

Chronology of recent events

Jan. 15 The Chilean government took control of the nation's largest banks at the behest of the International Monetary Fund's austerity program. Chile is scheduled to pay \$3.5 billion dollars on its loans this year.

Mar. 26 Riots and demonstrations occurred in four cities. The military was called out against the population for the first time since 1974.

May 8 A general strike and plant occupation by the National Union Command, a confederation of Chile's largest unions, was called off because Pinochet sent tanks and troops to three of the largest mines and threatened to "invade" any occupied facilities. Instead, the Union Command sponsored the first national day of protest on May 11th.

May 11 70% of the nation's students boycotted classes. Motorists blocked business-related and military traffic by packing the streets with automobiles. Marches and rallies of several thousands occurred. Demonstrations by lawyers led to beatings in the national courthouse.

May 14 Soldiers seized about 2000 people in predawn raids on two areas that had shown resistance on May 11th. The detained were held in soccer stadiums. About 200 union militants were arrested, and striking miners were fired.

June 10 At least 550 miners were fired, 350 arrested and three killed in strike actions at the El Salvador copper mine, Chile's third largest. The El Salvador and Chuquicamata copper mines were put under direct military occupation.

June 11 Hundreds of thousands march in the second national day of protest. Shantytowns in major cities throughout Chile were barricaded with piles of burning tires and trash. Clashes between rock- and glass-

throwing protesters and tear gas-, water canon- and rifle-firing "forces of order" led to 1300 arrests, many injuries and several deaths. Students held campuses, particularly the University of Santiago for three days. When they marched off campus, the police attacked with clubs and drove them back. To protest human rights violations, the Pinochet's constitution was ignominiously burned outside the supreme court before hundreds of demonstrators. Several city buses were destroyed by fire. Bombs exploded at seven electric power facilities.

June 20 Union leaders and the Communist Party disavow the violence which they claim is due to "splinter groups" outside their control.

July 12 The junta arrest Gabriel Valdez, and other leaders of the Democratic Alliance — a coalition dominated by the Christian Democrats — for organizing the third national day of protest. Lawyers throw small change at government prosecutors in the national courthouse, protesting detention and arrest proceedings.

Aug. 12 As street demonstrations continued for the third straight day, the commander of the Air Force — Fernando Matthei, a member of the junta — publically questioned the government's account of the violence and informed Pinochet that the air force would not participate in further repression. In late August, Brigadier General Carol Urzoa Iban — the military governor of Santiago — is assassinated.

Sept. 3 Rodomiro Tomic — a Christian Democratic leader — said that if Pinochet would reach minimal agreement with the people, the protests would be unnecessary.

Sept. 8 6000 people formed the funeral procession for Miguel Angel Zavala, a bus driver killed at a demonstration. 30,000 people lined the streets. The march, led by clergy and members of the Chilean Human Rights



graphic: Comunitad

"Fortunately our army is nationalist; for that reason we only invade our own country."

Commission, was stormed by police after it had entered the municipal cemetery. Gabriel Valdez announced that any further dialogue with the junta was inconceivable.

Sept. 13 The fourth straight day of protests included maintaining the barricades of burning tires to block military/police related traffic, marching, pot-banging, throwing rocks at cops, and assembling, through

most of the night. Approximately 36,000 people were involved in La Leguna along, one Santiago shantytown.

Oct. 5 A protest of 10,000 students and miners in Santiago, called to support out-of-work miners, burned an effigy of Pinochet. Riot police fired buckshot and tear gas when the crowd tried to march on the national palace with the slogan "Enough of crime and torture."

— N.M.



Chronology of the Chilean workers' movement

1909 The *Gran Federacion Obrera de Chile* (GFOC) is formed in September by the more conservative labor groups to bring together the workers' cooperatives. Cooperativism is strong in Chile at this time, with 55,000 people in 433 workers' co-ops.

1917 At the GFOC congress of 1917, a more revolutionary tendency becomes dominant, replacing the more conservative faction, and the name of the organization is shortened to Chilean Workers Federation (FOCH). Their goal was the complete abolition of capitalism and its replacement by the workers' union federation, which would control industry.

