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THE LESSONS OF THE CHILEAN COUP

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On September 11, 1973 the Chilean army carried out the *coup d'état* which it had been planning for the preceding two and a half years. The Popular Unity government was overthrown and its President, Salvador Allende, was shot dead in his room in the Moneda Palace, a large section of which was destroyed by artillery and aerial bombardment. The 'Chilean road' had come to an end. New names had been added to the scroll of working class martyrs in Latin America.

In attempting to assess the situation in Chile from 1970-73 and the course of events leading up to September 11, it is necessary to discuss the background in which the Popular Unity government was elected, what this victory represented and how the bourgeoisie in Chile together with the United States capitalists prepared to overthrow Allende.

THE FREI 'EXPERIMENT': THE BOURGEOISIE PLAYS THE REFORMIST CARD

Ever since the Cuban Revolution, the more sophisticated sections of the American and Latin American ruling classes understood the importance of projecting an alternative model of development to that of Cuba and creating an alternative pole of attraction in the Latin American continent. The influence and prestige of the Cuban Revolution and its leaders (Castro and Guevara) was such that the United States was extremely concerned at the possibility of Cuban-type social revolutions sweeping the continent. Hence the importance of Chile in their global strategy should not be underestimated. Accordingly important sections of the ruling class backed the Christian Democratic Party in the 1964 elections and ensured the victory of Eduardo Frei as President, a victory which was loudly hailed in the American press as a 'revolution in freedom'. It was stated on numerous occasions that Frei was going to 'profoundly transform' Chile's social and economic structure.

Certainly it would be futile to deny that certain reforms were undertaken by the Christian Democratic government: the Agrarian Reform Law of 1967 made a start in expropriating land and distributing it among peasants, a rural unionisation law permitted the establishment of peasant unions, it increased Chilean participation in the US-controlled copper industry and finally bought a controlling share in both the Anaconda and Kennecott Copper Companies; it even attempted to devote more resources to social expenditure.

Frei's reformism was supported by the United States. To understand this it is useful to grasp the changes which have taken place in the area of investment by imperialist capital in Latin America which have led away from a concentration on primary materials towards the manufacturing sector. By 1966 the investment in manufacturing industries had become the dominant area of investment. This meant that the United States could afford to abandon the old oligarchies and be prepared to deal with the new oligarchs in the shape of bourgeois or military 'reformism'. In a penetrating study of this situation Ernest Mandel wrote (*Imperialism and National Bourgeoisie in Latin America*, 'International', Vol 1 No. 5):

'With the economic transformation effected during the last fifteen years, these traditional political structures (ie the old oligarchy TA) have also been transformed. The objective basis for the alliance of 'oligarchy and imperialism' has been reduced. The autonomy of the 'national' industrial bourgeoisie disappears in the face of the imperialist manufacturing trusts. . . .

'So there gradually emerges a new alliance, an association of 'imperialist capital-national industrial capital' with an interest in weakening the oligarchic sectors - not only the big landowners and exporters, but even traditional mining capital. . . .'

Thus Frei's policies in no way clashed with the interests of US imperialism. Moreover Frei was also quite capable of carrying out a policy of repression against the workers movement. Working class demonstrations were regularly attacked and teargassed by the police. Eight workers were shot dead at the El Salvador mine in 1966 and ten squatters who had occupied unoccupied land were ruthlessly massacred in Puerto Montt in 1969. The reforms certainly stimulated working class consciousness in the sense that many workers and peasants were not satisfied and wanted more. It was in this context that the question of armed struggle began to be posed by sections of the revolutionary left. Carlos Altamirano, a prominent leader of the Chilean Socialist Party, told the Cuban newspaper *Granma* (Oct 30, 1968) that there was a 'progressive feeling of betrayal; . . . people, workers and youth seek true revolutionary methods of struggle, of action. In the country, as well as in the university, highly explosive forces are being formed.'

Within the Christian Democratic party itself groupings emerged which were extremely critical of Frei for pandering to the Right. In May 1969 a leftist current split off and formed the *Movimiento de Accion Popular Unitaria* (Movement of United Popular Action - MAPU). By 1970 it was clear that the Christian Democrats would not win the forthcoming election: their candidate Tomic was to use a rhetoric virtually indistinguishable from that of Allende, but the experience of Christian Democracy in power had disillusioned broad sections of the masses. Even the bourgeoisie was split and it was the participation of two bourgeois candidates (Tomic and the extreme right-wing Allesandri representing the National Party and the Democratic Radical Party), which paved the way for Allende's electoral victory.

REFORMISM OF A NEW TYPE: ALLENDE'S EXPERIMENT OR THE PEACEFUL ROAD TO SOCIALISM

The election of the Popular Unity (UP) was seen as an important step forward by large sections of the working class. The programme of the UP was without doubt confused (particularly on the co-existence of a private and a public sector), but nonetheless it transcended the reformism of Frei and pledged to create a new Chile, to nationalise all foreign capital and foreign trade, to extend the Agrarian Reform of Frei, and to lay the basis for the creation of a new apparatus under the control of the working class. In brief the UP saw its electoral victory as the beginning of the process of a transition to socialism.

What then was the character of the UP? Was it a classical Popular Front as existed in Chile, France and Spain in the 1930's or was it something different? A popular front embodies the collaboration between a working class party and a party or parties of the bourgeoisie, and is a tactic utilised by sections of the bourgeoisie to contain the rise of the mass movement and to keep a grip on working class parties. That was how the bourgeoisie conceived the Chilean Popular Front in the Thirties. Allende himself told Debray (*Conversations*, p.118) in that connection: '... we consciously entered into a coalition in order to form the left-wing of the system—the capitalist system, that is. By contrast, today, as our programme shows, we are struggling to change the system. . . . Our objective is total, scientific, Marxist socialism.'

The point made by Allende is essentially correct. The bourgeois parties in the UP were insignificant and some later withdrew from the coalition. In any case the two parties which dominated the UP were the Chilean CP and the Socialist Party (SP), representing a large section of the organised working class and pledged to socialism. Thus the stated aim of the UP-type coalitions is socialism, whereas the Popular Fronts of the Thirties were pledged essentially to combat fascism together with important sections of the bourgeoisie, and completely within the political and ideological framework of bourgeois democracy. This cannot be said about the UP. In fact, as we shall discuss later, one of the parties (MAPU) of bourgeois origin later developed a revolutionary programme and theses which were close to the positions of revolutionary marxism. The UP in Chile was thus, if anything, a reformist united front dominated by two large working class parties. Even if there had not been a single grouping of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois origin in the UP there is nothing to indicate that its policies would have been different in any way. Therefore in our view there is no comparison between the coalition government in Ceylon (where the reformist left is in coalition with a major bourgeois party) and the UP in Chile.

