

Chilean Revolution: The Bullet or the Ballot

For the past several decades, Chile has been the only country in Latin America (Cuba excepted) in which the organized working class has been both politically and socially significant and also led by Marxian socialists.

WHEN ASKED BY A REPORTER what he thought the recent election of Marxist Salvador Allende meant, a Chilean peasant replied: "Now it's our turn."

That puts the issue nicely. Does the fact that Chile now has a freely elected President who won "without soft-peddalling the Marxist revolutionary program he hopes to carry out" (New York Times) really mean that at last it's the "turn" of the peasants and workers? The answer is not so simple as one might first expect.

Allende ran as the coalition candidate of the mass-based Communist and left-Socialist parties, the old Radical Party (whose only ideology is opportunism) and the independent Catholic revolutionaries (MAPU). He pledged to put Chile "on the road to socialism" by taking over the major domestic and U.S. corporations, the banks and insurance companies and large agrarian estates, and by instituting democratic planning in the interests of the nation as a whole. Thus, the question: Can the Chileans put through a socialist revolution via the historically unprecedented route of constitutional amendment, presidential leadership and parliamentary legislation, while the parties, the mass media and the unified organizations of the propertied classes still vie freely in the political arena, and the old Army (46,000 strong)

and crack police force, the *carabineros* (24,000), remain intact and untouched?

On the face of it the question seems extraordinarily silly, if not absurd, especially in a period in which the U.S. government has repeatedly intervened in the internal affairs of other countries to resist movements for national independence and social reform. Whether radical or reform governments were elected democratically or not has never mattered in the past, either to the local ruling class or the U.S. government. Time after time—in the Dominican Republic, in Brazil, in British Guyana and elsewhere—Washington and its ruling-class allies have opposed, undermined and subverted popularly based constitutional governments. In 1954 the CIA overthrew the constitutional reform government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala and sponsored a dictatorship that returned expropriated properties to the United Fruit Company, repealed social reforms, gave oil concessions to American companies, smashed trade unions and killed hundreds—perhaps thousands—of workers and peasants.

In 1967 the reform government of the freely elected Greek Premier Andreas Papandreou, an anti-communist and Social Democrat, was overthrown by a combination of Greek and foreign investors in league with the Army. They destroyed parliamentary democracy as soon as it looked like

by Maurice Zeitlin

Photographs by Alejandro Stuart



"... and the North rose to the voice of the master [Allende]."

their "structure of privileges" might, in Papandreou's words, be "dismantled or undermined in any fashion or to any degree." They replaced it with a dictatorship that (again in Papandreou's words) amounts to "a covert occupation of Greece by the Pentagon."

[THE STAKES IN CHILE]

IN CHILE THE STAKES ARE extraordinary: there are the immense interests of the Chilean dominant class, and of major U.S. and other foreign (mainly British) corporations with investments there. U.S. *direct* investment alone is conservatively estimated at close to a billion dollars. Over a hundred corporations or agencies of U.S. private interests operate in Chile. There are major U.S. investments in electric power and the telephone company, but well over half of the known U.S. investment is concentrated in nitrate, iron and copper mining. Many so-called "Chilean" corporations are structurally integrated with U.S. corporations in "invisible" ways. The Chilean Cotton Manufacturing Company, for example, Chile's 14th largest firm, is ostensibly under the control of the Chilean Yarur family. In fact, 45 per cent of its stock is U.S.-owned. More to the point, this "Yarur" corporation in turn owns 49 per cent of Caupolicán Textiles (Chile's 24th largest firm), which, on the surface, appears to be without substantial foreign ownership. The well-known "Chilean" commercial firm, Huckle Brothers (Chile's 44th largest corporation), still has Huckle family members on the board and in the management. In fact, it is *owned* by W. R. Grace and Company through Grace's other Chilean subsidiaries. And these are not isolated instances.

Aside from its implications for direct business investments in Chile, the establishment of another socialist government in the Americas is of prime political significance. Neighboring Peruvian and Bolivian "nationalist" military regimes which have put through some radical reforms and imposed new limits on foreign capital are certainly not immune to the influence of a more radical model on their borders. Nor can the military regime and ruling classes of Ar-

gentina, with which Chile shares a 2700-mile border, ignore what happens there.

The question then is, given these obvious implications of an Allende victory at the polls, how was it permitted to occur? The ballots were counted, Allende came out with the largest plurality (39,000 votes), and the Congress, assembled as an electoral college with overwhelming support from the Christian Democrats in the House and Senate, elected Allende President. Not only was he elected: he took office and has proceeded these past few months step by step with measures promised in the socialist program he ran on.