1922 The first serious effort at direct manipulation of the workers' movement by political parties occurs. A delegation headed by Lius Emilio Recabarren appears at the 2nd National Congress of the FOCH. Recabarren has just returned from the USSR and announces his intention to form a Chilean Communist Party. FOCH abandons its federalist organizational practice in favor of centralism. The domination of CP politics alienates libertarian, syndicalist or social-democratic unionists, leading to a split in 1925.

1919 The Chilean IWW is founded as an anarcho-syndicalist workers organization in Valparaiso and spread rapidly throughout the country. The IWW espouses, as its tactic,

direct action, and, as its objective, abolition of wage-labor and direct control of production by the workers.

1920 Arturo Alessandri Palma is elected president and responds to worker activism by propagating a "corporatist" work code, inspired by Benito Mussolini, which aims at control of the working class.

1924 A coup d'etat takes place. At first only the IWW opposes the new regime. But a new wave of repression hits the workers' movement, with massacres, imprisonment, tortures.

1927 A new military regime comes to power with Carlos Ibanez del Campo at its head. A ferocious dictatorship destroys the unions one by one. There occur a series of assassinations of militants in plain view as meetings are letting out. Dawn kidnappings. Tortures. People forced into exile. The Chilean IWW ceases to exist. FOCH almost totally disappears.

1931 The fall of the dictatorship. The workers' movement enters a period of reorganization and Chile passes through a period of institutional crisis. The economic crisis amplifies this situation. The anarcho-syndicalist unions create the CGT (General Confederation of Workers). Though inspired by the IWW tradition, the CGT is built more on the federalist model of organization such as the Argentine FORA. Throughout the period of

1931-34 the unions of the CGT are involved in strikes and movement-building. During this process the General Association of Teachers is formed. The various political parties, such as the Socialists (SP), Communists (CP), the bourgeois Radical Party (RP) and the right-wing Phalange, advocate a legalized,

regulated form of unionism. The CGT unions reject the legalistic approach as a method for "dominating the revolutionary workers movement." Meanwhile, the CP has been trying to rebuild the FOCH but its support is weak. During this period the union movement is subject to no one but its own members, striking

Persona non grata in several countries

Italy, we're told, now has 3500 political prisoners. Among these is Juan Teofilo Pollocar — a Chilean libertarian exile. Juan was born in Coyhique, in the far south of Chile, in 1954 of a family of *campesinos*. Beginning in 1968, when he was 14, Juan came to participate in struggles on the land, in occupations of latifundia (large estates) and played various roles in organizations of Chilean *campesinos*. He was involved in the setting-up of a people's radio station in Coyhique, which is where he was the day of the military coup that overthrew the Allende government in 1973.

After the coup in Chile, Juan fled to Argentina, where he was detained by the military authorities. After a month in jail in Argentina, he was expelled and sent to Cuba. In April of 1975, Juan and five other Chilean libertarians were expelled from Cuba for political reasons and went to Italy. Because of their political expulsion from Cuba, a campaign of defamation against the six Chilean libertarians was launched by the marxist parties of the Popular Unity (Allende's coalition), whose organization in Italy, *Chile Democratico*, opposed their being

granted asylum in that country. Those of the six who were not in jail were forced to leave Italy.

Italy now has in effect a repressive law which permits imprisonment of people identified with the revolutionary left under a catch-all charge of "subversive association." This law had been passed, with the crucial aid of the Italian Communist Party, after the Red Brigades's assassination of Aldo Moro. In 1981 Pollocar was sentenced to 16 years in prison, under a charge of "subversive association" with the armed struggle group *Azione Rivoluzione*.

Juan's present situation is that he needs medical treatments, at a cost of 600,000 lira each, to avoid losing his leg. The Italian prison system does not provide for such medical attention. Italian and Chilean libertarians have been raising money on Juan's behalf. Information Network on Latin America has also been collecting funds on Juan's behalf and will forward funds to the folks in Italy handling solidarity on Juan's behalf. (Any donations for Juan should be so indicated and made payable to "Libertarian Aid for Latin America.") □

for its own principles and its revolutionary goals. It is not controlled by any political party seeking to dominate the labor movement for its own purposes.

