

CHILE

A newsletter in support of basic human rights

Volume 1 Number 2

April 10, 1975

A GOVERNMENT OF, BY AND FOR THE PEOPLE

THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES

OUTLINING GAINS MADE UNDER THE

POPULAR UNITY GOVERNMENT

AGRARIAN REFORMS

Chilean agriculture had a long history of tension between the large landholding elite (latifundistas) and the landless local farm worker. This tension reached its peak during the first months of the Unidad Popular administration. Promises by the U.P. of a rapid and thorough agrarian reform prompted tactics by the latifundistas of burning crops, slaughtering thousands of head of cattle, and refusing to plant or prepare ground for new crops. The intention was to discredit the new government by causing a food shortage which would necessitate rationing.

EXPLOITATION OF THE POOR

The cause underlying this unrest was the structure of landholding in Chile, where 4.4% of the rural population owned 80.9% of the total farm land. About 50% of the agricultural labor force worked on these large latifundios as either wage laborers or share croppers where they received small or non-existent wages, and were exploited by the landlords. Another 25% of the rural population owned tiny plots of land which were incapable of yielding even enough food for a single family.

The stagnating effects of this structure are shown by the impoverishment of the agrarian population -- 43% were undernourished, 85% of families lived in sub-standard housing (only 3.8% of housing has running water, and less than 20% have electricity). Infant mortality was one of the highest in the Western Hemisphere, with 120 of each 1,000 babies dying before their second birthday. Among the Mapuche Indians, who represent 1/4 of the rural population, infant mortality reaches 60% in the first year of life. Thus, it was obvious that the necessity for agrarian reform was paramount.



STRATEGY OF U.P.

These problems were formidable ones for the new U.P., but because of a basic commitment to the socialization of agriculture in Chile, a unified strategy was possible. The reform program had 20 points of concentration, including the following:

1. Mobilization of the campesinos (wage earners and sharecroppers) into organizations to create a more unified front to strengthen the reform.
2. Because of the diverse climates and soil arability throughout Chile, the reform would be planned and executed by regional areas, giving campesinos the major voice in agricultural planning.
3. Preference was given to cooperative farming in the new land tenure system, although each family was allowed to maintain an individual plot for a house and garden. Machinery was purchased for the cooperatives on a regional basis to ensure equitable use.
4. Nationalization of the banking system in order to make credit more accessible to all farmers.
5. All farmworkers, and their families, were covered by social security, instead of only the workers on commercial farms as in the past.

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GOALS OF CSC

On September 11, 1973, the democratically elected government in Chile was overthrown and the constitutional president, Salvador Allende was murdered by right-wing elements in the Chilean military. It was the most violent and barbaric military coup in Latin American history. The Congress was closed. All political parties and trade unions were abolished.

According to United Nations reports over 30,000 people have been murdered and another 40,000 have been tortured and imprisoned without any charges being brought against them. A reign of terror exists there that can only be compared to that of Nazi Germany.

In January of 1975 some concerned people, black and white, formed the Chile Solidarity Committee of Kansas City. The goals of the group were taken from the Second National Conference in Solidarity with Chile, which was held in Chicago on February 8th and 9th, 1975.

- Petition campaign for 500,000 signatures nationally, 5,000 locally to present to the United Nations 30th session. These petitions demand that the Chilean delegation representing the junta be expelled and that the United States be censored for their role of intervention in Chile.

- Post card mailings to the junta demanding the release of political prisoners.

- Nationally we hope to raise \$50,000, \$1500 locally, to be given to the Chilean resistance movement in order to help them restore democracy in Chile.

- The support of legislation that would terminate all economic and military aid to Chile because of the junta's consistent violations of all human and democratic rights.

- Exposure of the AIFLD (see article in this issue) and multi-national corporations and the role they played in the overthrow of the Popular Unity Government.



Recent News

The latest word from Chile reveals that the Chilean people are faced with an extremely difficult situation economically. Prices for fuel, flour and transportation have just been increased again. The junta ordered controls on some prices but the key items -- food, clothing and housing -- are not covered by those measures.