[SAVE THE COUNTRY]

ALLLENDE WAS NOT inaugurated without opposition, of course. In the weeks following his election, there was heightened parliamentary maneuvering, and the ruling class media called on the Senate and House (since no candidate had won a majority) to exercise their constitutional right to select, not Allende, but the candidate with the second number of votes—Jorge Alessandri, a former President and the representative of the propertied classes. Women draped in black mourning shawls stood outside the walls of the Moneda, the presidential office building, calling on President Frei to "save the country while there is still time." There were two unsuccessful assassination attempts against Allende; then, less than two weeks before Allende's inauguration, General René Schneider, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, who had announced that the Army would remain loyal to the Constitution, was killed by armed assassins as he was leaving his home. The intention apparently had been to kidnap the general, as part of a coordinated *putsch*, and to issue communiques in the general's name (and those of other actual top military conspirators) calling on the armed forces to "save the country from communism." The plan went awry because the general resisted, drew his revolver, fired once, and was killed.

More importantly, the left was not idly waiting on the good graces of the Army and the center and right parliamentarians to install Allende in office. In constant public meet-



"The people continue to be exploited."

ings throughout the country, the 8000 Allende committees of Unidad Popular kept the people alert and prepared against a possible attempt to rob the left of its electoral victory. Tightly organized and well-trained "shock forces" of the left were assembled in strategic areas of Santiago and other major cities, ready to take whatever action might be necessary to "guarantee the popular victory" at the polls. And in mass rallies of tens of thousands of supporters, Allende warned that any attempt to cripple the economy or prevent him from taking office would be met by a general strike. "The country," he said, "will stop as a first step. Workers will occupy their factories, peasants will occupy the land, and civil servants their offices."

In the months preceding the election, workers, peasants and urban poor had taken increasingly militant grass-roots action. Revolutionary socialists both in and out of the electoral coalition had led land seizures and occupation of vacant urban sites. Allende, in fact, seemed a rather moderate alternative to the armed peasants and urban poor who patrolled to protect the sites they had occupied, many of them accompanied by armed members of the dissident Movement of the Revolutionary Left, which advocated armed revolution. Financing of food and clothing for those active in the seizures as well as for the purchase of arms reportedly came from bank robberies carried out by *Miristas*. The left also had a highly efficient intelligence organization of its own which paralleled the government's operations and assured Allende that he would not have to rely on the good faith of the outgoing government alone.

[PEOPLE'S INTELLIGENCE]

THOUGH ITS INFORMATION about plots against the government and Allende was ignored before the murder of General Schneider, it was as the result of cooperation between the left's intelligence agencies that the majority of the participants in the plot and actual assassination of General Schneider were rounded up within days of his murder. (The list of the plotters and assassins reads, as a Chilean friend wrote me, like entries in

a Chilean "Who's Who.") When Schneider was murdered, President Frei immediately appointed José Toha, Allende's security chief (now Minister of the Interior), as Acting Undersecretary of the Interior and deputy director of the federal police investigating the assassination.

This event, while it need not be exaggerated, is sufficiently important to be emphasized. Where else could one expect to find the government intelligence service and the Army acting with such dispatch to find right-wing assassins who were trying to prevent the accession to office of a Marxist President—and to do so in cooperation with the left's intelligence organization?

Undoubtedly, there is a certain amount of fluff and mystification about the "incorruptibility" of the *carabineros*, Chile's national police, and the political "neutrality" of the (largely U.S.-trained) armed forces. As a latent threat and ever-present potentially repressive force monopolizing the means of violence, they have helped to maintain the existing order. Under Christian Democratic President Eduardo Frei's "revolution in liberty," the use of the armed forces against striking workers accused of "sedition" and "rebellion against constituted authority" was no less frequent, and the consequences more dire, than under recent conservative regimes. And plastic-masked, specially trained mobile riot-police units were used regularly, as a Los Angeles Times reporter put it, "to smash street demonstrations by strikers and anti-government groups" as well as to dislodge squatters from the land.

Nor has the Army stayed out of overt intervention in the "political process" entirely. Last year, there was an attempted coup (later passed off as a "strike for higher pay") led by dissident Army officers, and one leader of that abortive revolt has since been implicated in the plot which ended in Schneider's assassination. Mass mobilization by the left and a general strike, plus a split in the Army, stopped the *putsch* in its tracks. (The left's organizational skills and its sense of humor and showmanship came out well in the general strike: hundreds of communist-led garbage men converged on the Moneda and surrounded it with their heavily laden garbage trucks to ward off any possible move against the President!)

