim of all these acts together was to starve the proletariat.

So far we have been dealing with the offensive of the capitalist class inside Chile; it is clear that at no time did a sector of the class 'split ranks' and act according to the IJP's predictions; all of the capitalists sacrificed short term gains in their (successful) attempt to restore 'law and order'. And that sector of the capitalist class that came closest to making a deal with the UP, the Christian-Democrats are now being punished by the capitalists for being 'class-traitors', even Frei is in trouble. This internal offensive, of course, went together with the attack from outside of the imperialist forces.

THE IMPERIALIST OFFENSIVE

After Vietnam, US imperialism hoped to be able to deal with Chile in a more 'low profile' way. The stages of escalation it would use to bring the UP government down were as follows:

1. The creation by external and internal economic sabotage

of a mood in the country that would make sure that the UP was defeated at an election and the CD returned to power *legally*. This would have been the best solution for US imperialism because it would have left them with clean hands. However, the gains the UP made in the March '73 election showed the Yankess that Frei and the boys had been mis-advicing them that this would happen and that the result of their sabotage was the people rallying round the UP government *in elections*.

2. An internal coup supported by Brazilian and US military personnel. If this had not worked, US imperialism would have considered an invasion by Brazil (probably in support of an internal coup) and if that didn't work, the US would have invaded Chile itself; this would have been the worst solution from their point of view in terms of exposure.

The first stage of escalation involved the US in certain acts of economic aggression whose effect was to cripple the Chilean economy:

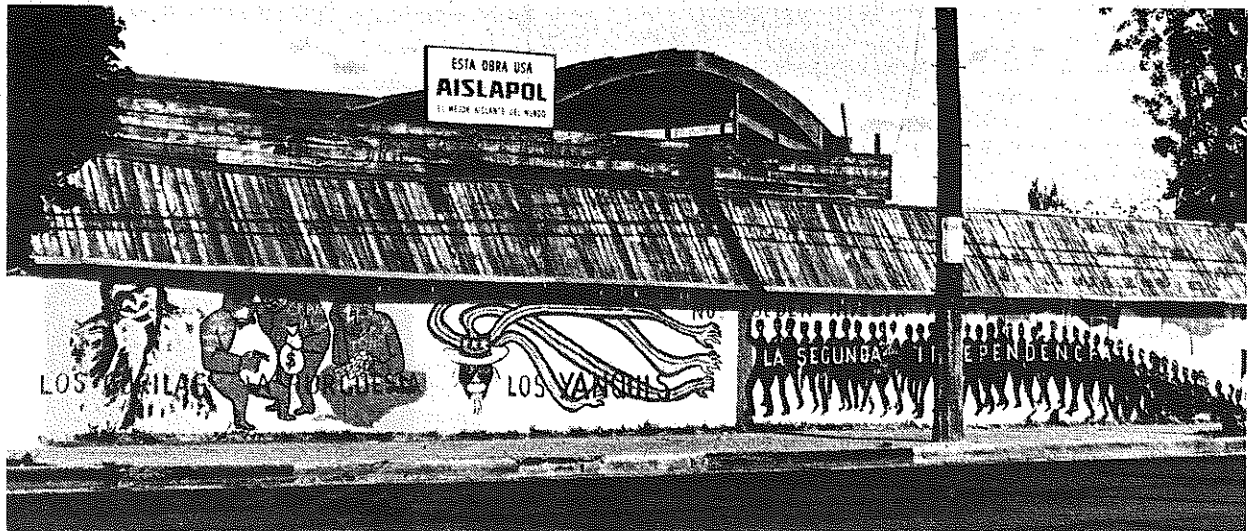
1. *The manipulation of the price of copper since 80% of*

ment down. During the 3 years, Chile also got loans from the USSR, China and the socialist block but this was mainly tied to the purchase of products and food from these countries; only China helped the Chileans out by buying copper and in '72, they bought 70,000 tons which was nearly 10% of total copper exports. In no way were the 'socialist' countries prepared to lend Chile the type of money that would have compensated for the loss of credit from the imperialist countries.