The second important point to grasp about the UP is that the Chilean CP was a right-wing force within it and that the SP was well to the left of the CP on virtually every political question. This fact becomes rather decisive in understanding why the UP was not in a position to contain the mass movement by selective repression (as the bourgeoisie would have liked even to outlaw the MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement)). It was the existence and presence of the SP which made the UP an unsalvageable force for the left section of the bourgeoisie (represented by Christian Democracy). In the absence of a strong left-wing pole inside the SP it is quite clear that the CP would have dragged the UP irredeemably to the Right and ultimately brought the Christian Democrats into the coalition, which would have made it a

classic popular front of the type in which the stalinist movement specialised in the Thirties.

What then is the Chilean Socialist Party, and what are its origins? The Chilean Socialist Party was founded in 1933 by Salvador Allende amongst others. It was from the beginning a party which stated in its programme its commitment to Marxism: *'The Party adheres to Marxism as the method for interpreting reality and recognises the class struggle as the motive force of history.'* The SP was created because its founders felt that the Chilean CP was incapable of responding to the needs of the Chilean proletariat (the CP was then going through an ultraleft phase in accordance with the turn initiated by the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow). The SP represented an attempt to build a working class party based on Marxism, but not under the domination of the Stalinised Third International. A party, that is, which was able to devise tactics in relation to the needs of the Chilean class struggle and not in accordance with the twists and turns of Moscow. The SP, as a result, was different from traditional social-democratic parties, and Allende specifically stated in 1970 that the SP had nothing to do 'with certain self-styled socialist parties in Europe'. Thus the SP never aligned itself with the Second International (it was the Radical Party which was the Chilean section of the Second International) and, in fact occupied a terrain to the left of the Chilean CP. Its internal life was much more open and many SP militants in the Thirties used to study Trotsky as well as Lenin (including Allende himself). Despite the fact that the SP was programmatically committed to Marxism, nonetheless it had no real strategy for the seizure of power and it was involved in a whole number of class-collaborationist electoral alliances, including the Popular Front of 1938, which was dominated by the Radical Party and its leader Cerda. It was and remained a centrist political formation, constantly vacillating under the pressure of different class forces in Chile. It was the peculiar nature of the Socialist Party together with the conditions which had brought the UP to power and the continuing mass mobilisations which made the position of the Chilean CP somewhat awkward. The CP had since the late Thirties been a party of class-collaboration. After its ignominious role in the Cerda Popular Front of 1938, a Front which did not carry out one *significant* reform in favour of the urban or rural proletariat, the Chilean CP continued its electoralist orientation. In 1946 it participated in the government of a right-wing Radical Party leader, Gonzales Videla. The CP excused this participation by quoting from Videla's pre-election rhetoric, which promised the working masses everything they wanted in addition to the moon. But the Radical Party as a major bourgeois party could *not* in any way serve the interests of the working class. Videla used the CP support to contain the rising working class upsurge (there were three CP leaders in Videla's cabinet) and when this task had been accomplished he banned the CP, unleashed a ferocious repression against the workers, arrested 1000 CP militants, and sent 500 of them to a desert concentration camp in the North. It was not until 1958 that the ban on the CP was lifted. Then it embarked once again on its old policies. No lessons were learnt. No questions were asked. The Cuban revolution left no mark on it, and the parliamentary, non-violent road to socialism was pursued with a vengeance once again.

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the basis of the parties of the working class, with a class programme, with the aim of establishing a truly people's government, has been oriented towards an electoral contest within the framework of bourgeois democracy. As a result, the working class has lost the possibility of coming to power for a period. It was not just one more loss of a presidential candidacy, but the catastrophic culmination of a heap of weaknesses and mistakes which have led us from a correct perspective to the blind alley of bourgeois democracy. We were dragged through a false doorway with respect to bourgeois constitutionalism and the policy of the 'peaceful road'.

It is obvious that this anti-parliamentarist current in the SP did not disappear with the election of the Popular Unity in 1970. On the contrary it was precisely this current, represented by the General Secretary of the party, Altamirano, which fought bitterly against the CP's attempts to drag the UP to the arms of Christian Democracy.

THE FIRST YEAR OF POPULAR UNITY: EXERCISING POWER INSIDE A CAPITALIST STATE

As mentioned above, Salvador Allende was elected President on the basis of a minority vote. The Chilean bourgeoisie could not agree on one candidate and instead put two in the field. This ensured the victory of Allende but placed him in a difficult situation vis a vis parliament, where the UP was in a minority and dependent on Christian Democratic support. In order for Allende to be confirmed in office, he had to give certain guarantees to parliament, which were embedded in the Constitution and which gave an undertaking that the UP would not destroy the system of liberal democracy and its state apparatus.

This concession was strongly attacked by the MIR and the Socialist Party youth. Both groups contended that to achieve office in these conditions would be to put one's head on the chopping block. The overwhelming majority of the UP, however, supported the concessions as 'tactical' and Allende assumed power in November 1970. In the period leading to his assumption of power the Army C-in-C Rene Schneider, supposedly a 'neutral' officer, was assassinated by right-wing squads who hoped thereby to unleash a military coup and prevent Allende from holding office. The attempt failed as the assassins were uncovered (largely owing to the vigilance of the MIR) and right-wing members of parliament were said to be involved. The assassination therefore proved to be counter-productive, and Allende was in a relatively strong position during the first several months in office.

The first year of the UP saw the Allende administration carrying out a number of important reforms as had been promised in the UP programme. Certainly there can be little doubt that many of these measures were immensely popular with the oppressed strata of Chilean society and had a big impact. Beginning with the free distribution of half a litre of milk for all children, a number of new laws were passed to increase and develop the existing social services, a ceiling was placed on all governmental salaries, 45 political prisoners were released, the special mobile group of riot police (trained in the arts of repression by the US AID police training programme immortalised in the film 'State of Siege') was disbanded. There was a 60% increase in wages and most prices were fixed. The first six months of 1971 saw inflation reduced to 7.5% compared to the first half of 1970 when it had risen to 22%. Major nationalisations were also begun, and within the first nine months a large

proportion of the textile, iron, automobile and copper industries had been nationalised. In addition 60% of the country's banks were also taken into public ownership.

The nationalisation of the three largest copper mines (all owned by American capital)—Cerro, Anaconda and Kennecott—was a measure of some importance, particularly since virtually no compensation was paid. The UP argued that the profits which the capitalists had extracted over the years amounted to more than ample compensation. But what was lacking in most cases was workers control after the nationalisations, a factor which could have been of utmost importance in transforming a legal decree into something concrete which could have changed the overall relationship of class forces and acted as a big impetus to workers being exploited in privately-owned factories. Nonetheless there were cases of factories being nationalised after being occupied by workers protesting against redundancies. This happened in May 1971 in the case of the Ford Motor Co. plant, and in November 1970 with the Northern Indiana Brass Co.'s local subsidiary.

