

Willi Dickhut

Chile and the Road to Socialism

Lessons of the Pinochet Coup of 1973

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“Peaceful Road to Socialism”

By Jim Rosenbaum

The fascist coup in Chile on September 11, 1973, came after three years of progressive, anti-imperialist reforms under the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende, which had taken office through bourgeois-democratic elections. Allende was the leader of the Socialist Party, the main base of the Popular Unity coalition, which also included the Communist Party of Chile, a pro-Moscow revisionist party and other smaller groups.

The coup, led by General Augusto Pinochet, shocked the progressive forces throughout the world, particularly by its unbridled brutality. Allende himself died during the coup, which was followed by the round-up of members and supporters of Popular Unity, and the massacre of tens of thousands of workers, peasants and progressive intellectuals (including singer and songwriter Victor Jara), and the imprisonment, torture and deportation of many others. The coup was directly supported by U.S. imperialism, which was affected by the nationalization of the copper mines owned by Kennecott and Anaconda, and of International Telephone and Telegraph. U.S. President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger both praised Pinochet. A few days after the coup, Kissinger sent a secret note to the U.S. Ambassador to Chile to convey to Pinochet “our strongest desires to cooperate closely and establish firm basis for cordial and most constructive relationship.” When Kissinger met Pinochet in June of 1976, he said: “In the United States, as you know, we are sympathetic with what you are trying to do here. We want to help, not undermine you. You did a great service to the West in overthrowing Allende.”

This article, by Willi Dickhut, first appeared just two months after the coup, in November 1973, as a supplement to the newspaper *Rote Fahne* (*Red Flag*), the organ of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany (MLPD), a revolutionary party in that country. It was republished as a pamphlet, together with a first-time Spanish translation, in May of 2013. It is an exposure of the revisionist thesis of the “peaceful road to socialism” as put forth by Khrushchev in 1956 and advocated by many revisionist parties throughout the world, including the Communist Party of Chile. It is still relevant today, particularly for many who think that revisionism only began with

Gorbachev in the mid-1980s, or that Brezhnev was “less revisionist” than Khrushchev.

The MLPD correctly centered their criticism not only on the revisionist leadership of the Communist Party of Chile, but also on their “own” revisionists, the leadership of the German Communist Party (DKP).

In translating this article into English, it was necessary to take up the revisionist views of the leadership of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), and particularly its General Secretary at that time, Gus Hall. It was also necessary to criticize the revisionist views of the Soviet leadership at that time, and to note that they did learn “lessons” and make important tactical changes in their foreign policy, while in no way changing their basic positions.

One of the principal questions for Marxist-Leninists is to have a correct understanding of the class nature of the state. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin all made clear that the modern state, even in the most democratic republic, is an organ of the rule of the capitalist class. Therefore, to establish socialism, “the proletariat could not just make use of the old state machine but had to smash it” (Lenin, *The State and Revolution*). This was a lesson that the leadership of the CPUSA has tried to evade for decades.

On September 25, 1970, shortly after Allende’s Popular Unity coalition received a plurality in the elections, Gus Hall made a major speech in solidarity with the Communist Party of Chile. This speech was reprinted in full on October 17, 1970, in the *Daily World*, newspaper of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) at that time, with the title “The Meaning of Chile.” Hall’s speech is a cleverly disguised defense of the “peaceful road to socialism.” Hall states: “The ruling circles in America are thinking about military rule – counter-revolution from the barrel of the gun. To overthrow what was democratically, electorally arrived at in Chile. The ruling circles don’t mind political changes, as long as capitalist class rule remains.... But in Chile there is a difference. That is the mandate is to change that class rule. That is the mandate that won the Chilean election. That is new. The world revolutionary movement has not before experienced this road to power.”

But there is a great difference between the road to **office** and the road to **power**. Allende had won the presidency, but state power, and particularly the army, was still in the hands of the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie. Hall acknowledges this on the one hand, but

refuses to draw the necessary conclusions on the other hand. He states that U.S. imperialism may try to get the Chilean military to take over. He even stated: "If the victory has to be defended by armed struggle – and that may very well be the case, would that make the tactics leading to this victory wrong? Absolutely not! Armed struggle would now have the support of the Chilean masses in defense of the electoral victory. Armed struggle without the mass movement would fail."

But this is the line that Hall put forward for decades, for the U.S. as well. First, we would elect a government of an "anti-monopoly coalition," which would begin to undermine the economic base of U.S. imperialism, and if the bourgeoisie would use arms to try to overthrow this government, the workers would be justified in using arms to defend it.

Even after the coup, Hall refused to draw the lessons of the need to *prepare* the masses against a counter-revolution. And there were forces in Chile, such as the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) and the Revolutionary Communist Party of Chile, who had called for arming the workers. Instead of recognizing that these revolutionary organizations had called for arming the masses *before* the coup, he said: "These petty-bourgeois Monday-morning ideological buzzards hover over the bodies of heroic revolutionary fighters trying to find some political bone to pick on" (*Daily World*, October 16, 1973).