3. The departures of US technicians from factories and the US refusal to supply factories in Chile with spare parts. In many cases this forced the nationalized factories to operate at much less than full production.

4. The specific action of ITT and its attempt to get Nixon to make sure that Allende did not take his place as president. (See the Documents on this subject published by the Spokesman.)

5. Taken together, this external and internal strategy provided the capitalist class with formidable weapons in their



The military, the bourgeoisie, the yanquis can not prevent our second independence.

Chile's exports is copper; a high price of copper is essential to the country's prosperity. On the Metal Exchange in London, the price of copper fell from 745 % per ton in April '70 to £395 in November '71 and it remained at that level throughout '72; it fell because the large copper companies manipulated the market by selling off their stocks. They were counting on this ruining the economy and bringing the CD back; by early '73 their stocks of copper were extremely low and they were forced to buy from the producing countries including Chile and this brought the price of copper back up to £800 by July '73; this meant a good year for the Chilean economy and the failure of this part of the strategy of economic sabotage. Also the solidarity of the dockers of France, Holland and Britain contributed to the failure of the bourgeoisie's plan. Kennecott copper managed to get an agreement through the French courts to confiscate any copper: so the dockers refused to unload the copper which they knew was going to Kennecott.

2. *The blocking of short-term and long-term credit to Chile.* The US which controls institutions like the International Bank for Development and reconstruction used its power to stop Chile getting the credit it needed to pay for necessities. The US tried to get its imperialist allies to accept its claim that Chile could only get credit if the US copper companies that have been nationalized were given satisfactory compensation. By summer '73, the need of the European countries for copper was so great that they were prepared to scab on the US and loan Chile 662 million dollars. At this point, the US realized that an economic blockade would not bring the UP govern-

ment down. Their total effect was to produce economic and political instability in the country that guaranteed a certain amount of mass support to whatever the right might decide to do. But we must be clear that this mass support came from the middle-strata (small bourgeoisie, white-collar workers) and that the proletariat was more than ever united in seeing the need to support the UP government. A week before the Coup, in the gigantic demo to celebrate the 34th anniversary of the UP coming to power, peasants carried huge banners which said: 'THIS GOVERNMENT IS SHIT. BUT IT IS MINE AND I WILL DEFEND IT.'

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE? The only way this instability whipped up by the forces of reaction could have been fought was for the government to have mobilized the people and fought the battle against economic sabotage on class lines. As the MAPU said at Lo Curro this meant the setting up of organs of popular control over production and distribution (expanding the J.A.P.s-organs of price control) so that 'the control of the workers' be extended; control over production, over stocks, costs and prices, over investments and the maintenance of equipment, over finances, the paying of taxes and over imports'. Parallel with this there had to be a class-biased government policy which:

1. Raised low salaries faster than the cost of living and high salaries slower.

2. A switch from indirect taxation to direct taxation to make sure that the middle-class provided a higher proportion

of all taxes.

3. A *class-biased* production policy; to make sure that what the people needed was produced and not what the middle-classes wanted.

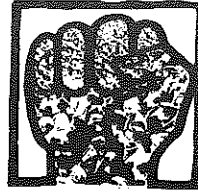
4. A *class-biased* import policy; to make sure that what the people needed was imported and not luxury goods for the middle-classes.

As we wrote above, this economic and political strategy was defeated by the CP at Lo Curro and the UP government embarked on their strategy of winning over the middle-classes by making compromises, especially by making capitalist production profitable. As MAPU wrote at the time, 'this CP policy of making the state sector and private sector of the economy profitable in accordance with a national plan would have been alright in a situation where all power lay in the hands of the proletariat. But it was not satisfactory from the point of view of the struggle for power, from the point of view of gathering not profits but political forces.