More significant was the seizure by the workers of 14 textile mills in May '71, which compelled the UP to take them under state control immediately to maintain production. In addition five other textile plants were also taken over in order to provide a base for the new state-owned textile industry. It was these measures in particular which convinced the bourgeoisie that the UP was not going to restrict take-overs to obvious anachronisms such as the copper mines, but was challenging the manufacturing sector of the bourgeoisie as well. Imperialism is always prepared to tolerate a certain measure of nationalisations provided that compensation is guaranteed (eg Peru), but in return it wants to use the prestige gained by the government carrying out the nationalisations to contain or, if necessary, repress the mass movement. Furthermore it does not readily brook any interference with the valued investments it has in the manufacturing sector of industry. In Chile the UP was unable to oblige imperialism in this fashion. The class base of the CP and the SP would have revolted and sections would have moved to the MIR and the revolutionary left in general. Also it would have involved the UP reaching some programmatic agreement with the Christian Democracy. Clearly that would have split the UP, and a CP-Christian Democratic Alliance without the SP would have been disastrous from the point of view of the bourgeoisie.

Thus the UP government was unable to satisfy imperialism by containing the mass movement. Its dilemma lay in the fact that by its very nature it was also incapable of satisfying the hopes and aspirations which its victory had aroused in the broad working class and peasant masses. Its vacillations were utilised by the bourgeoisie, as the latter together with the multinational corporations of Wall Street (of which the intrigues of ITT are only the most glaring example) prepared to bring about its downfall.

The UP programme stressed that the first stage was the anti-imperialist, anti-oligarchic stage of the process. The key lay precisely in the fact that there was no Chinese wall dividing imperialist economic interests from those of the local bourgeoisie. Over the last two decades the interpenetration of foreign and indigenous capital had increased by leaps and bounds, so that the possibility of sections of the local bourgeoisie balancing between the UP and US imperialism to strengthen themselves was virtually nil. If anything the stages theory of progress was more out of place today than it had been in the early years of the 20th century.

What were the real problems which confronted the UP government? Fidel Castro expressed them rather succinctly in his important speech on Chile in Havana on September 28, 1973:

'In the first place there was an intact bourgeois state apparatus. There were armed forces that called themselves apolitical, institutional that is, apparently neutral in the revolutionary process. There was that bourgeois parliament where a majority of members jumped to the tune of the ruling classes. There was a judicial system that was completely subservient to the reactionaries. ...

The key problem, therefore, was: how to smash the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie. This problem was at best understood by the major components of the UP in a gradualist, parliamentarist, constitutionalist way. There was a complete failure to understand the nature of the Chilean army and its function. There was a failure to see that the creation of an alternative apparatus based on the workers and peasants was of vital importance if the bourgeoisie was going to be defeated. There were indications that sections of the SP understood these problems, but this understanding was at best partial and the socialist left did not wage a crucial struggle on the issues at stake inside the UP until it was too late. Thus at the Congress of the SP after the victory of the UP a resolution was adopted which while backing Allende's policies to the hilt also stressed the following points:

'... We recognise as a form of self-criticism that some of the actions of the workers have gone beyond the political directions of Popular Unity and are in fact putting into the forefront the question of power ...

'The presence of workers in the government cannot signify dependence of the mass movement on the governmental apparatus ... The Socialist Party will fight to revitalise the committees of Popular Unity and to convert them into instruments of political power for the working masses in the new popular state ...

'... the Socialist Party gives special priority to those programmatic measures that undermine capitalist power and connect the bourgeois-democratic tasks with socialist tasks in the same uninterrupted process ...' (Punto Final, No. 124, February 16, 1971).

But again there was no clear guide as to what constituted the next vital steps for the masses in which bourgeois power could be undermined and destroyed.

IMPERIALISM AND THE BOURGEOISIE PREPARE THEIR OFFENSIVE

As briefly discussed above, the first reaction of US imperialism was to adopt a 'wait and see' attitude to the UP government. This period lasted roughly from between 9 and 11 months after Allende was elected. The reason for forbearance was because imperialism hoped that the UP government could possibly turn out to be an 'experiment' of the Peruvian type: anti-imperialist rhetoric, a few nationalisations, but at the same time a strict containment of the working masses. The UP was for a whole variety of reasons unable to play this role, the Chilean CP notwithstanding. In the last months of 1971 the imperialists began to turn the screws, clearly beginning to regret that they had not heeded the advice of ITT to organise an active CIA intervention against Allende. Though it must be pointed out that there was a split in the American ruling class on this question and all the available evidence indicates that the State Department and the CIA were involved in discussions with the

Chilean rightists before Allende was declared President. However, once the nationalisations began in earnest the United States declared economic war on Chile. All economic aid and credits were suspended and a de facto boycott of Chile by American capital began to be carried out. Internally a more vigorous application of Frei's Agrarian Reform saw the agrarian bourgeoisie embarking on a course of sabotaging agricultural production. The urban bourgeoisie, in total control of distribution, began to hoard and create a black market on a vast scale in Chile.

An interesting sidelight to the whole affair is the extremely significant fact that throughout the period of the UP government the United States did not for a single moment cut off *military* aid to the Chilean armed forces. Having put the economic screws on Allende, they continued to strengthen the military apparatus of the Chilean bourgeoisie, which they knew full well would at a later date be required to apply the military screws and throttle the UP. In October 1971 a well-known expert in repression, Nathaniel Davis, was appointed US Ambassador to Santiago. His previous posting had been Guatemala, where his 'advice' to the army had resulted in a severe repression of the popular movement. In December 1971 two Nixon aides, Finch and Klein, returned from a 'fact finding mission' to Chile and proclaimed that 'Allende won't last long.' This was meant to reassure the giant multinationals of the United States, who had begun to be affected by the nationalisations and which included in their ranks such illustrious names as Rockefeller, General Motors, ITT, Dow (remember the napalm!), Du Pont and several others.

American policy was aptly described by James Petras and Robert La Porte:

'The overall purpose of US policy is to create economic disorder and provide a domestic social crisis that could lead to ... the overthrow of the Allende government by a civil-military coalition made up of the Army, the Christian Democrats and the extreme right-wing National Party.' (US Responses to Economic Nationalism in Chile', unpublished, Penn State University, 1972).