...Y AHORA TAMBIEN CHILE



"Cuba; Free Territory of America—and now Chile."

[POLITICAL ORDER: CHILE VS. CUBA]

IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, CHILE has been a genuine "bourgeois" democracy in which the role of the police and armed forces and the use of force and violence in maintaining the system have been on a par with that in such advanced capitalist countries as Britain and the United States. The contrast with Cuba is instructive: There, the ruling strata were directly dependent on American imperialism—politically, militarily, economically—and lacked social legitimacy. The basis of their rule was nakedly revealed as their control of the means of violence. They stayed in power because they had a military regime (and behind it the power of the United States government) to protect them, not because anyone believed that they *deserved* power or that they had the *right* to rule. They were illegitimate in the eyes of virtually the entire population.

In Chile, however, the ruling strata have enjoyed considerable legitimacy. A coalition of propertied strata—large landlords and capitalists—has been able to rule for over a century with neither foreign control nor the intervention of the military as an *autonomous* social force. Their resilience is illustrated by the hand-in-glove relationship between Chilean political stability and parliamentary democracy. Contrast Cuba, where long before the revolution the forms of political democracy associated with capitalism had exhausted themselves. Cubans considered the brief interregnum of political democracy a sham, little more relevant to their needs or the interests of the nation than military rule had been. Parties and politicians associated with Cuba's Congress were all but universally held in contempt. While there is a healthy cynicism about "politics and politicians" in Chile, parliamentary democracy has not lost legitimacy. Communists and socialists have run their press, held their rallies and participated freely in elections for the past three decades. Indeed, they played a very significant role in the so-called Popular Front government of the '30s. When the Communist Party was outlawed in 1941, it simply continued activities under another name (the Proletarian Party) with-

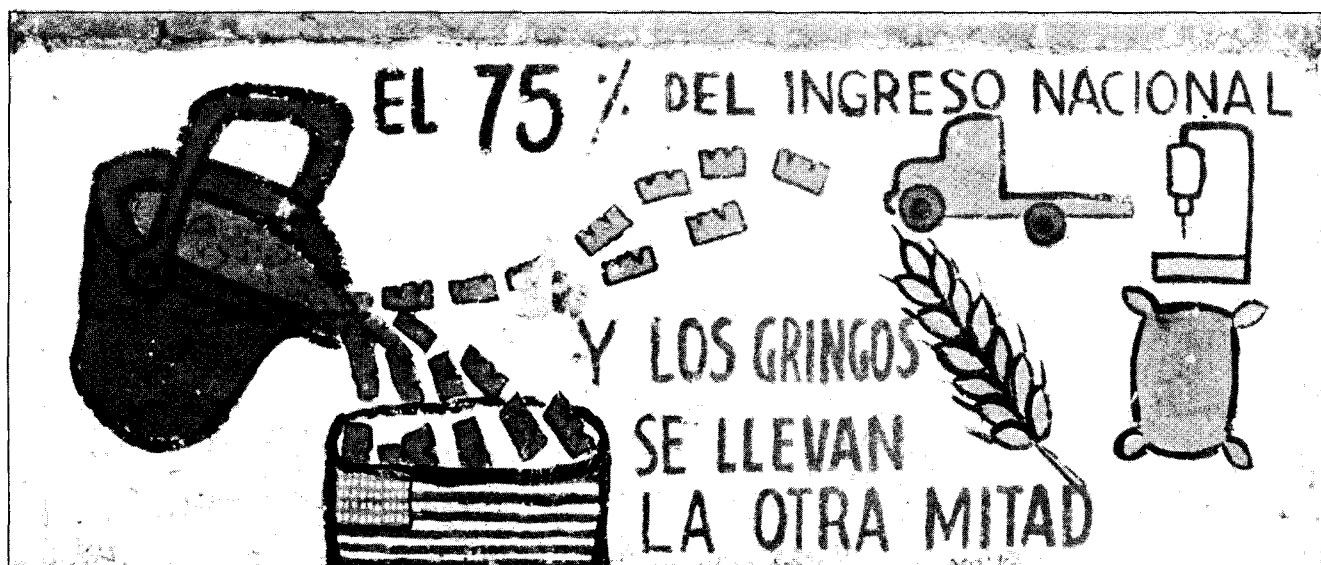
out interference. In fact, under the presidency of Gabriel González Videla, in 1946, three communists served for five months as ministers in the Cabinet. With the advent of the Cold War, the Communist Party again was outlawed in 1948 (by the "Law for the Defense of Democracy"), but the Party continued to have members in parliament.