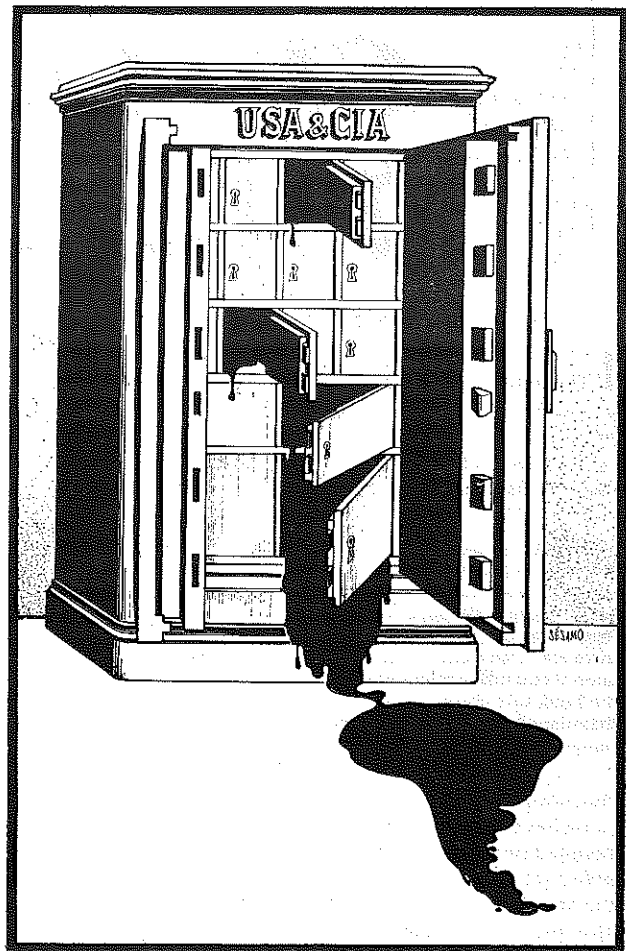
THESE PROBLEMS IN THE U.K. SITUATION

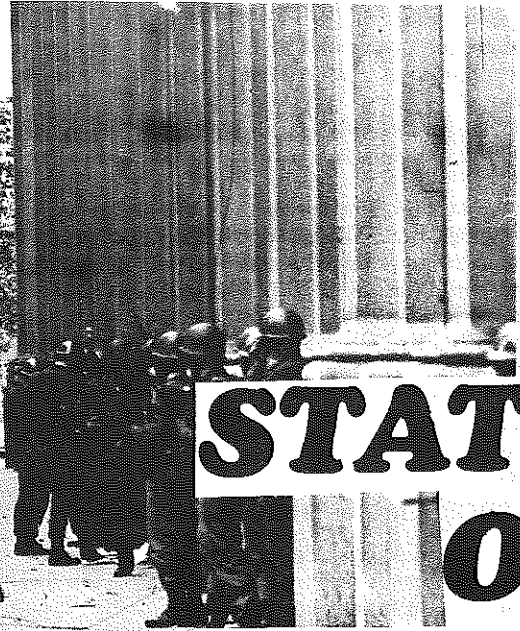
We must see that the capitalist class can use similar tactics in the U.K. to sabotage the economy (from the inside and the outside) in the event of there coming to power in Britain a government that wants to act in the interest of the proletariat. It is obvious that a Labour government has a very different relation to the interests of the people from that of the UP government. The Labour Party represents an alliance which includes a sector that represents the interests of industrial capitalism; there was no such sector within the UP. This means that there is permanently a struggle going on within the Labour Party as to which of the *conflicting* class-interests, the Party's policies will represent. What tends to happen is that when in opposition the party moves to the left, when in power its policies in no fundamental way attack capitalist interests. But this 'Jekyll and Hyde' trick requires a strong leader who can lead the party in its frequent shifts from right to left and back again and this Wilson is not. In the present Labour government, Wilson's (non) strategy has been to put the left-wing and the right-wing of the party together in the government and let things sort themselves out! Of course they haven't and the government is left with contradictory policies; with the right-wing (Lever, Healy, Williams, Jenkins etc.) reassuring the capitalists that Labour will look after them and the left-wing (Foot, Heffer, Benn) making anti-capitalist noises and passing legislation that are not at all popular amongst big business and the City (nationalization proposals, protection for furnished tenants, legal rights for workers on pickets, Trade Unions etc.). Even if these policies are not *directly* a great blow to capitalist interests, because they *raise people's expectations of what they can get* their long-term effect can be to sharpen the proletariat's sense of its class interest which is opposed to that of the bourgeoisie (and this can be a very long and difficult process in a society where the educational system, the culture and the mass-media are all trying to convince us that there are no class divisions in 'our' society, that we are all 'one big happy family').