In February 1972 Nixon gave the official seal of justification to what was already de facto US policy when he declared:

'Henceforth, should an American firm be expropriated without reasonable steps to provide prompt, adequate and effective compensation, there is a presumption that the expropriating country would receive no new bilateral economic benefits ... Similarly we would withhold our support for loans to that country in multilateral development institutions ... and, because expropriation is a concern of many countries, we are placing greater emphasis on the use of multilateral mechanisms for dealing with this problem.'

Presumably this was also a polite hint to West German imperialism, which also has an important level of capital investment in Chile, to participate in the economic blockade which had been mounted. But the message was clear: the American monster was preparing to move into action. Once the master had pronounced, the capitalist press in the United States stepped up its pressure and its attacks on the UP government increased in both size and virulence. A revealing study of the US press and Chile has been made by John Pollock and David Eisenhower (*The New Cold War in Latin America: The US Press and Chile*; in 'The Chilean Road to Socialism,' Doubleday, New York) and indicates, for those still suffering from doubts, the close inter-relationship between the US press, the multinational giants and the State Department.

Given the preparations which the Americans and their Chilean friends were making, the UP leaders showed little understanding of what was involved. The Communist Party *did* have a line: they would have made virtually every concession possible to the bourgeois parties; but this was impossible, as it would have resulted in the disintegration of the UP because of the opposition it would have encountered from forces within the SP and MAPU. The only other alternative was for the UP to go on to the offensive, mobilise the workers, expropriate large chunks of the private sector, and take distribution into its own hands. If this had been done in the early part of 1972 it would have disrupted the plans of the bourgeoisie, put the latter on the defensive, and improved the relationship of class forces in Chile in favour of the working masses. But to do so would have required a break with the reformist constitutionalism which characterised the road to the future mapped out by the Popular Unity, and this addiction to bourgeois legality and its rigid constitutionalism would prove to be the rock on which the UP foundered and was crushed.

By the autumn of 1972 the bourgeoisie had mounted its offensive. It went on strike against the Popular Unity government. E. Montes, the general secretary of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Chilean section of the Fourth International, described developments during that period in April 1973 to a reporter of the socialist American weekly, *Intercontinental Press*:

'There had been an inflation of 180% preceding the 'strike of the bourgeoisie.' There were shortages of many kinds of consumer goods. As a result there was discontent among petty bourgeois strata which moved to the right. The October '72 capitalist stoppage was an offensive by the right that stopped business nationally for 25 days in an attempt to bring about the fall of the government.

'While it took root in the petty bourgeois strata of the population, this stoppage or lockout failed. It not only failed; its effect was the opposite of what its sponsors intended: the workers movement sought to defend the government and the economy against the lockout. The workers kept production going without the boss. In a number of industries the workers took over, kept production going, set up a management. This, of course, posed very basic questions. Also, the government had to set up a requisition system to distribute the products and to keep production supplied with raw materials. Thus, by the time the bosses called off their 'strike', the 'social sector' of the economy (i.e. nationalised industry) had expanded ...

'From October '72 till now (April 1973) the economic deterioration caused by the imperialist boycott and sabotage by local capitalists has continued - inflation, shortages, black-market operations, and so on. In November and December 1972, the situation got worse, affecting even layers of the working class. In this situation, the government took a turn to the left. It was of short duration, but it had profound effects. It was expressed in a speech by the Minister of Housing, Fernando Flores, who called on the workers and peasants to strengthen and enlarge the functions of the JAP (Juntas de Abastecimiento y Control de Precios - Supply and Price Control Boards), mass organisations for policing prices and distributing consumer goods. Until that time the JAP had been watchdog bodies, but Flores now told the workers: 'You distribute.'

'From that time on the JAP undertook the storage and distribution of goods, more extensively in some places than in others. The JAP developed

characteristics of an embryonic dual power of the rank and file. To some extent the black market and other forms of capitalist sabotage were overcome by these activities. And while shortages continued in places where the petty bourgeoisie were strong, in a working class area with an efficient JAP, at least the basic necessities were available. This stopped the swing to the right among sections of the workers. Indeed, it swung them even further left, for now the workers were beginning to feel their own power in the field of distribution as well as the field of production.'

It was this turn by the UP which resulted in an increased majority in the 4 March election results. An increasing polarisation was taking place, and more and more workers were understanding the need to fight the bourgeoisie. It was increased radicalisation which was posing problems for the right-wing inside the UP (i.e. the CP and the SP right), who wanted to return to the bourgeoisie the factories taken over by the workers during the 'strike of the bourgeoisie' in October 1972. Carlos Altamirano, the SP's general secretary and leader of its left-wing, was strongly opposed to this plan, as was the dominant section of the party itself. This tussle between the right and the left inside the UP was reflected inside the MAPU. Once again comrade Montes provides us with a lucid account:

'This struggle (between the CP and the SP left - TA) has now taken the peculiar form of a fight within one of the small parties of the UP - MAPU, which originated as a left-wing split from Frei's Christian Democrats. The left-wing of MAPU won the leadership at the last party congress (November 1972), and passed a resolution opposing the theory of the revolution by stages and advocating instead permanent revolution, continuing the uninterrupted collectivisation and socialisation of the country. The congress removed Jaime Gazmuri, a representative of the party's right wing, as general secretary and replaced him with Oscar Garreton.

'Three days after the 4 March election (in which MAPU got 100,000 votes), the right-wing minority carried out a coup against the party leadership, forcibly occupying the three main offices, including the MAPU radio station in Santiago. There is no doubt that this coup had not only the support, but active participation, of the CP.

'The right-wing declared Gasmuri general secretary and expelled the left wing (i.e. the majority), including Garreton. The left-wing replied by expelling Gazmuri and those who participated in the coup ...'

However the JAPs were not effectively generalised. They functioned most effectively in the shanty towns, where the MIR was dominant and where democratically elected and representative delegates gave them real weight. However the right-wing inside the UP realised the dangers involved in this and they acted to restrict their activities. The Peruvian revolutionary leader in exile, Hugo Blanco, described the process brilliantly in *Intercontinental Press*:

'Once the JAP were permitted wide power. But, following this, their role was restricted, with many of their functions being handed over to the police at the same time that military officers were being brought into the top posts in the distribution system.

'At their height, besides receiving the goods and taking them to the merchants, the JAP maintained supervision over the prices and weighing of products sold over the counter ... Once things reached this level, the consumers saw that they were 'unpaid employees of the storekeepers,' realising

that merchants were unnecessary.'

The emasculation of the JAP by the introduction of police and military personnel was part of the whole strategic and tactical thrust embodied in the 'Chilean road' — a failure to break with the institutions of the bourgeois state and a refusal to 'offend' vital sectors of the state apparatus. It was this fact as much as conjunctural misanalyses which led to the clash with the copper miners and workers of the public sector in June 1973.