General Augusto Pinochet, the leader of the military junta, has admitted the terrible economic straits Chile is in and so have other junta officials. Early this year, the government predicted that 1975 would be a year for more "belt tightening."

An indication of the widespread poverty that plagues many sections of the Chilean population is provided by the fact that the Catholic church has begun a campaign to collect large amounts of food, clothing and money in an effort to ease the situation.

Measures of this kind are adopted only in times of national disasters.

Solidarity with the Chilean people was displayed in many places during the past several weeks. The meeting of the Latin American universities in support of the struggle against fascism, held in Bogota, Colombia, was noteworthy in this regard.

For several days, students, professors and university leaders expressed their solidarity with Chilean students as delegates from Chile gave more details about the torture of political prisoners in that country.

SALVADOR ALLENDE

LEGALLY ELECTED; ILLEGALLY MURDERED

Salvador Allende de Gossens, the constitutionally elected President of Chile, was murdered on September 11, 1973, by military forces which overthrew the government and established a military dictatorship.

Contrary to military reports that President Allende committed suicide, it has been documented that Allende fought to the last moment of his life, falling in a battle to defend the rights of the Chilean people.

DOCTOR AND ACTIVIST

His life was always devoted to the fight for equality and human rights. Born in Valparaiso, Chile, in 1908, the son of a lawyer, Salvador Allende entered the School of Medicine at the University of Chile in 1926. While a medical student, he became involved in politics and in 1931, took part in demonstrations which led to the fall of Carlos Ibanez, a corrupt Chilean politician.

Allende was a founder of the Chilean Socialist Party in 1933, and was the chief organizer in Valparaiso of the campaign to elect Aguirre Cerde, a Popular Front candidate to the Presidency in 1938.

In 1939, Allende served as the Minister of Health and was elected to the Chilean Senate in 1945, where he served until 1970. He was Vice-President of the Senate for five years and President for two. As Secretary-General of the Socialist Party, Allende ran unsuccessfully for the Presidency in 1952, 1958, and 1964.

POPULARLY ELECTED

In 1970, he was elected President at the head of a broadly based Popular Unity Government, composed of the Socialist and Communist Parties, Independents for Popular Action, the Social Democrats, liberals, peasants, students and Christians.

In the 1970 elections, the Popular Unity government won despite the later revealed involvement by the United States' Central Intelligence Agency in attempting to block Allende's election. Allende was sworn to the Presidency of Chile on November 3, 1970.

Following a program of nationalization, land reform, and a more equitable distribution of the country's wealth, Allende found himself in the midst of an economic blockade to his newly formed government. The U.S. influenced major loan institutions, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank, to cut credits to Chile. It was a "high risk" to invest in a government which was making life better for it's people.

Braving threats of further denials of loans and the possibility of a right-wing military coup, the Popular Unity government continued to carry forth it's programs, defending the elected government as best it could.

THE MILITARY COUP

On the morning of September 11, 1973, President Allende received a telephone call informing him of the military coup taking place. He immediately made the decision to go to La Moneda, the Presidential Palace, to defend the post that the people of Chile had entrusted him.

Bringing in tanks and air support, the military attempted to coerce President Allende and his staff to surrender. But the President of Chile was firm, saying, "I will defend to the death the authority which the people have given me."

ASSASSINATION

The few Chileans who managed to escape from the besieged Presidential Palace have told of Allende's death. The President fought against the unlawful troops to his last breath, suffering several mortal wounds before finally receiving a fatal blow from automatic weapon fire.

The military junta has attempted to portray President Salvador Allende's murder as suicide. These ruthless men wish to hide the courage and heroism of President Allende and the entire Chilean people who resisted the fascist moves by the military. But the people realize that President Allende died fighting for their constitutional rights and realize that these freedoms have been criminally abused and discarded by the present rulers of Chile.

The world will long remember the heroic example of Salvador Allende.