From the view-point of the revolutionary left, the Labour Party in power is just another capitalist government 'with a difference', but we must remember that this is not the way the capitalist class, especially the City sees things. The last Labour government ('64-'70) was forced by the City to devalue the pound, it was also forced to stop its policies of economic expansion and its attempt to solve the balance of payments problem by a higher rate of economic growth, instead it was forced to slow down the economy, especially as the capitalists refused to invest. The current Labour government is going to be forced to slow down the economy and this will mean millions of unemployed; this is because of the capitalists refusal to invest (as in Chile) and their huge exporting of capital which



they are investing abroad. They are also using their newspapers to put across this story which goes something like: 'All would be O.K. if it weren't for the mad Benn. It's because of him that the capitalists are not investing, if only that nutter could be gotten rid of.' At the same time, we can be sure that the next time (which will be soon) the Labour government is forced to apply to the International Monetary Fund or some other lending agency of the international capitalist class, it will be told that it can only have the money if it cuts wages, slows the economy down and makes thousands more unemployed; the only difference with Chile is that Labour will accept the loan on these terms, whereas the UP government did not. In this situation it will be very important for the revolutionary left to point out that what this shows is that power lies with a government *only as long as it governs to the interests on the international capitalist class*. One of our jobs in this situation is to make the choice facing the proletariat clear; either rule by international capitalism or popular power. The lesson of Chile is clear; there is no middle-way.





STATE OF SEIGE

CHILE SINCE THE COUP

1. The military coup of September '73 had expressed the will of the entire Chilean and imperialist bourgeoisie. Particularly important was the euphoric support given to it by the petit-bourgeoisie and middle-classes, the traditional social base of fascism. As one eye-witness reported at the time:

[the petit bourgeoisie] . . . compete with one another in exhibiting their slavish gratitude to the numerous masters of the country. The newspapers and radio broadcast every day the telephone numbers to ring in order to denounce someone or report anyone behaving suspiciously. Day and night, 24 hrs a day these numbers are busy, even though there are often many of them . . . The unending file of thousands upon thousands of men and women, fathers leading their offspring by the hand, who come to openly and rudely exhibit their joy in front of the ruins of the Moneda Presidential Palace. (Jean-Pierre Beauvais, *Rouge*, 29 October)

But since those early days, things have changed for them. The junta has emerged as the arm of the large and imperialist bourgeoisie; and its ruthless and primitive policies express *only* that allegiance. The constant devaluation of the escudo, the attack on the working class — both through mass unemployment and a savage reduction in wages — has led to the almost collapse of the internal Chilean market. The small capitalist is being thrown into bankruptcy, and none but the very highest salary can withstand the ravages of inflation. The junta believes in free competition, in the most literal sense;

and it has so far been unprepared to guide the economy in the direction of the small businessman. So as early as December last year, AMPICH, the Association of Medium and Small Industrialists and Craftsmen, complained that their sales of food and beverages had dropped by 80%.

It is the large exporters who benefit from the economy at the moment. The people who get extremely cheap labour and an enormous price advantage that the devalued escudo gives them on the world market. But who are not having to sell their goods to the impoverished Chileans. This situation has led to ironic reversals: e.g. the same lorry-owners who played such a part in Allende's downfall, have already been forced to strike against the present junta. And there have been threats of similar action from other middle-class quarters.

These policies are reflected at the political-governmental level. The junta is building a corporate state that has no room for the skills and traditions of the bourgeois politicians. Certain individuals — particularly from the NP — have been drawn into the new state, but *all* political parties have been banned. The CD party originally in full support of the coup, now oppose the junta.

2 These developments have left the generals with a very small social base and support. This does not automatically imply, as some would have, that the majority of the Chilean people are capable of forming a united block against the junta;

the disillusioned p-b masses do not automatically move over to proletarian positions. But these changes do spell problems for the military. The enemy is weaker even if the proletariat has not necessarily been made directly stronger.