But how could the workers defend the Popular Unity government if they were not already armed, trained and organized to do so. The bourgeoisie already has its armed forces, which are powerful and well-trained, and not just through military exercises. The U.S. armed forces have been used not just against workers and oppressed peoples in this country (and there have been countless examples of this throughout U.S. history), but throughout the world. They have tried to suppress liberation movements (for example in Vietnam, where the U.S. lost), and to overthrow governments that were defending their sovereignty (such as Saddam Hussein's Iraq or Gadhafi's Libya, where the U.S. has won for now). To wait until a counter-revolutionary coup takes place to begin to arm the workers and other progressive forces is to wait until it is too late, as the tragic events in Chile proved once again.

In later years, Hall stepped up his revisionist positions on the state. He put forward the line of "Bill of Rights Socialism." This



meant far more than a declaration of the need to preserve freedom of speech, of the press, etc. under socialism. It amounted to a pledge to the ruling class that the CPUSA would not overthrow the capitalist system, and would not repress the bourgeoisie under “socialism.” This went together with the CPUSA giving up any independent line, tailing the Democratic Party in the political sphere and the trade union bureaucrats in the economic sphere.

But it was not only the CP of Chile and relatively small revisionist parties, such as the CPUSA and DKP, that called for peaceful transition to socialism.” The CPSU under Leonid Brezhnev also put forth this line. And of course the CPSU was a party in power, at the head of a strong state.

Brezhnev himself, in his Report to the 24th Congress of the CPSU in March of 1971, stated: “The victory of the Popular Unity forces in Chile was a most important event. There, for the first time in the history of the continent, the people have secured, by constitutional means, the installation of a government they want and trust.”

But even after the coup, there was an authoritative article in the well-known Soviet journal *New Times*, 1974 no. 1, by Vladimir Tolstikov entitled: “Mighty Political Force of Our Time,” which appraised the work of the revisionist parties worldwide. The article

stated: "Taking full account of the situation that had developed in the country, the Communist Party of Chile opted for the peaceful path of development of the revolution, and subsequent experience confirmed the correctness of that choice.... A number of Communist and Workers parties have declared that the Chilean experience, notwithstanding the difficulties encountered and the temporary defeat of the revolution in that country, does not detract from the importance and value of the peaceful transition to socialism. The fraternal parties maintain that in our time the prospects for such peaceful transitions have improved, and they are taking due account of the lessons of Chile in working out their tactics" (pp. 5-6).

The statement that "in our time the prospects for such peaceful transitions have improved" is a clear reference to the policies of "détente," which the CPSU proclaimed would make the prospects of peaceful transition easier. This was especially emphasized after Brezhnev's visit to the U.S. in June of 1973. For example, there was an article in *New Times* #36, September 1973 (written before the coup) by D. Volsky, entitled "Soviet-American Relations and the Third World." He claims that after Brezhnev's trip to the U.S., détente "is benefiting all countries and peoples, the Third World nations included."

New Tactics of Revisionism after the Coup in Chile

It would not be correct to say that the Soviet revisionists and other parties and forces influenced by them did not learn any lessons from the setback to the policy of "peaceful transition" in Chile. However, these lessons were not of a Marxist-Leninist character. Rather than supporting the workers and peasants in their struggle for power, they relied on another section of the ruling class, high-ranking pro-Soviet officers, who could take over the reins of the state and bring about to increased Soviet influence. We will take three examples: Ethiopia, Portugal and Afghanistan.

In 1974 in Ethiopia, the decades-long rule of the feudal emperor Haile Selassie came to an end. His rule had been weakened by the long-running liberation movement in Eritrea*, and further weakened

* Eritrea borders Ethiopia on the North-East. It was an Italian colony until Italy's defeat during World War 2, when it was placed under British military administration. After the war, the UN placed it under a federation with Ethiopia, which annexed it in 1962.

by mass demonstrations in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. Selassie was forced to resign by a council of medium- to high-ranking military officers called the Derg. Although the military at first continued Ethiopia's long-standing friendly relations with the U.S., a series of executions within the military brought Col. Haile Mengistu Mariam to power by 1977. Proclaiming Ethiopia "socialist," Mengistu developed close relations with the Soviet Union, while bloodily suppressing the democratic civilian organizations involved in the overthrow of Haile Selassie. Unable to defeat the Eritrean liberation movement and the Ethiopian popular forces on its own, the Derg called for the Soviet Union to provide thousands of military "advisors" and billions of dollars worth of planes, tanks and other heavy weapons to help. Despite this "aid," by May of 1991 Mengistu's government collapsed. The armed coalition that had been fighting the regime came to power, but despite its socialist pretensions it quickly reverted to dependence on U.S. imperialism. Eritrea won its independence and continues to build itself up as a sovereign, anti-imperialist state.

The decades-old fascist regime in Portugal (first under Antonio Salazar and then under Marcelo Caetano) was waging a losing war to hold on to its African colonies of Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique. In April of 1974, Caetano was overthrown in a popularly-supported coup (called the Carnation Revolution) by left-wing military officers (mainly majors and captains) in the Armed Forces Movement (FMA). The pro-Soviet revisionist Portuguese Communist Party tried to push forward a "left-wing" government under Brigadier, later General, Vasco Goncalves, but this failed when bourgeois-democratic elections were won by the pro-U.S. "Socialist" Mario Soares in 1976.

