

APPENDIX TO THE ENGLISH CANADIAN NATIONAL BUREAU MINUTES of November 24, 1977

REPORT ON THE CHILEAN LEFT..... by Foco

In the report delivered to the Bureau several weeks ago, we noted the appearance of a political opening for the Trotskyist movement within the Chilean exile community. This opening took the form of the appearance of the LOC support group in Edmonton, which derived from the crisis of the MIR.

We also noted that the crisis within the Chilean left was part of a more generalized crisis of the Latin American vanguard, revolving around such questions as the defeat of the Popular Unity, the failure of guerrillaism, the fiasco of left Peronism, the role of Castroism, and so on. The report noted that this situation provided important opportunities for Trotskyism to expand its forces. It also pointed out that the Stalinists would capitalize on these developments if the Fourth International could not project itself as a political pole in the emerging debates and discussions.

The report also noted the existence of a large and significant Chilean exile community in Canada, which placed the Canadian section in a special position with regard to these opportunities. For us, the report argued, this was a unique opportunity to make a contribution to building the Fourth International both inside and outside the borders of the Canadian state.

Since that report was given, the LOC^{*} support group has increased its membership threefold, expanding into a number of cities in the Prairies. The problem of developing a strong organic relationship with this group is today posed even more strongly than before.

In the previous report we noted the importance of building a strong LOC group in Canada, and especially of aiding the development of a Trotskyist cadre. In this process it would be essential for the LOC comrades to have all the autonomy of action and political authority to work out their political line and lead the intervention. At the same time, we expressed our desire to have a close working relationship, an organic relationship, with these militants.

This is, in my mind, a good general approach to the problem. But it is only that...i.e., a general approach. It is a starting point, but only a starting point. All that it says is that the LOC will lead the Chilean work. This tells us no more about how we can help build the LOC than it does to say to the LOC that the RWL will lead the ^{**}work. That says nothing to the LOC about how they can help to build the RWL. ^{**}Canadian

What we project is the eventual expansion of the LOC right across Canada and Quebec. We project the LOC will exist parallel to the RWL right across the country, and that it will be organically connected to the organization. But for this to happen it is not enough that we recognize the existence of the LOC and its authority over the Chilean work. We must understand that work...what the LOC is trying to do...what is its political line...how it is building itself. The fact that the Edmonton branch is on top of this today is purely accidental. The responsibility clearly lies with the Bureau and the PC which, in the not so distant future, will probably be required to deal with the LOC leadership in a more direct fashion. The purpose of this report is to begin this process.

* Communist League of Chile

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Origins of the Crisis of the Chilean Left

The crisis of the MIR, which gave rise to the initial LOC grouping in Edmonton, is not unique to the MIR. It exists in all of the parties of the Chilean left, with the exception of the Communist Party. This crisis has two sources. The first is the defeat of the Popular Unity and the Chilean workers movement in 1973. The second is the current impasse of the left...its groping for a strategy to overthrow the dictatorship in Chile.

The development of a crisis in the Popular Unity was evident even before the overthrow of the Allende regime. With the escalation of the ^{class} struggle through 1971-72, the bosses strike in late 1972, the rise of the Cordones Industriales and Comandos Comunales, the demonstrations of the right and the counterdemonstrations of the left, political polarizations and divisions began to appear within the UP. It is well known that there were political divisions within the Socialist Party and the MAPU, two of the government parties. With the sharpening of the class struggle, these divisions began to appear publicly in struggles that ran counter to the UP. As early as May of 1972, there was a demonstration in Concepcion organized by five UP parties and the MIR. Under orders from the city's communist mayor, police opened fire on the demonstration. Later in the year, the non-CP UP parties in that city again joined with the MIR in launching a Peoples Assembly to fight the mobilizations of the right wing.

In January 1973, the Communist Economics Minister Orlando Millas introduced a proposal that actually entertained the idea of returning factories to the bosses that had been taken over by the workers during the bosses strike. The MAPU Political Committee criticized this proposal. Less than a week later fifteen of its leaders were expelled, including nine members of the CC and six of the PC, for their "divisionist activities" and for having contacts with "ultraleftist sectors outside the UP".

There are many other examples; these are only a few. The divisions within the UP, which tended to polarize especially the MAPU and SP internally into revolutionary and reformist camps, was already proceeding before the coup.