Faced with a growing inflation the public sector workers staged a strike for higher wages. The government branded them as 'agents of the right,' like those who took part in illegal occupations of factories and land. The workers leading the strike responded by telling the UP that they were prepared to take over *El Mercurio*, the organ of the Chilean counter-revolution, but the continual attacks by the UP made many workers responsive to the initiatives of the right. Hugo Blanco described the situation of the El Teniente miners thus:

'These workers struggled for the nationalisation of the mines together with their brothers at the Chuquicamata mine. They have pretty much always been the vanguard of the Chilean workers movement; thanks to them it won gains like the sliding scale of wages. It should also be pointed out that they voted 70% for the UP during the last elections ...

'The present strike, which began on 15 April (1973), holds serious implications for the working class. The miners are defending their standard of living and they are showing that they are not rightists but they they support the general process of change that is occurring.

'The government and the UP have furiously torn into the strikers, branding them as agents of fascism. In this, as in everything, it is the CP that stands out; it is organising parades in Santiago against the miners, calling on the government to use a 'firm hand,' since in its view there is no difference between this strike and the bosses' strike last October ...

'Chile is a capitalist country. The nationalisation of 'basic industry' leaving derivative industry in the hands of private capital, involves nothing more than a kind of state-capitalism. The number of factories that have been 'taken over' by the workers and that the government has found itself forced to 'intervene' in is relatively small. Distribution remains 70% in private hands, and most of the remainder is also carried out with the aid of private concerns.

'In this situation, all the efforts of the workers in the Social Sector of the economy end up in the pockets of the capitalists ...

'The dollars earned by the efforts of the copper workers are sold at a low price to importers of essential consumer goods, machines and raw materials. The consumer goods go to the black market. The machines and raw materials go at bargain rates to private factories, which nevertheless sell their products at a high price. Thus the sacrifices of the miners are swelling the profits of capitalism.'

Precisely! It is absurd to ask the miners to tighten their belts in a society where the bourgeoisie not only still exists, but has its entire state apparatus intact and controls a significant section of the economy and a majority of the distribution. It was the attacks made by the UP and the CP in particular which drove sections (and important sections at that) of workers into the arms of the Right. Only by relying more and more on the independent

mobilisations of the working class and telling them the truth (i.e. the real difficulties confronting the UP) could the bourgeoisie have been successfully fought.

And if it is thought that it was only the 'ultraleft and sinister' Trotskyists who held to this view, we can do no better than turn to the plaintive voice of the left SP paper *Aurora de Chile*, which spoke for hundreds of thousands of UP supporters when it wrote in an editorial in November '72 (one month after the 'strike of the bourgeoisie'):

'Because we are sure that there is going to be another bosses' strike. The strike was called off but not ended, the rich said on Sunday night (5 Nov., 1972). We heard them clearly over the radio. Either the drones are going to leave the honeycomb or they will come back to rule the country with blood and fire. It is us or the rich ... There is going to be another bosses' strike, and the government is handing the plants back to the fascists so that they can make another try ...

'The big problem is that we are in those plants and we are not going to give them back. The government said for us to make these plants produce, and we did, and now we are not going to give them back. What is the government going to do? Shoot us? ...

'They didn't drive the rich out of the enclaves where they were holding the trucks. Are they going to drive us government supporters out of the plants? What a dilemma, Companero Presidente!'

The dilemma was answered by the UP in a way which was somewhat unique in the annals of the international workers movement (though it must be said not at all unique in the Stalinist segment of it). The leading military and naval chiefs were brought into the cabinet in an attempt to create stability and no doubt to try and 'unify the nation.' The military chiefs accepted cabinet posts (General Prats became Minister of the Interior) and thus staved off an immediate crisis, but soon after the March 1973 elections they left the cabinet. The official excuse was that the March elections had confirmed that the base of the UP was intact and there was no need for the military to remain in the cabinet. The real reasons were somewhat different. It was clear that the plans for a coup were already imminent and the military leaders wanted no army chiefs in a government they were about to bring down. So they prepared a series of demands which they knew Allende could not accept. The Christian Democratic daily *La Prensa* made the following observation:

'In a prolonged meeting in the middle of last week, the Council of Generals decided to call on President Allende to meet four demands. Failure to do so would mean that the men in uniform would leave the offices they held. The demands included the right to maintain effective surveillance of the armed groups; the end of the executive's use of legal loopholes to institute social reforms; and taking a technical and non-political approach to the questions relating to food supply.'

The withdrawal by the 'uniforms' from the cabinet was merely the beginning of the process which culminated in the coup on 11 September, 1973. In the time which elapsed many important events were to take place. On 29 June the Second Armoured Regiment made an attempt at a coup and led an assault on the Moneda Palace. Whether its Commander, Lt. Colonel Souper, acted alone or whether it was a deliberate ploy by the Council of Generals to

test the reaction — in other words a dress rehearsal — we do not know.

Certainly it is clear that in the officers' messes talk of a coup had been going on for the last two years, so that even if Souper took an independent initiative, it was done in full awareness of the mood in the upper ranks of the Chilean Army.

The most important feature of this abortive coup, however, was the reaction which it aroused in the working class. Factory occupations and a strengthening of the Cordones Industriales (local workers' action committees) greeted the abortive uprising. Defence committees were strengthened and partially armed. However it is important to note that the CUT (Chilean Workers Union, dominated by the CP & SP) did not call a General Strike and prepare the workers for struggle. They were keen on keeping workers *inside* the factories and restricted themselves to calling simply for factory occupations. While some independent initiatives outflanked the trade-union and CP leaders, they were few and far between. Nonetheless the anger of the workers at this attempted coup was clear to observers. Nearly a million workers marched on the evening of 29 June and demanded that Allende dissolve parliament and execute the plotters. Allende called attention to the 'loyalty' of the majority of the military. The scene had all the ingredients of a Greek tragedy: the main characters conscious that they were confronted with disaster, but they adopted a fatalistic attitude coupled with a naive belief in the armed forces.

One of the independent initiatives from the base which did indicate that the vanguard workers were becoming conscious of the necessity of arming the masses was the action of the delegates of the Vicuna Mackenna Cordon (the industrial cordons grouped together assemblies of workers and cut across industrial lines). A joint statement issued by the elected council of the Vicuna Mackenna Industrial Cordon was drawn up and signed in the Elecmetal factory on 29 June. We reproduce it in full below:

'We, representatives of the undersigned left-wing parties, express our total support to the measures taken by the Command of the Vicuna Mackenna Industrial Cordon in its Instructions Numbers 1, 2, and 3 (a reference to factory take-overs and preparations to defend the cordon with all means available at a time when the attempted coup had not yet been put down).