The junta's problems have more recently, it seems, extended to inside its own narrow ranks. Sections of the large bourgeoisie have not found themselves immune to the state of the economy, and it is reported that even the notorious Edwards empire is running into difficulty as its soft-drinks monopoly finds no one to buy. (The Edwards are one of the Chilean bourgeois families.) And the splits within the military itself now seem to be becoming more than just power struggles based on jealousy and ambition. It is possible that a very real and serious division could be developing between the army on the one hand (led by the Generals Palacios, Arellano and Bonilla, favouring a more populist and less harsh economic policy) — and the arch-reactionary Navy, led by Admiral Merino.

The main question facing Chilean capital is that of *stability*. Without that, the Chilean economy — if not facing revolution — will always face passive resistance, sabotage and non-co-operation; and this from even the middle layers of the society. The working-class in Chile is already well aware of this sort of struggle. For instance the El Teniente copper mine is suffering a serious drop in production, along with 'mysterious' cases of furnaces over-heating.

And then there is always the problem of the r&f in the armed forces. Mutinies have been reported among regiments in the North of the country; and the carabineros of all people have shown dissatisfaction that it is they who are always in the front line against the people. We should remember that only a few months ago there were stirrings in Chile about a possible war with Peru. One of the main reasons for that was to consolidate the armed forces around the question of a patriotic war, and divert their attention away from the civil situation.

3 So what are the possible and necessary changes from the point of view of the ruling-class? One thing is clear. There will be no reversal to 'democracy' from the capitalists, for many years to come. That imperialism has just dispensed with fascist regimes in Portugal and Greece had no relevance for Chile. The proletariat is too close to its revolutionary past, for the bourgeoisie to give it any chance to express its democratic will. Frei was all about bourgeois democracy in Chile, and he lost. They don't want to repeat the same mistake.

The armed forces and the police place no time limit upon their stay in government, because the task of reconstructing the country morally, institutionally and materially requires prolonged and thorough measures. **IT IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL TO CHANGE THE MENTALITY OF THE CHILEANS . . .** The government of the armed forces aspires to initiate a new stage in our national destiny, opening the way to **NEW GENERATIONS OF CHILEANS, FORMED IN A SCHOOL OF SOUND CIVIC BEHAVIOUR.** (Junta's declaration of Principles.)

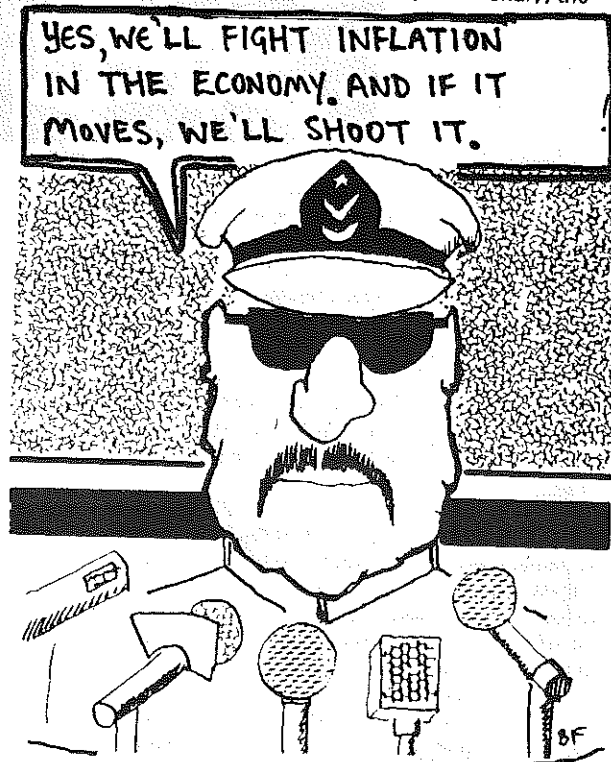
What is possible — and necessary — are modifications within the present dictatorship and its policy: as we've suggested, more economic room for the small capitalists; more state intervention on prices and inflation; an attempt to use its international credits to get parts of industry really going again and to try and build up pockets of 'prosperity' in the country — this could mean trying to create a 'labour aristocracy' in certain industries, e.g. the mines; or more probable for them, moves to help the income of the middle-classes, particularly in order to create a satisfied layer of managers, and employees in the state bureaucracy (as in Brazil).