In Afghanistan in 1978, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) overthrew President Daoud. The PDPA, which had close ties with high military officers, brought Afghanistan close to the Soviet Union. Despite many factional battles within the PDPA, Afghanistan was proclaimed an "atheist state." This gave the U.S. an excuse to spend billions of dollars to finance the reactionary Islamic fundamentalist "mujahedin" to fight the pro-Soviet regime. This led the Soviet Union to send over 100,000 troops to shore up the Afghani military regime. In this fighting the Soviet troops bombed villages and killed civilians, leading to the demoralization

of many Soviet soldiers. This was an important factor leading to the downfall of the Soviet Union.*

It should be noted that the Soviet Union's policy in these countries had nothing to do with Lenin's policy of calling on Russian soldiers to help undermine the tsarist regime. The soldiers were "workers in uniform," while in the above countries the pro-Soviet forces were high military officers who were trained under the previous reactionary regimes. Thus, the Soviet Union relied not on the workers and peasants, but on another section of the bourgeois state power to bring about, not socialism, but bourgeois regimes under its influence.

Positions of Revisionist China and of Socialist Albania towards the Coup in Chile

While the pro-Soviet revisionists in Chile refused to arm the masses in order to prepare for the military coup that everyone knew was in the making, the Chinese revisionist followers of the counter-revolutionary "Theory of the Three Worlds" took a different reactionary course. After the coup, the Communist Party of China made no statement of condemnation and *Peking Review* carried only a few short articles describing the coup and the resistance to it. China sought to maintain relations with Pinochet as the leader of a "Third World" country and even continued to provide credits to the Pinochet regime. This led the Revolutionary Communist Party of Chile to make a public break with the Chinese revisionists. In their Open Letter to the Communist Party of China

(<http://www.marx2mao.com/Other/Rev.%20Com.%20Party%20of%20Chile.pdf>), they said: "the representatives of China at the United Nations and in other international bodies left the sessions without voting when the resolutions condemning Pinochet and his henchmen were presented.... you have granted credits to the Junta; none other than the Chinese ambassador had himself photographed in the process of handing over gifts to the dictator Pinochet in August of this year."

Unlike the Soviet and Chinese revisionists, socialist Albania took a principled, correct position, denouncing the coup and its U.S. imperialist backers, while pointing out that the revisionist "peaceful

* This is not the place to go into detail about the class nature of these regimes, which is a much more complicated topic.

road” opened the way to it. Albania pointed out: “In Chile the counter-revolutionary storm continues to rage against the working masses, the patriots and fighters of that country. The rightist forces which seized power as a result of the September 11 coup d’état have established a reign of terror which even the Hitlerites would have envied.... The most fanatical, ultra-reactionary forces of darkness, the agents of American imperialism are strutting on the political stage.... For the Chilean people this is a grave, although temporary, misfortune, but for the modern revisionists it constitutes an all-round defeat, a complete overturning of their opportunist theories. All the revisionists, from those of Moscow to those of Italy, France and elsewhere, presented the ‘Chilean experience’ as a concrete example which proved their ‘new theories’ about the ‘peaceful road of the revolution’, the transition to socialism under the leadership of many parties, the moderation of the nature of imperialism, the dying out of the class struggle in the conditions of peaceful coexistence, etc. The revisionist press made great play with the ‘Chilean road’ in order to advertise the opportunist theses of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and the reformist and utopian programs of the Togliattist type.” (See “The Tragic Events in Chile: A Lessons for the Revolutionaries of the Whole World,” published in Zeri i Popullit on October 2, 1973, available at: <http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/archive/hoxhachile.htm>.)

The experience of the Popular Unity government and its overthrow by the pro-U.S. imperialist fascist coup led by Pinochet still has many lessons for us today. The first lesson is that it is possible to organize the masses of working people into a broad united front against imperialism and for socialism, and that in certain circumstances it is possible for such a united front to form a government. But the main lesson is that, without the overthrow of the bourgeois state apparatus, and without a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party to lead this, it is impossible to defeat imperialism and build socialism. The experience of Chile shows, today as well as over 50 years ago, that the “peaceful road to socialism” is a myth.

The MLPD bears no responsibility for this introduction.

Foreword

On September 11, 1973, a fascist military junta led by General Pinochet overthrew the anti-imperialist government of Chile. The unrestrained military carried out a systematic witch-hunt against socialists, communists, trade unionists, progressive artists, scientists and rebel youths. Tens of thousands of people were tortured, assassinated and sent off to concentration camps – many “disappeared” forever. President Salvador Allende, who had been democratically elected, also lost his life.

Three years earlier, the anti-imperialist electoral alliance, Popular Unity, won a majority in the presidential election. Allende’s Socialist Party and the Communist Party of Chile, which was revisionist and loyal to Moscow, as well as some small leftist groups made up the alliance.