'The workers will not allow the government, installed by us, to be overthrown by the bourgeoisie. We will not permit the gains we have achieved over long years of struggle to be swept aside by a fascist mob. The workers will crush sedition; we will make no truce with the bourgeoisie, but will crush it once and for all.

'1. All plants will become part of the Social Sector of the economy; not one plant that is important for the workers will remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

'2. Workers Leadership. Production and distribution will remain in the hands of the workers, and the people will exercise complete control over community territory.

'3. Popular Militia. The organised people must protect their gains. Create a Defence Committee and arm it in every industry and neighbourhood.

'4. The leadership of the defence, and the advance of the people will be

assured only if they rest in the hands of the organised working class.

Eloy Bustamante, *Socialist Party*

Jose Urrutia, *Communist Party*

Augusto Alcayaga A., *Radical Party*

Sergion Sotomayor, *Christian Left*

Enrique Fernandez, *Revolutionary Socialist Party (Chilean section of the Fourth International).*

The abortive coup on 29 June was an important test for the UP. If the statement signed by the leadership of the Vicuna Mackenna Cordon had been generalised, and the entire working class movement, its trade unions and its political parties (both those inside and outside the UP) had united to defend the UP against the threat of military dictatorship, the picture could have been significantly different. After 29 June the workers were prepared to make all sorts of sacrifices. They had experienced for themselves a move by the army to topple the UP and they had responded in their own way, thus defeating the tanks outside the Moneda Palace.

This was the opportunity (late though it was) for the UP to call for the creation of a nationwide workers and peasants militia. It was their last chance and they failed to take advantage of it. If a revolutionary party had existed in Chile at this time its intervention could have been decisive, but the revolutionary groups and currents did not constitute such a party and the UP was totally engrossed in the logic of its own utopian 'experiment.' In the *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky wrote:

'A revolutionary uprising that spreads over a number of days can develop victoriously only in the case that it ascends step by step, and scores one success after another. A pause in its growth is dangerous; a prolonged marking of time, fatal. But even successes by themselves are not enough; the masses must know about them in time, and have time to understand their value. It is possible to let slip a victory at the very moment when it is within arms reach. This has happened in history.'

The failure of the UP to develop, extend and generalise the mobilisations which greeted the military coup of 29 June was, as later events were to demonstrate conclusively, fatal in every sense of the word. Even though the UP had been indulging in a prolonged marking of time from the middle of 1972 onwards, concerted and resolute action after 29 June could have altered the situation. This did not take place and, although Col. Souper was not successful, the failure of the UP to mobilise and arm the masses led to a renewed offensive by the bourgeoisie which started with the strike by the truck owners on 25 July and ended with the coup d'etat of 11 September, 1973.

The rapidity with which the bourgeoisie had resumed its struggle alarmed Fidel Castro and the Cuban leadership. During his state visit to Chile, Fidel had noticed the alarming growth of the fascist groups and had in a number of speeches warned the UP about this threat. Now he felt it necessary to send a special letter to Allende via two members of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party.

It is not necessary to reproduce the whole letter published in *Granma* (English edition, 7 October, 1973), but merely to give readers its essence. After explaining that Carlos and Pineiro were using the pretext of the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations to visit Chile and discuss with Allende, Castro wrote:

... and I can imagine that tensions must be high and that you want to gain time to improve the balance of power in case fighting breaks out and, if possible, find a way to continue the revolutionary process without civil strife, avoiding any historic responsibility for what may happen. Those are praiseworthy objectives. But if the other side, whose real objectives we are not able to judge from here, continues to carry out a perfidious and irresponsible policy, demanding a price which it is impossible for Popular Unity and the Revolution to pay, which is quite likely, don't ever forget the extraordinary strength of the Chilean working class and the firm support it has always given you in difficult moments. In response to your call when the revolution is in danger; it can block those who are organising a coup, maintain the support of the fence-sitters, impose its conditions and decide the fate of Chile once and for all if the need arises. The enemy must realise that the Chilean working class is on the alert and ready to go into action. Its power and fighting spirit can tilt the scales in the capital in your favour, even though other circumstances may be unfavourable...

'Let Carlos and Manuel know how your loyal Cuban friends can be of service. Fraternally, Fidel Castro.'

But while Fidel's words came late they were nonetheless an important indication of the views of the Cuban leadership, and the internationalist aid they offered could have been of some importance on 11 September. But the UP government seemed mesmerised by the situation in which it now found itself. In early July the bourgeoisie's favourite newspaper, *El Mercurio*, carried an article entitled 'Anti-Communist Satisfaction':

'Travelling through anti-communist countries like Brazil offers profound satisfactions for those of us who have had to put up with the Communists for almost three years. In the first place, you find the Communists in their proper place, in hiding.'

Almost as if reassuring and trying to coax the military leadership, Luis Corvalan, the leader of the Chilean CP, made a speech which was reported in the 31 July issue of *Chile Hoy*:

'They (the reactionaries) are claiming that we have an orientation of replacing the professional army.'

'No sir, we continue and will continue to support keeping our armed institutions strictly professional.'

The attitude of the leaders of the UP convinced the armed forces that there would be no serious organised and generalised resistance to a coup d'état. They began to plan the last stages of the coup in collaboration with representatives of US imperialism and the Brazilian military junta.

On 4 September between 700,000 and 800,000 supporters of the UP marched past the Moneda Palace to commemorate the third anniversary of the Chilean experiment. Little did their leaders know it, but in exactly a week the UP would cease to exist. The workers chanted: 'Allende, the people are defending you; Hit the reactionaries hard.' The mood of the masses was militant. They were waiting for a lead which never came. However one week before the coup the UP executive committee did issue a statement expressing 'solidarity with the sailors and NCOs who have been charged' and denounced the 'unprecedented tortures to which the detained men have been subjected.' The statement (which was published in *Le Monde* on 6 September) went further and expressed support for Altamirano, Oscar Garretón of the MAPU,

and Miguel Enrique (the MIR leader) who were under attack from the military. The smell of the coup had reached the UP executive committee, but they still did not call for a general strike and prepare the masses.

On 11 September, the Chilean military with the backing of all the ruling class parties and the fascists, launched a coup d'état. At the Moneda Palace, Salvador Allende refused to surrender or resign and chose to fight. Together with Augusto Olivares (a famous Chilean journalist) and his small bodyguard, the Chilean President fought back, knowing perfectly well that it was a moral gesture. He had realised – alas, too late – that there was no such thing as the Chilean road to socialism. His last message dictated as he was firing at the attackers was: *'That is how we write the first page of this history. My people and (Latin) America will write the rest.'*

A few minutes later he was machine-gunned to death. He could have resigned and left the country in comparative safety, but he chose to go down with a gun in his hand. Could it be that in his last hours Salvador Allende decided to symbolically demonstrate the futility of the 'peaceful road' and point the way to the future?