President Allende

AIFLD

Tool of U.S. Corporations

The American Institute for Free Labor Development was set up in 1962 by certain multi-national corporations, the U.S. government, and the AFL-CIO. Its self-declared purpose is to divert trade unions in Latin America toward U.S. corporations' goals. It is funded by grants from corporations, and by our tax dollars and union dues.

It neatly shows how our government and union leaders are used to "soften up" workers in other countries for bigger corporate profits. AIFLD has trained over 200,000 trade unionists from Latin America, through seminars, free training courses, and tours in the U.S. AIFLD's usual style is to organize "company" unions, then push them toward fighting any kind of national liberation movement as well as fighting more militant unions. They accuse every militant of being communist.

Examples of intervention by the AIFLD include:

The Dominican Republic, 1965-- The AIFLD puppet union, CONATRAL, supported the military coup which overthrew the elected liberal president, Juan Bosch. The military then froze wages, outlawed strikes, fired militant workers, and jailed uncooperative labor leaders. CONATRAL also supported the intervention of U.S. troops in the Dominican Republic during this period.

Brazil, 1964-- A military coup also occurred, overthrowing the Brazilian president, Goulart. AIFLD director, William C. Doherty, bragged to a Senate subcommittee in 1968 of the role that AIFLD played in the coup: "Brazilian graduates of the AIFLD school were so active that they became intimately involved in some of the clandestine operations of the revolution before it took place."

Chile, 1973-- The class consciousness and militant traditions of the working class had consistently frustrated AIFLD's attempts to subvert the labor unions, even though 6,000 trade unionists had participated in AIFLD seminars in Chile by 1970.

PROFESSIONAL "ELITE"

From the moment Allende's Popular Unity (UP) took executive power in 1970, AIFLD worked closely with the Chilean wealthy class to sabotage the economy from within, and undermine the unity of the working class. They quadrupled their investment in union "training programs" after 1970, and in 1971 helped form the Confederation of Chilean Professionals. This organization coordinated the month-long truck owners and merchants lockout, and the doctors' strike in 1972.

UNIONS OUTLAWED

What in fact did these AFL-CIO supported forces win for Chile's working class? The government they helped bring to power massacred 30,000 Chileans in the days following the coup. It has arrested, tortured, and executed an additional 6,000 - 20,000 people. The junta outlawed all unions and strikes. When construction workers in Santiago's subway staged a sitdown strike soon after the coup to protest frozen wages and skyrocketing prices, they were shot on the spot. Approximately 200,000 workers have been fired for political reasons.

Since the coup, AIFLD has been busy trying to cover up the lack of Chilean support for the junta. Their programs in Chile have doubled. They are forming a group of small, junta-approved unions, claiming to be the "new alternative" to the now-illegal Chilean unions.



Chile: institutionalized brutality against women

This year, when the entire world is celebrating International Women's Year, the military junta of Chile is doing everything possible to keep it as a year of savagery against women -- which has been the case ever since the coup on September 11, 1973.

The torture sessions and the humiliations to citizens started in Chile on the very day of the bloody coup which overthrew the constitutional government of the Popular Unity; and women activists sympathetic to the previous government and female relations of militants have been the target of the junta's constant and violent attacks.

Laura Allende, the sister of the late President Allende and a senator in the Chilean Congress until the coup, was recently released from a concentration camp and exiled to Mexico. Her release was the direct result of strong world pressure.

Soldiers broke into the home of Ms. Allende several times and conducted illegal searches, but in November, 1974, she was arrested and detained in prison, despite the fact that she suffers from cancer and requires cobalt treatments.

WORLDWIDE PROTEST

Immediately, a worldwide cry of protest arose. At the United Nations, in women's organizations of many countries and elsewhere, demands were made for her release and the military junta was forced to exile Laura Allende last month.

The case of Lumi Videla showed the Chilean military junta's brutality in the raw. Lumi was arrested and later murdered in the torture chambers. Her corpse was dumped into the gardens of the Italian embassy in Santiago.