The military coup perpetrated by the CIA, the U.S. secret agency, did not come as a surprise. It was preceded by smear campaigns, sabotage and coup attempts. Many people with revolutionary views demanded that weapons be given to the workers and that a popular militia be established. This fell on deaf ears, not only with Allende, who had social democratic views. Despite all warnings, the modern revisionists of the CP of Chile were also the ones who propagated the possibility of a “peaceful road to socialism.” Instead of preparing the masses for the imminent civil war, for the necessity of armed struggle, they blindly trusted in the bourgeois army and spread illusions about the role of the armed forces, thus disarming the working class and the masses.

In November of 1973 a “Blue Supplement” to the weekly *Rote Fahne* (*Red Flag*) entitled *Chile and the Road to Socialism* was published. The author was Willi Dickhut, theoretical pioneer and co-founder of the MLPD. This article showed that the CP of Chile had thrown overboard the basic doctrines of Marxism-Leninism and therefore also shared responsibility for the cruel defeat of the Chilean working class. The fascist terror also affected many members of their own party; however, the revisionists never took up a position of principle or of self-criticism regarding this. On the contrary; even today they repeat these illusions in a new form.

So that these bitter lessons are not forgotten in the preparation for the international socialist revolution, we have reprinted this article unaltered, and also for the first time with a Spanish translation.

April 2013

Stefan Engel

Chile and the Road to Socialism

Supplement to the *Red Flag* No. 11, 1973

On September 11, 1973, after three years of President Allende's government, the particular "Chilean road to socialism" was drowned in blood. Thousands of workers were shot, beaten to death, executed, brutally assassinated by an unrestrained military, and buried together with the illusion of the "peaceful road to socialism."

The starting point of this revisionist policy, including that of the "peaceful road to socialism," was the 20th Congress of the CPSU* in 1956. The communist parties of many countries, among them the Communist Party of Chile, corroded within by the spirit of social-democracy and opportunism, now, under the influence of the Soviet revisionists, made an about-face to a new course. Jorge Texier stated this frankly in *Problems of Peace and Socialism* [better known in English as *World Marxist Review*] (the international journal of the revisionist parties):

"At the illegal 10th Party Congress (1956) we carefully and self-critically studied the records of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and set ourselves as an immediate political perspective the task of establishing closer links with the masses and steadily carrying forward the revolution. 'Our country,' said Party General Secretary Galo Gonzalez, 'gives examples suggesting the possibility of changing the present regime by peaceful, parliamentary means, through elections or in other ways... A mass movement would impart a democratic content to these methods and ways'." (July 1972, p. 90; English edition.)

In the program of the CP of Chile there is outlined *"the possibility of a path – based on the development of the struggle of the masses – that allows us to do without a civil war to win political power."*

In *Revolutionäre Weg 2 (Revolutionary Way 2)* we noted that the results after the Second World War showed how the liberation movements in various countries were defeated at gunpoint. *"All these events show that the thesis of the 'peaceful road' in the era of imperialism is absurd. This thesis only serves to paralyze the revolutionary fighting strength of the working class."* (See pp. 70-71 of

* Communist Party of the Soviet Union



A broad united front

the German edition.) The revisionists have not learned anything from these experiences. On the contrary, the “Chilean road to socialism” was emphasized as an excellent example of the possibility of the “peaceful road” and was meant to show that the revisionist policy was correct.

In Chile, the Socialist Party (SP), the Communist Party (CP), the Radical Party and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), as well as small groups such as the movements API (Independent Popular Action) and MAPU (Movement for United Popular Action) joined the Popular Unity and triumphed in the presidential election of September 4, 1970; Allende became president. What was the material basis of that electoral success?

The exploitation of the people

The working people and natural resources of the country were looted by the powerful exploiters. At their head were the U.S. copper consortia Anaconda and Kennecott, among others, which for 50 years invested a total of \$30 million and exported their profits, which reached \$4,500 million. In recent years the U.S. monopolies increased their exploitation. Copper production increased from 658,000 tons in 1968 to 800,000 tons in 1970. The greed of the U.S. copper monopolies is easily explained: Chilean copper reserves amount to 80 million tons, that is, 30% of the world copper reserves.

The U.S. consortium Bethlehem Steel Corporation owned the iron mines and a steel mill in Chile. Other U.S. companies exploited



Copper mine Chuquicamata

Chilean saltpeter reserves. The U.S. giant International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) invested \$200 million into the Chilean economy. The American and Foreign Power Company played a decisive part in the production of electricity. For 50

years the foreign companies looted Chile for a total of \$9,800 million in profits.

To the foreign exploiters must be added 150 monopoly enterprises and about 30,000 companies of the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. In agriculture the ownership of the feudal landowners was unlimited. 4.2% of landowners owned 80% of all arable land.

The unprecedented exploitation of the workers in the city and the countryside was accompanied by unimaginable poverty. Within ten years, the cost of living increased tenfold. A half million families were left homeless. The infant mortality rate was high; a million and a half children were malnourished. The unemployment rate reached 8.8%. The misery and discontent of the masses led to numerous strikes and demonstrations.