IN CONCLUSION: FOUR QUESTIONS AND FOUR ANSWERS WHICH EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND OURSELVES

Question 1:

WAS THE CHILEAN COUP INEVITABLE?

As we have attempted to show above, the answer to this is a clearcut yes. It was a key decision taken by the Chilean generals in obvious collusion with the United States. To destroy bourgeois democracy in Chile was too important decision for the Chilean guerrillas to take on their own, since its repercussions were not confined to Chile nor even Latin America, but, as we are seeing today, are having an impact on Western Europe.

Many statements by the CP seem to imply that the coup could have been avoided if more concessions had been made to the Right. This view has been expressed in *Pravda*, which attempted to pin the blame on the moves towards a coup on the revolutionary left. *Soviet News* of 21 August, 1973 carried excerpts from Vitaly Borovsky's article in *Pravda*. In this Borovsky wrote:

* *'Reaction has tried hard to provoke a conflict between the army and the people. Ultra-left elements, who by their provocative actions have helped to set the military against the people, are, as always, playing a disgraceful part in this sinister affair.'*

'The plotters have tried to set the armed forces against the government and to transform the military men from being defender of their country's interests into tools upholding the narrow and selfish interests of a handful of exploiters.'

This bizarre attempt to present the army as a neutral force being egged on by reactionaries on the one hand and provoked by ultra-lefts on the other is a novel innovation for anyone claiming to be a Leninist. Borovsky, without doubt a well-trained Stalinist, not only fails to understand the role of the state and its apparatus (on which more below), but actually slanders the only

groups in Chile such as the MIR, who had been not only warning the UP of an impending coup, but had actually attempted to distribute propaganda to the rank and file soldiers and sailors. Borovsky's disgusting innuendos are refuted even by the last statement issued by the executive committee of the UP, to which we referred in preceding paragraphs.

Jack Woddis attempts to outdo Borovsky. In an article published in the *Morning Star* and reproduced as a leaflet, he states that if the UP had been given more time they would have won a 'decisive majority' which would have had 'its impact on the armed forces too'. This touching faith in the bourgeois state and its institutions is related to a new allegation which the CP comes up with. The problem, we are now told, was not only the ultra-lefts outside the UP, but the ultra-lefts inside it:

'Whatever their intentions, the ultra-left groups outside Popular Unity, such as the MIR, and those sections supporting them in the Socialist Party and in MAPU (two of the Popular Unity coalition parties), acted in such a way which played into the hands of reaction.'

Dear comrades of the Communist Parties, we have another suggestion for you to add to your list of ultra-lefts: Fidel Castro. His speech on Chile we referred to above would surely place him in the same category, and perhaps you should also study the speech made by Salvador Allende's daughter in Havana on the same day. She, too, is possibly an ultra-left. And then when you really begin to think carefully, could it be possible that the late Allende himself was under the influence of ultra-lefts.

Sorry, Jack Woddis, but this gibberish will not do. If you and your party do not have the political tools which could help you to analyse the reasons for the coup, the best you can do is to remain silent. It would be better than peddling slanders, many of which have their origins in the bourgeois press of Latin America.

Question 2:

WAS THE SUCCESS OF THE COUP INEVITABLE AND IF NOT HOW COULD IT HAVE BEEN AVOIDED?

This brings us to the heart of the debate between revolutionaries and reformists and we will, therefore, reply to this question in some detail. It is often assumed by the reformists that revolutionaries are opposed to participation in elections or interventions in the domain of bourgeois politics on principle. This is totally false. On the contrary revolutionaries must participate in a whole number of bourgeois institutions in order to be better able to influence and win over the masses. It is therefore always a question of tactics. The way in which we see it is in the classical tradition of Leninism: participation in bourgeois elections is justified provided they help to increase and multiply the extra-parliamentary mobilisation of the masses in the course of which the working class can begin to construct its own alternative institutions of power. The importance which the Bolsheviks attached to the Soviets was qualitatively different from their interventions in the Constituent Assembly. In fact they were even able to dissolve the latter - despite the fact that they were a minority in it - because they were basing themselves on more superior representative organs, ie the soviets.

This elementary Leninist lesson of how communists intervene in bourgeois parliaments has been inverted by the Stalinist movement throughout the

world. In Japan, France, Italy and in Chile the CPs used extra-parliamentary mobilisations in an attempt to strengthen their electoral representation. This is precisely because their strategy for socialism is exclusively confined to parliamentarism and their members are trained and educated in this understanding.

We have spent some time explaining this point because only then can we understand that the inability of the UP to resist the coup and to prepare the masses was not an accident, but due to a fundamental flaw in the politics of the CP and the right wing of the SP. The basic mistake which the UP made was in its estimation of the bourgeois army. This error reverberates throughout the three years that the UP was in the government and it was to prove fatal on 11 September.

In his 28 September speech Fidel Castro, after pointing out the enormous problems which confronted the UP, said:

'There were Armed Forces that called themselves apolitical, institutional—that is, apparently neutral in the revolutionary process.'

The problem for the Chilean working class, however, lay in the fact that it was not only the army which ascribed this role to itself, but it was also the President of Chile and the Popular Unity. Allende himself referred constantly to his faith in the armed forces:

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'I have repeatedly pointed out the pure patriotic tradition, democratic and professional, of our Armed Forces and have stated my purpose of fulfilling the national obligation by facilitating their technical improvement and by respecting their specific function, so that their mission of guarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country should be more effective.'

This was stated soon after his election in 1970 and it was only in the week before the coup that the UP wavered in its loyalty to the armed forces. Luis Corvalan, the leader of the Chilean CP was even more effusive in his remarks related to the army. In his book, *Chile, the People Take Over*, he wrote:

'The Popular Unity parties came to power not as a result of grappling with the armed forces or any part of them. . . . When the people triumphed, with the National Congress confirming their victory, the armed forces publicly recognised the government. They retained their spirit of professionalism, their respect for the Constitution and the Law. . . .'

In July 1973 Corvalan claimed that the 29 June coup attempt had been defeated because of the 'loyalty of the armed forces and the police' and spoke of the 'march forward to Socialism without civil war'. His speech was printed by the theoretical journal of the British CP in September 1973, a few days before the coup. Hardly had the ink on it dried than history gave its verdict on the political analyses contained in the speech.