This is not to minimize the repression to which leftists have been subjected in Chile, or to nourish illusions about the uniqueness of its dominant class. Rather, it highlights the contradictory nature and genuine reality of Chile's "bourgeois" democracy. As Volodia Teitelboim, a leading member of the Chilean Communist Party's Central Committee, commented recently: "The Cuban and Chilean experiences are very different. They had a military dictatorship for years. We have had a century and a half of almost uninterrupted parliamentary government." He might have added there also has been almost a century of uninterrupted class struggle.

[THE RISE OF THE LEFT]

SINCE THE MIDDLE OF THE LAST century, Chile has been the scene of frequent large-scale strikes and popular demonstrations rivalling those in advanced capitalist countries. For the past several decades, Chile has been the only country in Latin America (Cuba excepted) in which the organized working class has been both politically and socially significant, and also led by Marxian socialists. It is also the only western capitalist country (since the demise of the Nenni Socialists in Italy) where there has been a durable, well-organized Marxian Socialist Party to the left of the communists, and with its own mass base in the working-class and trade-union movement.

The socialist movement in Chile began to become a serious contender for power in the '50s, as its popular base among the workers widened. Between 1952 and 1956, the organized working-class movement became increasingly unified: on the trade-union level, a central labor organization (CUT) was formed, and in the political arena a broad electoral bloc emerged, uniting the socialists and commu-



"Seventy-five per cent of the national income . . . and the gringos take away the other half."

nists and several splinter parties in a coalition called the Popular Action Front (FRAP). From FRAP's formation in 1956, the electoral strength of the socialist movement has risen rapidly. In the presidential election in 1958, Allende got 29 per cent; in 1964, 39 per cent, of the vote.

The rise of the Christian Democratic Party paralleled the rise of the Marxian parties. In the space of a few decades it transformed itself from just one more splinter party of the right with corporatist ideas into a governing reform party emphasizing the need for economic development. While its dominant wing, led by Frei, emphasized reforms within the framework of capitalism, its more radical and militant activists talked about building a "communitarian society" through "anti-imperialism" and a "non-capitalist path of development." Radomiro Tomic, the Christian Democrat candidate in the 1970 presidential election, reflected that tendency far more than he did the centrist one. Tomic ran, as the New York Times put it, almost as if he were an opposition candidate and "tried at times to outflank Dr. Allende on the left . . ." But to blame Tomic personally, as the Times did, for being the "architect of disaster" in the elections, and for the victory of the Unidad Popular, is to miss the essence of recent Chilean history.

The expectation of a revolution has been in the wind for a decade or more in Chile. When Allende lost (by a narrow margin) in 1958, hundreds of thousands of workers surged into the streets spontaneously, believing they had been robbed in the ballot count; many on the left were prepared to strike for power, while others were demanding that Allende, not Alessandri, be selected President by Congress (a constitutionally permissible and historically supportable course). The outgoing President, Carlos Ibáñez, called the head of CUT, a Christian Socialist, to offer the left the reins of government and throw his authority in their favor if asked. Heated secret debates ended with the decision of the communists and socialists to call for observance of the legal results of the election and to cool off revolutionary fervor.

Six years later, in 1964, Frei was elected on a program explicitly designed as an alternative to the socialist movement. He spoke in a populist, nationalist, even revolution-

ary, idiom and called for a "revolution in liberty." The Christian Democratic program emphasized the need to "recover" Chile's resources, especially copper, from foreign control. With its rhetoric of "mass participation" in reconstructing Chilean society, and its emphasis on the "dignity" of the poor and the need for vast reforms, Christian Democracy is an additional sharp index of the erosion of ruling-class ideological hegemony which has been taking place in Chile at an accelerating pace in the past 20 years. Few leading Chilean intellectuals now defend "capitalism" as a humane or just system, and the overwhelming majority of workers are class-conscious, militant supporters of the Marxian left.

[THRUST OF THE PEASANTRY]

IN THE PAST TEN YEARS the peasantry has emerged as a potentially powerful left political force. Under the Christian Democratic government, agitation about agrarian reform was at a perpetual peak. And the number of *peasants involved* in strikes (protected somewhat by the umbrella of the Christian Democrats, who have since split to ally with the Communist Party and the Socialist Party) *trebled* in the first year (1964-65) after Frei took office, while the Frei Administration went ahead, though slowly and reluctantly, with expropriation (with compensation) of several large estates. Frei had promised new land for 100,000 families, but settled only 30,000 during his term in office (while spending \$100 million to compensate former landowners).