Allende's program of reform

This material base was the precondition for the formation of the Popular Unity and for Allende's electoral victory in 1970. Allende's government formulated a major reform program that was carried out step by step. Two years after Allende got into office, the General Secretary of the CP of Chile, Luis Corvalan, summarized the results in an interview with the revisionist journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism* [*World Marxist Review*]:

"The past two years have seen deep-going changes in the economy. The government has nationalized copper, the imperialist-owned Anaconda and Kennecott companies, saltpeter and iron-ore

mines, the Huachipato steel mills, the local subsidiary of the American and Foreign Power Co., and also the big foreign export and import firms. It has expropriated the Chilean branch of the International Telephone and Telegraph Co. (ITT). A telling blow has thus been dealt the whole system of imperialist domination. The agrarian reform extends to half of the arable land. An end has been put to the omnipotence of the latifundists. The state has taken over private banking, and has nationalized, requisitioned or placed under government control several dozen monopoly-type large industrial enterprises. It also controls 94 per cent of exports of goods and services and 60 per cent of imports." (November 1972, p. 15; English edition.)



Truck to transport copper

These results were certainly great successes of Popular Unity and of Allende's government, which should have been used as a means to further mobilize the masses for the revolutionary struggle. The expropriations were made partly with and partly without compensation. All the affected exploiters put up increasing resistance to the reform program of Allende's government, so that class antagonisms sharpened even more.

Instead of preparing the working masses for the sharpening of the class struggle and taking steps for the armed struggle with the aim of the seizure of power as a condition for



Allende speaks in National Stadium



Peasant demonstration: On to the offensive!

building socialism, the revisionists had other concerns: “*The Communist Party addresses the working class, the peasants and all Chilean workers to tell them that the **main task** consists is to increase farm production, to increase the output of copper and manufactured goods,*” said the election call of the CP of Chile of March 1973. (Source: the revisionist newsletter *Information Bulletin – IB* – No. 3, 1973, p 46; English edition.)

Lenin’s teachings

The CP of Chile had rejected Lenin’s teachings, which he already wrote in late 1899 in the controversy with the “economists” and their newspaper “Rabochaya Mysl” (Worker’s Thought, RM):

“Lastly, instead of indicating the means modern socialism advances for the achievement of socialism – the winning of political



Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

*power by the organized proletariat – instead of this, **R. M.** speaks only of placing production under their (the workers’) social management or under the management of democratized social power, democratized ‘by their [the workers’] active participation on boards examining all kinds of factory affairs, in courts of arbitration, in all possible assemblies, commissions, and confer-*

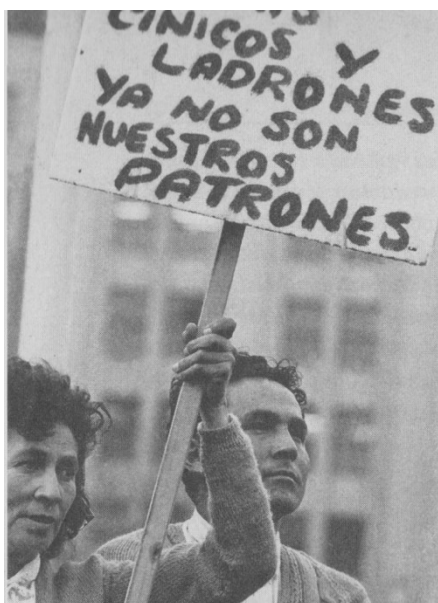
ences for the elaboration of labor laws; by the workers' participation in public self-government, and, lastly, in the country's general representative institution.' In this way the editors of *Rabochaya Mysl* include in working-class socialism only that which is to be obtained along the **peaceful** path and exclude the revolutionary path. This narrowing-down of socialism and its reduction to common bourgeois liberalism represents again a tremendous step backwards....



Workers demand: Workers to power!

"The working class would, of course, prefer to take power **peacefully** (we have already stated that this seizure of power can be carried out only by the organized working class which has passed through the school of the class struggle), but to **renounce** the revolutionary seizure of power would be **madness** on the part of the proletariat, both from the theoretical and the practical-political points of view; it would mean nothing but a disgraceful retreat in face of the bourgeoisie and all other propertied classes. It is very probable – even most probable – that the bourgeoisie will not make peaceful concessions to the proletariat and at the decisive moment will resort to violence for the defense of its privileges. In that case, no other way will be left to the proletariat for the achievement of its aim but that of revolution." (Lenin, *A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social Democracy*, in *Collected Works*, 4th English Edition, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, Volume 4, p. 276.)

The Chilean national bourgeoisie (known for its political acumen, its capability of maneuvers and tactics toward the masses) had hoped that the expropriation of the imperialist monopolies and the feudal landlords would open up a capitalist path for Chile (land reform is a demand of the **bourgeois** revolution). It felt deceived



The Yankees are no longer our masters!

when Popular Unity announced that it would continue the reform movement as a peaceful road to socialism. The national bourgeoisie moved closer to the reactionary part of the Chilean bourgeoisie that was tied to the imperialist monopolies. The resistance of the reactionary forces increased during the last year of the Allende government. The fight sharpened more and more around the main issue: the question of power.