1932 As always the armed forces fulfill their tragic role. On June 4 a group of politicians and military men carry out a coup d'état and install the government of Marmaduke Grove who declares Chile a "socialist republic," but the workers and the unions have no avenue for participation. On June 16th the military bring the 12-day-old "socialist republic" to an end.

1934 The Confederation of Chilean Workers (CTCH) is formed under the auspices of the Socialist and Communist parties. The Communists adopt the Popular Front tactic of alliances with other reform-oriented parties and "progressive" sections of the ruling class. The Chilean workers' movement now finds itself divided into two camps: the revolutionary unionism of the CGT, and the party-controlled unionism of the CTCH.

1938 Pedro Aguirre Corda, candidate of the Popular Front, is elected to the presidency. Although a national *campesinos* organization is formed in 1939, strikes during the harvest season are outlawed by the Popular Front government. CTCH leaders are elected to parliament and the CTCH becomes committed to the defense of the government and its policies. In 1939 the CTCH fails to support a printers' strike organized by the anarcho-syndicalist CGT. Internal democracy within the CTCH begins to suffer. Due to the failure of the Popular Front government, the CTCH splits into opposing Communist and Socialist factions.

1946 G. Gonzalez Videla, a member of the bourgeois Radical Party, is elected president with the support of the left parties. Videla propagates a "law of the defense of democracy" which is used to outlaw the CP, and also a campaign of repression is unleashed against the labor movement.

1952 Carlos Ibanez del Campo, whose bloody dictatorship in 1927-31 could hardly be forgotten by the working class, is elected president. To develop a common front against the bosses, the CTCH factions appeal for unity during 1st of May mobilizations.

1953 Unity discussions lead to the merger of the CGT and the two CTCH factions; in February the Chilean Workers Central (CUT) is born. The National Committee consists of Clotario Blest (President—an independent left-wing Christian), Baudilio Cazanova and Isodoro Godoy (Socialists), and Juan Vargas Puebla (a Communist). The National Council of the CUT consists of two Christian Democrats (a reformist Church-supported party), seven Socialists, a Phalangist, a Communist and four anarcho-syndicalists (Ernesto Miranda, Ramon Dominguez, Hector Duran and Celso Poblete). The unification of the labor movement is followed by a period of unity and action. Manual workers, intellectuals, *campesinos*, students and professional workers join up with the CUT. The workers are developing a consensus towards a confrontation with the bosses and the State. This is reflected in a 15-point program drawn up by the National Council. The CUT develops a campaign of partial work

stoppages, preparing for a general strike. The workers are demanding changes that are social and political as well as economic.

1956 It is in this social climate of rebellion that the national general strike of July 1956 takes place. For 48 hours nothing moves in Chile. Ibanez threatens to resign and give the responsibility for running the country to the CUT. However, 70% of the leaders of the CUT are of the marxist parties. Ibanez calls upon the left-wing parties for a solution to the crisis. The parties of the left ask the leaders of the CUT to call off the general strike. A committee is set up by the CUT, headed by the CUT president, Clotario Blest. When the committee presents a list of demands to the Ibanez government, Ibanez demands that the workers return to work before he will respond. With the Communists, Socialists and Radicals supporting this proposal, the general strike is called off. The four anarcho-syndicalists on the National Council protest that the strike should not be called off without first consulting the rank-and-file, but they are overruled. The return to work creates disorientation and demoralization. Having gained nothing, Chilean workers cannot understand why they should return to work.

1957 A new general strike is called, to back up the original demands made during the July 1956 general strike, which had not yet been fulfilled. This strike is a failure and the government responds with strong repressive measures. After this experience, the four anarcho-syndicalist members resign from the National Council.

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Clotario Blest

The 1956 general strike, and its aftermath, demonstrated the destructive role of the political parties, which prevented revolutionary unionism from accomplishing its work of social transformation. The interests of the political parties were successfully imposed above those of the workers. After 1957, the CUT became a fish pond, with the parties fighting for control of the unions. Under the government of Allende, the CUT continued as an arena for the manipulations of the marxist political parties, and the Christian Democrats perfected their competition for control, as well.

— *Coordinadora Libertaria
Latino-Americana*