However, by making the talk of agrarian reform respectable, Christian Democrats gave the left a major opportunity to speak to hundreds of thousands of peasants in remote and isolated haciendas and small-holders communities which had been practically impenetrable to socialists and communists before. They gained strength among all types of peasants in the past years, both among agricultural wage laborers and small proprietors (but particularly among the former).

The political radicalization of the peasantry has continued against a backdrop of small but cumulative changes in the countryside—including electrification, improved transpor-



"And there will be work for all."

tation, mechanized production—which have undermined the hold of the old system of social control by the large landowners. These changes, coupled with growing political agitation, created a situation in which the organized socialist movement was not only broadening its already major base among workers in the mines, mills and factories, but gaining tens of thousands of new adherents among the peasants as well. With the growth in the cities of a new movement among the previously unorganized slum dwellers—the so-called movement of the “Homeless”—this means that scarcely any exploited stratum remains in Chile which has not been penetrated by the left and by socialist ideas.

Initiatives by younger socialists, many of them in the Movement of the Revolutionary Left and others in the Christian left Movement of United Popular Action (MAPU), have kept these old Socialist and Communist parties alert and actively organizing, unable to rest with their present base even if they wished to do so. In the months preceding the elections, urban land seizures and peasant occupations seemed to be occurring in a rapid crescendo, and a New York Times reporter quoted “a conservative Chilean civil servant” whose fears and estimate of the situation undoubtedly reflected those of the privileged in general: “It makes little difference,” he said, “whether or not Allende wins this election. Without quick and drastic action, the Marxists will win their real battle anyway.”

[WHAT'S GOOD FOR BUSINESS]

WHAT, THEN, IS TO HAPPEN to the capitalist economy in the meantime? The Allende government has left no doubt of its intentions to nationalize major companies, banks and insurance companies, and major foreign investments. Does it then expect businessmen to continue to function as if business conditions were normal—as if the ownership and control of their enterprises and profits were not endangered? Will businessmen continue to reinvest at their normal rate in the expansion of their enterprises and the production of goods and services, without the security of a “proper investment cli-

mate,” without being able to make reasonable calculations concerning the profitability of these investments, without knowing if they will, indeed, find themselves without a business tomorrow? The answer seems quite clear in principle, and much of the empirical experience of the government so far seems to confirm it: the economy cannot function as long as big businessmen believe their country is headed by genuine socialists whose policies threaten the very existence of the capitalist system.

Allende's election, as the New York Times put it, “changed the business climate overnight. . . . The initial response of the business community was near panic, followed by a massive flight of liquid capital. Stock market prices dropped dramatically, as did asking prices for property and businesses. Many with money to save left the country after bidding up the dollar from the official rate of 14 escudos to more than four times that figure. Although many subsequently returned here after securing funds abroad, the business mood at year end was extremely cautious, to say the least.”

Some of the largest enterprises have begun to lay off workers, and the already staggering rate of unemployment inherited by the socialist regime (upwards of a fifth of the work force in metropolitan Santiago) has risen further, as the interrelated activities of suppliers, producers and consumers of goods have extended the slowdown throughout the economy. Private construction, for example, both of office buildings and of housing, reportedly has come almost to a standstill. Aside from the immediate unemployment of the workers in the construction industry, this has meant that metal, lumber, cement, glass and other industries which depend on the construction industry as a principal market also are likely to be affected drastically, as are their workers, in chain reaction. A brass company, for instance, had its sales drop 70 per cent in the two months after Allende's election. So the manager shut down the plant “to avoid insolvency.” “What was I supposed to do?” he asked. “I wasn't about to let useless workers get paid from company reserves.” The Allende government took over the management of the firm in late November under a 1945 labor

law giving the government authority to “intervene” when necessary to protect the interests of the employees of a company. It has since “intervened” in several other large firms, including a major bank and Chile’s largest textile plant. And it has taken measures to prevent further mass lay-offs.

Just such policies, however, are destined to further erode “business confidence” and create a “climate of uncertainty” among the major investors whose decisions have national economic consequences. The Allende government could find itself held responsible for an economic crisis without being in a position to act decisively, as long as it adheres to the commitment to act solely within the existing legal framework. It could find itself managing a deteriorating economy which it is not in a position to control, because the government must await parliamentary pleasure for legislation allowing the expropriation of the enterprises, and the creation of a planning organism capable of genuine coordination of production in the national interest. On the other hand, “whatever efforts it may make to recover lost confidence . . . will not succeed,” as a leading business journal in Chile (*Portada*, October 1970) itself points out, “because to do so would automatically indicate that [the government] had decided to abandon its program.”