The question of power is decisive

Here the great illusion begins, the danger of the revisionist policy of “peaceful transition to socialism.” In his speech to the Congress of the Republic on May 21, 1971, Allende stated:

“The skeptics and prophets of doom will say it is not possible. They will say that a Parliament that has so well served the ruling class is unable to be transformed to become the Parliament of the Chilean People.

“Furthermore, they have emphatically stated that the Armed Forces and Police, who have until now supported the institutional order that we will supersede, will not agree to guarantee the popular will that is determined to build socialism in our country. They forget the patriotic consciousness of our Armed Forces and Police, their professional tradition and their submission to civil power...”

“The people of Chile are winning political power without being forced to use weapons.” (Salvador Allende, *The Chilean Road to Socialism*, pp. 4 and 13, on the internet:

www.alianzabolivariana.org/pdf/chilena_al_socialismo.pdf)



The armed forces everywhere, and so also in Chile, are the instrument of the state power of the ruling class. The officers of the armed forces and police are the sons of the Chilean bourgeoisie. To believe that these sons of the bourgeoisie would guarantee the transition to socialism is worse than naive. Contrary to the historical experience of the workers' movement, Allende told a press conference on May 5, 1971: *"We are proud of the professional role of our Armed Forces. The great feature of the Armed Forces of Chile has been their obedience to civil power, their unconditional respect for the popular will as expressed at the polls, to the laws of Chile, to the Chilean Constitution."* (Salvador Allende, *The Armed Forces*, in *Selected Works*, p. 320, cited on the Internet: www.salvador-allende.cl/Documentos/1970-73/5%20de%20mayo%201971.pdf)

Allende was not a Communist, so his opinion is at least understandable. **Allende had to pay with his life for this illusory conception and blind faith in the instrument of power of the bourgeoisie.** The reactionary forces, the imperialist monopolies and the U.S. secret agency [CIA], the national monopolies and feudal landlords used all means, from bribery to the assassination of loyal officers, in order to influence the armed forces against the Allende government and Popular Unity.

When the parliamentary elections of March 1973 did not lead to the legal overthrow of Allende, the reactionary forces were only left with the violent coup. In June of 1973 two tank regiments separately launched an attempted coup, and although it failed, it showed very clearly where the armed forces were heading.

The illusion of the CP of Chile

So what did the CP of Chile say about this development?

Perhaps, they warned the people against the illusions in the armed forces in the hands of the bourgeoisie and against the intention of the reactionary forces to unleash a civil war? Did they call on the broad masses to prepare for an armed conflict? Let us look at what the General Secretary of the CP of Chile, Luis Corvalan, said at a meeting of activists of his party on July 8, a few days after the coup attempt in June: *"The uprising was crushed quickly thanks to the decisive intervention of the commander in chief of the army and the loyal attitude of the armed forces, the police and the security agencies."*

So it was not only Allende, but also the leaders of the CP of Chile, who blindly trusted in the instrument of power of the bourgeoisie. They continued spreading this illusion, this erroneous evaluation of the armed forces, despite the imminent threat of civil war. A captive of the disastrous policy of the "peaceful road to socialism," the Chilean revisionist G. Banchero wrote in the revisionist journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism*:

"In Chile, where an anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly, and anti-feudal democratic people's revolution is now under way, we have essentially retained the old state machine. Government offices are staffed mainly with the old officials...."



September 11, 1973: Soldiers shoot at the Moneda,
the government palace

“In Chile the armed forces, observing their status of a professional institution, take no part in political debate, and submit to the lawfully constituted civilian power. Bonds of cooperation and mutual respect have evolved between the army and the working class (listen clearly – RW editor’s note) in the name of the patriotic goal of shaping Chile into a free, advanced, and democratic land.” (August 1973, p. 21; English edition.)

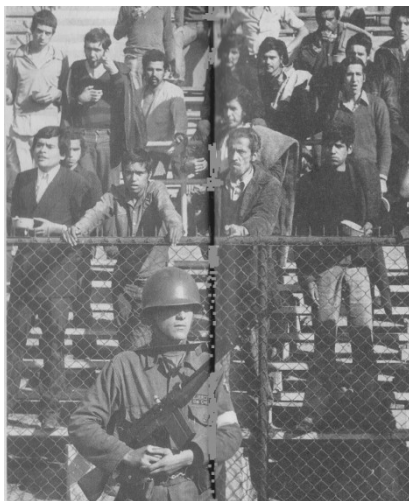
Just a month later, this “peaceful revolution” was drowned by the same armed forces in the blood of thousands and thousands of workers and peasants. Tens of thousands were arrested and tortured, many beaten to death.

We raise our fervent protest against the terror perpetrated by the military junta!

We declare our resounding solidarity with the victims of the military and the fascists!

Even in the September issue of the international revisionist journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, that is, a few days before the coup by the military junta, A. Yañez and G. Banchero enthusiastically praised the armed forces. It is unbelievable but what follows is written in black and white:

*“The people and the army won an important victory. They defended the government, disarmed the adventurist and criminal elements who were sowing death on the streets of the capital and who had betrayed the glorious traditions of our armed forces. **The Chilean soldiers displayed their unswerving determination to defend the government elected by the people. Patriotism, and courage triumphed.**”* (September, 1973, p. 99; English edition.)