But there will be no weakening of the monolithic, corporatist dictatorship whichever general is in charge. At best they will open up the regime to more discussion with certain interests like the small businessmen; and perhaps they will make the repression against the working-class, less primitive and public. More bodies may be buried rather than left float in the rivers

and canals. The torture will become — as it already has shown to be — more 'scientific', more advanced in its CIA subtlety.

Internationally, the capitalists states would like the junta to tone down its gorilla activities. In Latin America in particular, the extent of the Chilean atrocities is a problem for many of the other states. The proletarian masses overwhelmingly identify with the Chilean resistance and that is not good for the internal security of those states. Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Colombia have all been forced to speak out against the generals; and in Argentina, the recent visit of General Pinochet in May provoked a number of happy incidents: a strike of the workers at the airport at which he landed; counter-demonstrations in all the large cities; bomb attacks against the offices of the Chilean airline; and in The General Motors plant, 16 out of a shipment of 2,000 armoured cars destined for Chile were blown up.

4 But all this is still to forget the Chilean proletariat and its own role in determining the class struggle. There's little need here to document the repression against the proletariat and in particular its vanguards. It took a serious defeat in Chile last September and the comrades have a very long and difficult task in front of them. How difficult is not clear. The mass movement has been overpowered, dispersed and disorganized. Many former militants — lucky enough to escape death — are no doubt demoralised and frightened off political resistance to the regime. But the Chilean proletariat has *not* suffered an historical crushing along the lines of Germany or Spain in the 30's. Firstly, the Chilean gorillas have been unable to launch and sustain a mass fascist movement in the country, dedicated to poison and attack the workers from within. Unlike Hitler, they have not got a new and dynamic counter-revolutionary mass movement. And secondly, the

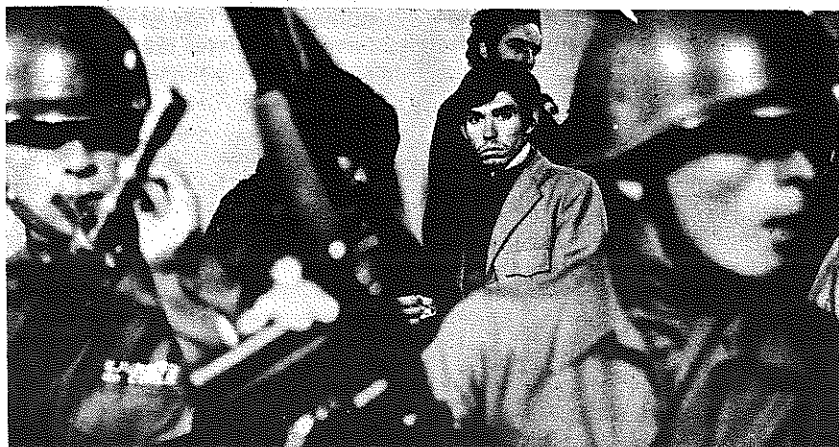


Chilean proletariat was in a period of political and organisational growth at the time of the coup. The coup did not come on top of a long phase of stagnation and impasse for the movement as in Germany before 1933; nor after the demoralising experience of armed war between different fractions of the workers movement as in Spain before Franco's victory. The implications of these differences are not fully clear. But it seems true to say that the Chilean masses are still very much in

touch with the revolutionary tradition and enthusiasm that was being built up around the cordons and commandos in 1973.

The number of acts of resistance are remarkable given the odds: strikes at the El Teniente, Chuquicamata and Algarrobo mines as well as in numerous factories; shootings and stonings of prominent right-wing figures (e.g. Miguel Helo, a well-known opponent of UP who was shot in the chest while driving home to Santiago); the reappearance of wall slogans, clandestine leaflets, publications and even pirate radio broadcasts by a MIR leader still in Chile. It is reported for instance that a well-known junta butcher went out one morning to find his car covered in MIR slogans. Next time hopefully it won't only be slogans for this Chilean, Carrero Blanco.