The ability of the large enterprises especially to frustrate government “interventions” and to create economic havoc, whether intentionally or not, is further accentuated because these firms are, on the one hand, in control of the bulk of the production and sales in their respective industries—many of them being effective monopolies—and, on the other, because interlocking directorates and common large shareholders, as well as reciprocal holdings of the firms in each other, bind them together into a centralized political economic structure. Nor should U.S. penetration of these firms be forgotten here. Government “intervention” in the management of such individual firms cannot provide a mechanism capable of coping with such an integrated system of monopoly capital; only expropriation can make it possible for genuine control of the economy.

[CHILEAN NEW DEAL?]

WE MAY ASSUME THAT THE socialists in the Chilean government are well aware of the nature of the alternatives they face, but neither their words nor their deeds so far give a clear picture of how they expect to resolve this dilemma. Nor, of course, do they hold all the options. On the one hand, the government has clearly stated its intention to nationalize, *within the coming year*, the domestic and foreign banks, the large mining companies owned by Kennecott and Anaconda, and “some large monopolies in production and distribution”; and it continues to reiterate on all occasions its fundamental aim to begin to create a “socialist and pluralist society.”

On the other hand, the government claims that it foresees a considerable period during which the economy will continue to have a major sector of private ownership of production, although the state will be “the prevailing” sector. Moreover, they have to put into effect a short-run program within the present capitalist framework to stimulate employment and production. Thus far, the government has decreed a price freeze for all industrial and consumer goods; bank

inspectors are exercising control over private bank credit; there have been substantial wage increases for public and private employees, and efforts are under way to begin an emergency construction program financed by additional taxes on corporations. Meanwhile, powerful capitalist representatives have had frequent meetings with Allende at which they have reportedly pledged their cooperation if “Allende would outline an economic program they could live with.” Sergio Jarpa, president of the conservative National Party, has announced, “We’re not prejudiced about what the new government is going to do. If it’s good for the country we will go along even though it has a socialist label.” And one of Chile’s big businessmen is quoted as making the extraordinary statement that “We lost the election and we are going to have socialism in Chile. Dr. Allende asked for our cooperation. . . .”

While the government’s immediate plans unquestionably would take certain basic sectors under state ownership and control, they would nevertheless not necessarily put Chile “on the road to socialism” nor fundamentally alter her economic structure. Since the Popular Front government of the ’30s established the Government Development Corporation (CORFO) in 1939, the state has played a major role in investment, especially in machinery and equipment. CORFO has controlled, on the average over the years, about a fifth of gross domestic investment. State-owned and mixed enterprises (with both the government and large private investors owning the bulk of the stock) have been established in areas deemed necessary for Chilean development which private capital would not enter because of the uncertainty of profitable returns. Once successful, however, the mixed enterprises have been gradually turned over to private owners. Even those which still operate as mixed enterprises (such as the Pacific Steel Company) usually have exclusive management contracts with large foreign corporations, and the policies of these enterprises have tended to be guided by profit considerations for the largest Chilean corporations and the needs of the private sector as a whole.

In other words, the socialist government could actually put through major reforms which the capitalists themselves would never have sponsored but which might release forces for the expansion, rather than the contraction, of capitalism in Chile—much as the New Deal policies of the ’30s in the U.S. and the post-World War II nationalizations in Britain under the Labor government were arrested by big business, though these very policies helped to maintain capitalism in these countries.

The Chilean situation is different in that the Chilean socialist movement is well to the left of the British and more committed to a real socialist program. However, because they have chosen the path of parliamentary socialism, they will have to compromise and negotiate critical measures along the way, and this will hinder their ability to respond to situations decisively and radically.

[MODERATE COMMUNISTS]

IF THE GOVERNMENT succeeds in its short-run efforts to stimulate the economy and regain “business confidence,” the immediate crisis—and therefore confrontation with the large capitalists and their allies—



"And being born will not bring anguish."

would be avoided. In the process, the aroused energies of the masses and organized cadres and their readiness for action could be dissipated as the country settles once again into "normalcy." So far the government's responses to spontaneous occupations of large estates by agricultural laborers and to workers' strikes and urban land seizures have been contradictory, and this may in part reflect actual policy differences within the coalition government and between ministers. In general, however, the left seems to be urging the cadre to take it easy, cooling out independent worker and peasant initiatives and attempting to stabilize the economy while it consolidates its position. Yet it's worth recalling that this is precisely what the Cuban revolutionary government did under Castro's leadership in the early months, and such surface appearances tell us little, if anything, about the plans of the Chilean socialist leadership.