The military turns the National Stadium into a concentration camp, and carries out a blood bath



The Chilean working class had to pay a high price for the illusion of a peaceful road to socialism!

emphasizes: “... we communists raise today with greater strength, dynamism and combativeness the revolutionary (? – RW editor’s note) and patriotic slogan: *Never again civil war, never again fascism!*”

This is a pious wish, it is bourgeois pacifism that was spread especially during and after World War I under the slogan: Never again war! in order to divert the workers from the revolutionary struggle. Although reaction was already placing on the agenda the armed struggle against Popular Unity and the Allende government, Corvalan begged his party members:

“We have always expressed – and we repeat today despite the recent events – that in the current situation in Chile there is a real option of carrying through the anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic revolution in order to begin the march to socialism without civil war, although naturally by means of a very harsh class struggle.”

Instead of preparing the working masses for the imminent civil war and organizing the arming of the workers and poor peasants legally and illegally, that is, with or without government aid; instead of developing a plan that would lead to the defeat of the reactionary

Already in 1969 we pointed out in *Revolutionary Way 2*: “If one does not prepare the working class for the armed struggle, they will be defenseless before the machine guns of the state troops in a civil war.” (See p. 71 of the German edition.)

Pacifism in place of armed struggle

Did the CP of Chile prepare the masses for the imminent civil war?

Let us return to Corvalan’s speech, delivered at the meeting of party activists mentioned above, in which he em-

coup, instead of warning the masses of the intervention of the armed forces against the people, Corvalan assured: “No, gentlemen! (referring to the reactionaries – RW editor’s note). *We continue to support the absolutely professional character of the armed institutions. Their enemies are not in the ranks of the people, but in the camp of reaction.*” (IB, No. 13, 1973 p. 23; translation from the German.)



The working class demands:
Don't give the fascists an inch!

(IB, No. 13, 1973 p. 23; translation from the German.)

The CP of Chile had planned to hold its 15th Congress from November 25 to December 1, 1973. In preparation it published a **draft thesis** that is entirely revisionist. The Chilean revisionists clung to the “peaceful road to socialism,” despite the imminent threat of a reactionary coup. The draft said: “*The thesis regarding the possibility of advancing towards socialism by non-violent means remains valid. Its implementation is feasible because only a tiny minority, a section of the opposition, patently fascist-type groups are prepared to push events along anti-constitutional lines.*” (Information Bulletin, Number 11-12, 1973, p. 53; English edition.)

What an erroneous and fatal evaluation of the situation and of the class forces! It is totally contradictory to the Leninist conception, which says, “*Marxist dialectics call for a concrete analysis of each specific historical situation.*” (Lenin, *The Junius Pamphlet* in *Collected Works*, Volume 30.) **The CP of Chile let itself be guided by its wishful thinking**, rather than by the actual situation and the doc



Pinochet and his officers

trines of Marxism-Leninism. The Chilean revisionists threw Marxism-Leninism overboard, they overlooked the historical lessons of the revolutionary workers' movement and those of the

Paris Commune in particular, converting into its opposite the role of the bourgeois state apparatus and spreading the view of taking it over. Thus they say in their thesis: "***The state apparatus is the main instrument of building a new society.*** The specific feature of our country is that the Popular Government, striving to carry out deep-going revolutionary transformation, is acting with the help of the bourgeois bureaucratic apparatus." (Ibid., p. 58.)

In his book *The State and Revolution*, Lenin fights against revisionists of the Kautsky type who preached the same illusions about the bourgeois state and its takeover by the proletariat when they said: "*The aim of our political struggle remains, as hitherto, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by converting parliament into the master of the government.*" (Quoted in: Lenin, *The State and Revolution in Collected Works*, Vol. 33.). Lenin puts forward the revolutionary position against this revisionist conception of the State:

*"The point is whether the old state machine (bound by thousands of threads to the bourgeoisie and permeated through and through with routine and inertia) shall remain, or be **destroyed** and replaced by a **new** one. Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the **old** state machine, but in this class **smashing** this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a **new** machine. Kautsky slurs over this basic idea of Marxism, or he had utterly failed to understand it."* (Ibid.)

The opportunism of the German Communist Party (DKP)

This crucial doctrine of Lenin requires drawing a clear dividing line between opportunist politics on the one hand and revolutionary politics on the other. **What is taking place now in Chile may happen elsewhere tomorrow.** The revisionist DKP also preaches the transformation of the capitalist state legally and peacefully based on the bourgeois constitution. Shamelessly it declares this thesis at its congress. This is what it says in thesis No. 9:

“Because of the present conditions in the class struggle, the DKP assumes that the way best suited to open the road to socialism is the struggle of the working class and the other democratic forces for the democratic renewal of both the state and society, that is, by an anti-monopoly democracy. The DKP aspires to carry out this transformation on the basis of democratic principles and rights enshrined in the constitution.”