These actions are important as they help to reform the spirit and the will of the Chilean proletariat. And significantly there have been victories for these struggles. For instance the MIR report that the Algarrobo iron mine went on a 24 hour strike and succeeded in putting a stop to any more dismissals from the mine. Limited victories such as this cannot be under-



estimated.

The news is not bleak from the political organisations. These definitely took a hammering in September. 15,000 is the minimum number of those killed in Chile, and we can reasonably assume that most of them were militants in the left parties. Many prominent figures of the UP have either been murdered or are now in captivity. Though the leaders of the three main left-wing fractions of the movement are free: Altamirano (Left SP), Garretón (MAPU), and Enriquez (MIR) — (Enriquez is still in Chile, and it's probably true to say generally that because of their traditions, the MIR was best prepared to resist the effects of the coup against its organisation.)

And since September we believe that the left has been able to regroup and re-establish its structures without any irreparable damage to its organisation and resources. And the existence of these organisations is of crucial importance to the Chilean working-class. Without them it would have the impossible task of organising channels of co-ordination and communication from scratch.

But more than outlining these factors, we would not like to start speculating on the course of the coming struggles. Too much is unknown and unpredictable. It is clear that the fight will be a long and protracted one, but we cannot say where and how the balance of political and military forces will swing back to the revolutionaries. It is too tied up with the morale and loyalty of the army; the divisions in the junta; the state of class struggle in L.A. as a whole; and at times could be seriously affected by mistakes on either side — from the revolutionary side, one slip could quickly lead to the wholesale destruction of an important cell of the resistance. So nothing is certain.

5 The strategy of the resistance, its main slogans and demands, begin from the most pressing needs of the masses in the face of the military repression: abolition of torture and the restoration of basic human rights; for the right to organise in TU's etc. and the freedom of the press and association; for defense against redundancy and the savage attack on the people's living standards. It's around these demands that they have the possibility of organising a broad anti-fascist front, comprising all the left parties and the different sections of the population who can be drawn into a progressive opposition to the present regime: workers, peasants, students, lower ranks of the army, the poorer elements of the p-b, the pobladores, the intellectuals, etc. The base of the C-D party in particular has to be won over to the struggle, and there are encouraging signs of this happening: the C-D workers at El Teniente holding a collection for sacked communist and socialist militants; and in Concepcion there has been the establishment of the Revolutionary Christian Democratic Youth, whose signature has appeared beneath anti-junta slogans in the town.

A policy of broad, flexible alliance is, today, an indispensable condition for sharpening the internal contradictions of the enemy, dividing the enemy ranks, isolating it from its potential supporters, and thereby assuring its defeat. A policy of narrow sectarian alliances would on the other hand isolate and weaken the proletariat and help the dictatorship to consolidate itself in power. (Declaration from the MAPU, Santiago, March 1974.)

So at the moment the most immediate practical tasks that they have set themselves is the formation of anti-junta committees in every workplace, community, barracks etc.

But it is in the longer term that the strategies and perspectives are less unanimous and united. For the CP in particular, but seriously influencing the SP, the re-establishment of democracy is as always a *stage* in the struggle that they separate from the struggle for socialism. In practice this means that once again they sacrifice the political independence and strength of the proletariat on the altar of an alliance with the 'democratic' sectors of the middle-classes. Having learnt very little from the past, Corvalán unfortunately has still failed to understand the role of the bourgeois state, and has talked of the coup as an *aberration* in what will again one day be the democratic tradition of the Chilean armed forces.

The Chilean revolutionary left have an important political battle ahead of them against the reformist line: a battle around which we could see a progressive unification of the different revolutionary tendencies inside Chile. Today the revolutionary position is in fact in a relatively strong position. The coup has opened many eyes, and the prestige of the MIR in particular is reported to be very high. And both the MIR and the MAPU, whilst stressing the importance of unity in action, have begun a serious political offensive against the reformism inside the other left parties.