Of course, whatever its plans, it does not hold all the cards, and the situation could change rapidly and profoundly if the ruling class and its foreign allies should themselves choose to have a showdown—or unintentionally provoke one. Then, as Allende has made clear, the socialist leaders would be compelled to take action they may not have desired or even anticipated: "A government must weigh what obstacles it will encounter," Allende has said. "Perhaps if obstacles are artificially created, if there is a conspiracy by ultrareactionary sectors, if the current attempt to provoke economic chaos is accentuated, we'll be forced to take our steps more quickly and decisively—that is, the process could be radicalized, not because we want it to be, but because we have no other choice."

Withal, bargaining and compromise—if not stalemate—are firmly rooted Chilean national traditions, while the socialist government also has internal problems because it rests on a diverse coalition. Of special significance is the fact that the Socialist Party is itself highly pluralistic, containing a diversity of ideological currents (though it is heavily weighted on the side of the Marxian and pro-Fidelista left).

A critical factor in the left coalition is the tightly organized and disciplined Chilean Communist Party. If its

past is any indication, the CP is likely to attempt at every turn to moderate government policies, and will be the cornerstone of compromise and hesitation rather than revolutionary audacity and initiative. It has long been one of the most Stalinist parties in the world, conforming almost reflexively to every shift in Soviet policies and programs. In the past decade, the Soviets—and therefore the Chilean communists—have put their emphasis on "peaceful coexistence" and on the establishment of cordial trade and diplomatic relations with countries in Latin America.

Even the Cuban experience did not shake the Party out of its previous parliamentary rhythms, and Fidel and Chilean Party leaders have had several public polemical debates about the revolutionary path to power in Latin America. Apparently this is known even in Washington: Evans and Novak, "sadly confident" that the end is near for freedom in Chile, report "... the hope by top U.S. policymakers that the well-organized Communist Party, which is to the right of Allende's Socialist Party in the ruling coalition, may itself be a moderating influence. Perhaps, prodded by Moscow, the Communists might block flagrantly revolutionary moves in either foreign or domestic policy."

[THE ACID TEST]

MORE IMPORTANT, PERHAPS, in understanding the potential of the socialist leadership is the fact that it has been shaped largely by its experience in the trade-union movement—which necessarily has involved battles for immediate reforms—and, to a profound and immeasurable extent, its participation in Parliament. "Most of us in the Communist Party," as Central Committee member Teitelboim put it recently, "have worked in the parliamentary system for 30 years." The same is true of the socialists. Therein, of course, lies a special sort of dialectic: for while it raises the prospect (which, if successful, will have tremendous significance for the development of the international socialist movement) of a socialist government ruling through a genuine parliamentary democracy, it also means that the *revolutionary* capacity of



"And the new man is born."

the Chilean socialist movement has yet to be tested. This is not to detract from the political and organizational abilities of the communists and socialists—and it would be arrogant and incorrect to do so, considering their already *unprecedented* feat of creating a popular base so broad as to bring them into government by the electoral path.

What it does mean, though, is that because they have not been tempered by years of dangerous clandestine political activity, nor by guerrilla warfare, they may underestimate the struggle ahead. Never having experienced colonial rule and oppression, never having needed to organize under conditions of dictatorship nor to resist an occupying foreign power, the Chilean leaders may unconsciously delude themselves about what it will take to "defeat definitively the dominant class in Chile," as the communist Minister of Finance (a former worker and trade-union organizer) stated the government's goal recently. Carried away by their own rhetoric, to quote Allende's inauguration speech, that "Chileans can be proud of having always managed to give preference to the peaceful political course rather than to violence," they may prepare themselves poorly to do battle if and when that dominant class (together with its domestic and foreign allies) forsakes "the peaceful political course" in order to save the old order. Again, it would be silly to say that the Chileans are not aware of this possibility on an intellectual level. The question is what meaning their intellectual understanding has for their practical political and organizational work now.

They seem to have fallen rather quickly back into the pattern of activity shaped by their parliamentary experience, and are now deeply involved in preparing for the coming municipal elections in April—which they speak of as their "next major battleground." Luís Corvalán, secretary general of the Communist Party, and himself a senator, declares: "We must transform these elections into a great national political battle against the enemies of change, in favor of the program of the Unidad Popular and in support of the government presided over by comrade Salvador Allende."