This is the “purest and most vile” opportunism just like the conception of the old revisionists. There is no reason to suppose that the capitalist wolves, in any country, would become peaceful sheep, however much they camouflage themselves behind a “democratic” sheepskin. If one gets close to them, even with “very peaceful measures” and on the “basis of the constitution” (as Popular Unity did in Chile), they will show their teeth and tear their victims apart.

In a statement about Chile, the presidium of the DKP says: *“The Chilean conspirators and coup plotters and come from the caste of the militarists. Their action is also a warning sign for us.”* However, has the DKP really drawn the lessons from the example of Chile? Has it finally abandoned its disastrous revisionist policy of the so-called “peaceful road to socialism,” of “rolling back the power of monopolies,” of “the democratic renewal of the State (and of its instruments of military power – RW editor’s note) and of society (the monopoly economy of the state included – RW editor’s note)”? **The DKP does not think of doing this.**

On the contrary, it continues to spread the illusion of “peaceful transition to socialism,” probably because it assumes that the instruments of state power, that is, the army, border guards, police and judiciary, will give examples of such a democratic attitude in the Federal Republic of Germany that will leave the way open to the “peaceful road”; or, that these forces will remain with their arms

folded so that it will be possible to “roll back” and finally peacefully defeat the power of the monopolies.

Tool of reactionary power

Not even all the social-democrats maintain such illusions. For example, the German parliamentary deputy, Erwin Horn, in an alarming article in the newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau* of October 19, 1973, titled “Is the German army reliably democratic?” in the beginning quoted the former chair of the Young Socialists, Karsten Voigt, who stated at a demonstration:

“The coup was perpetrated by some enemies of the constitution in public service: generals, admirals and chiefs of police. In Chile it has become clear, in the decisive conflict, that the real enemies of the constitution were not the socialists, nor the communists, but the military condoned or approved by the nationalist and Christian-Democratic politicians. This should also make us think about the Federal Republic of Germany. Therefore it is very obvious that we must ask and examine more intensely what kind of thoughts predominate in the army and the border police.”

Beginning with this, Horn specifically details a number of examples of the reactionary spirit of many generals in the German army, such as retired General Schnez, about whom he comments: *“The role of the General Schnez and his clique remains unclear up to now. At the least, this general, signing a study of the internal structure of the German army, that is, of most of the troops of the German armed forces, **demanding that the state and society should unilaterally be subordinate to military categories.**”* (Emphasis by the RW editor.)

The extreme-right politicians of the CDU/CSU* are the ones who encourage the reactionary positions of many officers. They consider the Chilean military coup as an “instructive example.” At the congress of the CSU the chair of the CDU, Helmut Kohl, openly threatened: *“The CDU/CSU will not look with folded arms while some sectors in the SPD† and also in the government try to change the quality of this state.”*

* CDU/CSU: Christian Democratic Union / Christian Social Union

† SPD: Social-Democratic Party of Germany

The DKP has not drawn any fundamental lesson from the bloody events in Chile. The Chilean revisionists also underestimated the counter-revolutionary forces. For example, A. Rodríguez wrote in the journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism* that Allende's popular government was bringing about a revolutionary transformation by constitutional means. *"This produces a situation in which the bourgeoisie has neither the opportunity nor the resolve to resort to armed force."*



(June 1972, p. 137; emphasis by the RW editor.) Meanwhile the DKP also nurtures such illusions. In the thesis No. 9 of the Congress in Düsseldorf it said completely seriously: *"Only through a harsh class and popular struggle against the inevitable resistance of the groups that defend the interests of big capital, can the anti-monopoly popular and socialist movement attain the strength to prevent the reactionary forces from employing violence."* (Thesis of the Düsseldorf Congress of the German Communist Party, p 17; emphasis by the RW editor.) And this, despite all the historical lessons of the workers' movement and the class struggle.

The revolutionary road

From the opportunist attitude of the modern revisionists we must draw the same conclusion that Lenin drew from the betrayal of the old revisionists of the type of Kautsky and others: *"But we shall break with the opportunists; and the entire class-conscious proletariat will be with us in the fight – not to 'shift the relation of forces,'*



but to overthrow the bourgeoisie, to destroy bourgeois parliamentarism, for a democratic republic after the type of the Commune, or a republic of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat." (Lenin, *The State and Revolution in Collected Works*, Volume 33.)

The is the 56th anniversary of the Russian Revolution of October 1917, the outstanding example of the revolutionary struggle for power. The armed struggle to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie finally triumphed not only because the Bolshevik party, led by Lenin, broke on time with the revisionists and opportunists of all kinds, but also because it had prepared the masses for the armed uprising. From all this we must draw lessons.

Also in Chile, the working masses will draw the conclusion from the atrocities committed by the military junta, that it is impossible to achieve socialism by a peaceful road. Because of their bloody sacrifices, they have realized that only the destruction of the state apparatus through armed struggle can create the conditions for building socialism. This lesson is applicable to all capitalist countries. Therefore, let us put an end to all illusions about the peaceful transition to socialism! Long live the revolutionary road of the October Revolution!