Thus the entire strategy of the UP was based on the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism through the existence of a so-called 'neutral' army. Salvador Allende expressed this most clearly in a speech to the peasants in Linares on 28 May, 1971:

'I have pointed out that this process of change is possible, because the armed

groups in Chile such as the MIR, who had been not only warning the UP of an impending coup, but had actually attempted to distribute propaganda to the rank and file soldiers and sailors. Borowsky's disgusting innuendos are refuted even by the last statement issued by the executive committee of the UP, to which we referred in preceding paragraphs.

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'I have pointed out that this process of change is possible, because the armed

forces and the Carabineers (armed police) have a professional conscience. They respect the laws and the Constitution, which is not the case in the majority of Latin American countries, and this constitutes an exception in this and even in other continents.'

Given this wrong assessment the UP tackled the problem of the bourgeois army in the wrong way. Instead of attempting to appeal to the conscript base of the army and the navy, the UP concentrated on the military and naval leadership. They thus fell into the trap of substituting psychology for class analysis, and instead of seeing the function of the army in class terms saw it in terms of good and bad generals. This sealed their fate.

If from 1971 onwards the UP and its constituent parties had directed their attention to the base of the armed forces, they could have created a different situation. Democratic rights enjoyed by other citizens should have been extended (by Presidential decree, if necessary) to soldiers and sailors. In other words, they should have been given the right to form trade unions, to join political parties, to produce their own newspapers, etc. Thus even if the army top brass had attempted to prevent this physically it would have provided an extremely useful basis on which to appeal to the base of the army and navy to defend the UP. The integration of elected soldiers delegates into the JAPs and the industrial cordones would have laid the basis for splitting the army.

While propaganda directed at the soldiers, coupled with the granting of democratic rights, would have been an important step forward, of course on its own it would not have been sufficient. It was the creation of workers militias from the defence committees which were springing up which would have been decisive in concretely providing soldiers and sailors with the embryo of an alternative workers and peasants army. In the absence of all these factors a successful resistance was virtually impossible. It was in this sense that the lack of a revolutionary party was felt most severely. The CP and SP had no armed detachments of their own; the MIR was too small, though it did have its armed units, many of whose members were to fight and some to die heroically when the military struck. Even if the UP had only changed course after the 29 June coup, certain important preparations could have been made as Fidel Castro's letter clearly and correctly indicates. So the success of the coup was not inevitable, but was brought about by the inability of the UP to prepare the masses for the armed struggle.

Question 3:

WHAT THEN ARE THE REAL LESSON OF CHILE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT AND SOCIALISTS EVERYWHERE?

In our view the main lessons we can draw from the Chilean events are not very original or breathtaking. They require a restatement of the essential Marxist-Leninist view of the state and its apparatus. The lessons of Chile can therefore be easily studied in Lenin's polemic against the pre-1914 Kautsky as expressed in *State and Revolution*, where he stresses the absolute need to destroy and smash the apparatus of the bourgeois state in order to pave the way for the establishment of working class power. The reason why the bourgeois state and its institutions must be destroyed is because within their framework it is impossible for the masses to exercise real power.

From this we must conclude that winning electoral majorities in bourgeois parliamentary elections cannot be a *qualitative* step forward on its own. It is only if the workers are prepared if their party or parties have their own armed detachments to defend themselves against reaction and both politically and technically arm the masses, that electoral victories can be utilised to create a new state with representative institutions in which the working masses exercise real control and power.

Fidel Castro drew certain lessons as well:

'Chilean revolutionaries know that now there's no alternative other than revolutionary armed struggle (APPLAUSE)

'They tried the electoral way, the peaceful way, and the imperialists and reactionaries changed the rules of the game. The reactionaries trampled on the Constitution, the laws, the Parliament, everything, and there's no way out of that situation.'

Castro is wrong on one point: Chilean revolutionaries always knew that there was no peaceful road. It is the base of the CP and SP who have now learnt through bitter experience that basic Leninist lesson.

The second point we stress is that the struggle which develops in Chile in the coming months and years cannot be fought in terms of being a struggle for the return of bourgeois democracy. The call of the British CP therefore, which demands 'Support of Chilean Democracy', is seriously misleading and dangerous. It was the bourgeoisie who decided to change the form of its rule from bourgeois democracy to semi-fascist military dictatorship. There is no democracy without a class content. Is the CP serious when it poses as the main aim of the coming struggle the re-establishment of bourgeois democracy? Is that the basis on which it is going to try and mobilise the masses? If that is what is intended then we will see more defeats. One of the lessons of Chile is precisely the lessons which we learn from Trotsky's theses on the permanent revolution. This does not mean that we do not fight for restoration of democratic rights, release of political prisoners, etc. But the overall context in which we struggle, even for democratic rights, is the struggle for socialism.

Question 4:

WHAT SHOULD BE THE AIMS OF THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT?

In our view solidarity means support for the struggles of the Chilean workers and peasants. This means aiding all the forces (and this includes the former components of the UP) which are engaged in organising resistance to the military dictatorship. This means that for an effective united action on this question the CP should drop its sectarian attitude to the MIR and other revolutionary organisations in Chile. If it sees the solidarity movement in this country exclusively as the preserve of those who are in political agreement with the Chilean CP and non-ultraleft sections of the SP, then it will not be easy to build a united solidarity movement.

Secondly, solidarity means taking the campaign inside the working class, not merely in order to get some resolutions passed but to agitate on the relevance of Chile for the struggle of the working class in this country as well as in Western Europe as a whole. Chile may be a far away Latin American country, but what happened there has had a deep impact on the advanced sections of the working class movement throughout Europe. A solidarity movement

should see as one of its tasks, therefore, the linking up of the campaign on Chile with the real problems which confront workers and other oppressed layers in Britain. This is something which it was difficult to do at the time of the Vietnam mobilisations. Today it is not only possible but vital, as the class struggle enters a new phase. The British army, like its Chilean counterpart, also claims to be neutral, apolitical and professional. A close study of its actions in the Six Counties of Ireland and a reading of the work of its ideologues such as Kitson provides a very different picture.

In brief, a solidarity movement on Chile has enormous potential. Furthermore, developed internationally, it could play an important part in the future victory of the Chilean Revolution.

POSTSCRIPT

It was not possible and it was not intended to discuss what has happened in Chile since the coup in this brief pamphlet. We will be producing another pamphlet on the latest developments in the coming months. In the meantime *Intercontinental Press* (New York), *Rouge* (France), *Bandiera Rossa* and *Lotta Continua* (Italy) and *Red Weekly* (Britain) are providing the most detailed and useful coverage on what is happening now.

Red Weekly can be bought in Colletts on Charing Cross Road; subs available from 182 Pentonville Road, London N1.

The International Marxist Group ,
British section of the Fourth
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