TORTURED AND RAPED

Just as terrible has been the situation of the wife and daughters of former Senator Jorge Montes. The whole family was arrested and the tortures started without delay. The three women were raped in front of the former congressman and two of them are in serious physical and mental condition resulting from the tortures.

The wives and daughters of murdered General Alberto Bachelet and Enrique Kirberg, former rector of the State Technical University, who is now in prison, were arrested and tortured and are still in prison.

PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF TORTURE

Beatriz Campbell, another victim of the the junta, gave a particularly dreadful account to a journalist of the London daily newspaper, Morning Star.

Beatriz said that under the pretext that her husband was a Communist (he was imprisoned for some time for unspecified reasons), several soldiers showed up at her home on the evening of May 16, 1974 and raped her repeatedly in the presence of her small children, the oldest of whom was five at the time. Before leaving the house, the soldiers threatened to kill her if she ventured to disclose what had occurred. A few days later, the soldiers returned to mark her thigh with the symbol of the hammer and the sickle, with a branding iron.

INSTITUTIONALIZED BRUTALITY

Giving all the names of the women who have been tortured by Chilean junta would take much time and space. We can sum up this brief article with a description of the tortures inflicted on women by the fascist junta, which was added to the final resolution of the third session of the international commission to investigate the crimes of the junta, held in Mexico City this past February.

It reads: "Among the methods applied are the rape of women in collective and individual form in the presence of husbands, fathers, brothers and children, sometimes young ones; injections of air in the breasts and heavy blows on the vagina; wounds in the vagina with bayonets and walking sticks; wounds in the vagina with bottle necks..."

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Lately, the junta has been using the method of arresting the wives and children of political prisoners and of exiles to try to stop the wave of protests from all over the world.

Needless to say, the junta is guilty of innumerable atrocities against women. In Chile, International Women's Year is being celebrated with the institutionalization of torture.

World solidarity has succeeded in winning great victories over Chilean fascism. Increasing this solidarity with the women and the entire people of Chile is the best tribute we can offer Chilean women, those who are being tortured in the dungeons of the regime and those who are bravely struggling in the clandestine movement to overthrow fascism.

-- from Granma, Havana, Cuba -- 3/16/75

LAND FOR THE PEOPLE

After just the first year of the U.P. administration, the gains made were already impressive. A total of 1,157 latifundios had been expropriated, including the largest sheep ranch in the world which held 3.5 million acres. 13,962 families had been resettled on this expropriated land, and there was still room enough for 21,959 more families. Peasant Councils were set up and began supervising regional planning. More credit was available through state buying agencies. Jacques Chonchol, the minister of agriculture, estimated that the latifundio system would have been completely terminated in the spring of 1974.

As a result of the military coup in September, 1973, however, all of these gains have been completely reversed.

The statistics in the above article were taken from the following writings:

1. Martin Sternberg, "Chilean Land Tenure and Land Reform," unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Calif., Berkeley, September 1962, p. 34.
2. Robert L. Ayres, "Economic Stagnation and the Emergence of the Political Ideology of Chilean Underdevelopment," unpublished paper, University of California, Berkeley, 1971, p.10.
3. Irwin Hornstein, "Better Foods for Chile's Children," War on Hunger, V:5:7-9 (May 1971).



STATE OF SIEGE EXTENDED....

It was recently announced in Santiago that the state of siege will be extended for another six months. The state of siege has been in effect in Chile for a year and a half and gives the junta the "legal" power to transfer prisoners from one place to another, hold persons under arrest in places other than jails, refuse to have prisoners tried by a civil court, prohibit the holding of meetings, raid homes and maintain the curfew.

CHILE -- a newsletter in support of basic human rights is a monthly publication of the Information Committee of the Chile Solidarity Committee of Kansas City. Funds raised by the committee are forwarded in total to the Chilean resistance. Any articles, criticisms, suggestions, or donations can be sent to the Chile Solidarity Committee of Kansas City, P.O. Box 4771, Kansas City, Missouri, 64109

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