In this connection, the recent self-criticism of former Greek Premier Andreas Papandreou, overthrown by the colonels' *putsch*, is especially relevant—all the more so since he and his government embarked not on the "construction of socialism" in Greece but on the salvation of capitalism through reform:

"Our willingness to negotiate, to temporize, to postpone action was mistaken by the forces of the Establishment as weakness, as avoidance of the confrontation and its consequences. And by the time the confrontation had come, we had lost the momentum that the great electoral victory had bestowed upon us . . . The junta struck and the country was set back at least fifty years . . ."

"Had we given serious attention to the establishment of a clandestine, resistance-oriented organization, had we formed nuclei throughout the country, had we given clear instructions for action in response to a coup, had we distributed radio transmitters and mimeograph machines, and had we rented apartments under cover to protect the leadership of the organization, then possibly we could have frustrated the coup within the first few hours. And while it is true that I organized the Democratic Leagues and gave them this type of assignment, it must be admitted candidly that neither I nor my immediate circle chose to concentrate our energies in this direction. This was due in part to the peculiar fact that no one had emotionally accepted the possibility of a coup, although all signs of an impending coup were there. The forthcoming elections absorbed the thoughts and activities of all party members, and captured the attention of the population." (from Democracy at Gunpoint)

Maurice Zeitlin lived in Chile from mid-1965 through 1966 and has written extensively on Chilean politics. Parts of this article will appear in his book (with Lynda Ewen and Richard Ratcliff) on the propertied classes in Chile, Landlords and Capitalists. Zeitlin's RAMPARTS (March 1970) report on Cuba has since appeared in the Harper Torchbook edition of his Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class.

Salmon Fishing in America:

The Indians vs. the State of Washington

“The state has only one aim, I don’t care what kind of public statements it makes, and that’s to destroy our fishing equipment, chase us off the rivers, and save the fish for the white men.”

THIS FALL, AS THE SALMON began their spawning run from the sea back to the waters of their birth, a band of Indians waited for them in an illegal camp along western Washington’s Puyallup River. Calling themselves the Medicine Creek Nation in memory of the 1854 treaty that gave the rich Puget Sound area to the U.S. government, they began to fish in places where their ancestors had stood hundreds of years ago. They used nylon nets instead of hand-woven weirs and traps, and skiffs with outboard motors instead of canoes; but otherwise the scene recalled a time when big cities had not yet cut jagged swaths out of the forests of the Pacific Northwest, and Boeing test planes had not devastated the silence; when the system of rivers fed by glacial snows hooding Mount Rainier and running like veins down into the Sound were not only clear and unpolluted, but supported runs of salmon ganged so thick that, as one visitor said, it seemed almost possible to cross the river on their backs.

But this year, the salmon were sparse; and when the Indians set up their camp, they stood in the shadow of Tacoma’s grey industrial sprawl and a maze of freeways flinging cars off to the suburbs as if by centrifugal force. But the setting didn’t matter. The Medicine Creek Nation wasn’t there as a publicity stunt or out of nostalgia for the past. They were concerned with today, with the fact that the State of Washington denies the fishing rights which are the key to their survival. These Indians were deadly serious; and the guards posted at the entrances to their camp

carried loaded hunting rifles.

This was not their first angry demonstration on these waters. The “trouble,” as it is called, had made frequent headlines through the mid-’60s as reports of the wild, free-swinging melees on the rivers between Indian fishermen and state game wardens filtered out of the Puget Sound area and brought celebrities like Marlon Brando and Dick Gregory north for the “fish-ins.” But a decade of pitched battles, court tests and civil disobedience had passed, and Indians were still being arrested for fishing. Resentment in this camp was greater than ever, the Indians’ patience stretched taut. Washington officials sensed this change in mood, one fish and game officer later commenting: “We took one look at this bunch and decided we had gone from the era of the fish-in to the shoot-out.”

THE MEDICINE CREEK NATION stood for several weeks in an atmosphere of growing tension, repelling occasional attacks by local sportsmen-vigilantes. Then, early on the morning of September 9, the state finally moved in. Sidney Mills, a 23-year-old Yakima Indian, tells what happened: “We looked up and saw we were surrounded. They were all over—wardens, Tacoma tac squad, state troopers, and people just in plain street-clothes. There looked to be a couple hundred of them, and they all had either riot guns or some other kinds of automatic weapons, and helmets and flak jackets. We had maybe six or seven hunting guns in camp, some of them real

(Text continued on Page 39)

by Peter Collier