But it is precisely the same policy towards alliances that the CP today proposes. It fails to see that bourgeois democracy can never withstand fascism. They are two alternatives within the rule of capital. And that is an historical truth for the proletarian movement, that in Chile today has the most immediate relevance. Democracy cannot be restored there even in its bourgeois form, until capital is assured that the proletariat is politically annihilated. And the revolutionary position starts from that basis:

This defeat (i.e. the coup) was an expression of the historical mistakes of reformist policies. During a period of intensification of the workers movement and the ensuing social polarisation, a persistent search for an alliance with a fraction of the bourgeoisie weakened and disarmed the power of the workers movement and transferred its strength to the bourgeois counter-revolutionaries. (Statement by MIR, Santiago, January 1974.)

The struggle against the barbarian dictatorship is the common denominator in the mobilisation of the most widely differing areas of the population who do not share the same individual interests. The working-class and the oppressed masses are not only fighting against dictatorship — they are also fighting for socialism. The working-class and the people must provide the impetus for the broadest possible anti-fascist resistance front in conjunction with all sectors of the population prepared to join the struggle. *But the working class and the people reserve their absolute right to their own independent political line and organisation.* For the proletariat is fighting against not only the oppression from this dictatorship, it is fighting to stamp out all the forms of dictatorship which have been used to repress it and other social sectors.

The proletariat and all other oppressed sectors have the duty to organise to secure their own independent, autonomous programme and propaganda within the anti-fascist resistance front.

Only in this way can the struggle against the junta provide a powerful stimulus to the education of the proletariat in preparation for its historical mission — the conquest of power, workers and peasants revolution, the building of socialism. (Bautista Von Schowen, MIR leader, October '73.)

So for the Chilean revolutionaries the perspective is to use every means to develop the confidence, morale, clarity and organisation of the proletarian masses, towards the launching of a protracted revolutionary armed struggle, aimed at establishing a proletarian state. [The exact formulations of the MAPU and the MIR seem not to fully co-incide on these points, but together they do form a very clear block against the revisionist and reformist position.]

The battle between revolutionary and reformist political line also comes down to the question of the forms of struggle to be launched by the Chilean resistance; and in turn this comes down to the role of armed struggle. Here we quote extensively from the MIR.

In our struggle against the junta dictatorship, our military action will seek to incorporate vast sections of the mass movement into the armed struggle and not to limit this activity to vanguard groups alone who "in the name of the masses" and with their "sympaty (or support)" carry out military actions.

The aim of a mass military strategy is to smash the military and repressive stranglehold of the dictatorship. This will require the building of the People's Revolutionary Army, the only force that is able to take on and overthrow the reactionary army through a long revolutionary war that will develop in the towns and in the countryside

But for us, the armed struggle is not only an aspect of the political struggle, the result of a long process of the accumulation of forces, a kind of "final thrust." with which the proletariat and its allies topple the bourgeois order and take power. The conditions under which the class struggle is being fought in Chile today make it the case that all the initiatives of the masses must have military support. The structure and the organisation of the mass movement must take into consideration the military side of our tasks; propaganda, organisation etc.....

The only way to make sure that the masses are not just spectators or sympathisers of the armed struggle, is to link our actions with the concrete struggle of the people, by creating the conditions in which the people become the principal protagonist in this process

Given the brutal blow received by the proletariat, the principal task today is the reorganisation of the mass movement. This task requires the presence of an organised party, able to offer clear political solutions, possessing a structure that enables it to carry out these solutions. The MIR is there to do this

The formation of resistance committees throughout the country in the factories, on the agricultural estates, in the shanty-towns, schools and offices which link at the base, workers, peasants, squatters, white-collar workers and students, and soon soldiers and non-commissioned officers shows that the mass movement is beginning to overcome the organisational stale-mate it was in.

It is to this task and to preparing our party for the violent clashes of a prolonged struggle that we are concentrating our energy. The energy of thousands of militants and sympathisers, of hundreds of cadres formed in the difficult years of when we were clandestine (1969-70) and in the hard class war that marked the period of the Popular Unity government.