The Socialist Party and MAPU

The Communist Party, which was the leading force in the Popular Unity coalition, was and is well-organized and has a high degree of ideological consistency. Its political line is classically Menshevik: a peaceful evolution to socialism; two-stage revolution; the parliamentary and constitutional road. The Socialist Party and MAPU (United Popular Action Movement) were and are less **stable** formations, and are deeply affected by the crisis of the Chilean left.

The Socialist Party has a history that stretches back to the early thirties. This party was never attached to the Second International and has always had a strong left wing. In its 1957 congress it declared its goal to be the construction of a marxist-leninist revolutionary party.

The MAPU is a younger party. It was created in a split from the Christian Democrats in 1969, of people disillusioned by the failure of the Frei CD government. The Frei government came to power because of its populist appeals and its proposed agrarian reform program and exited from power in a campaign of bloody repression against the workers and popular sectors.

From the very beginning there were two lines within the MAPU. One stood for the construction of a Christian left party which would be integrated into a

broad union of the left. The other aspired to be something more than just the Christian humanist component of the left. It wanted to build a revolutionary proletarian party.

In its first congress, held two months after the election of Allende, the MAPU began to define its ideological positions. It criticized the Communist Party as reformist and characterized the CP's orientation as popular frontist. It accused the CP of avoiding the question of state power. It also described the revolutionary process as having an "uninterrupted character in which the democratic and socialist tasks must be combined".

In other respects, however, its line was weak. For the success of the revolutionary process the MAPU declared it was essential to have the support of the advanced sectors of the Christian Democracy. It assumed that this support would be forthcoming because these sectors would be attracted by the anti-imperialist measures of a revolutionary government. Another weakness was the MAPU's insistence on pressuring the Popular Unity government from within the framework of the popular unity...there is a fear of isolation from the popular movement that runs throughout the declarations of MAPU.

Following the First Congress there was a battle between the reformist and revolutionary currents in the party, which resulted in the split of the reformists from the party. This split, together with the deepening radicalization in the Chilean working class, brought about a further evolution in the ideological definition of MAPU. At its Second Congress in December of 1972, this evolution is quite clear.

I want to devote some time to explaining the programmatic definition achieved by the MAPU at its 1972 Congress. This will help comrades to understand the degree to which this Party (as well as some other sectors of the UP) were affected by the radicalization. What I will do is read a series of excerpts from the main Congress resolution, without editorial comment.

Second Congress

"The proletariat has one task only: to put an end to the capitalist system of production, to all exploitation of man by man..."

"...the complete and final victory of the proletariat can not be obtained in one leap. This victory begins with the destruction of the state power of the bourgeoisie and the construction by the proletariat of its own state power."

"Socialism is the installation at the national level of the collective power of decision making over the means of production, the work force and social surplus. A collective power exercised directly by the popular masses led by the working class organized as the State."

"The revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which is the Proletarian State--the Socialist State--will in no sense be a tyrannical regime. It will simply be the collective defense of the economic authority of the proletariat and the people against all attempts of the old ruling class to return to power, and against all possibility for the appearance of a new exploiting minority. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat implies, on the one hand, the most democratic relation ever known between leaders and the people, the elimination of all political repression...and on the other hand the energetic suppression by the masses of all attempts to re-impose bourgeois oppression or a new oppressive regime."

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Socialism cannot be built in one country. "The enormous development of the productive forces which it requires cannot be achieved in an isolated country like Chile, but only at the level of the whole world. The definitive victory of the Chilean proletariat or in any other country cannot be achieved except through the triumph of the socialist revolution in the most advanced countries, that is to say, the imperialist countries of Europe, Japan and the United States...."

Noting the October revolution of 1917, the resolution goes on to say that, "Fourteen States have succeeded in overthrowing the bourgeoisie and have begun to explore new paths." Then it points out that, "The denunciations of Stalinism have exposed, before the face of the world, the immense danger of bureaucratic degeneration and the chauvinism connected with it." These regimes are still fraught with contradictions, the resolution notes. "Within each one of these blocks new contradictions have arisen, bursting out sharply in the Chinese Cultural Revolution of 1966-71 on the one hand, and in the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact in 1968 on the other."

The resolution also denounces peaceful coexistence, arguing that "the only guarantee of world peace is to forcefully advance the world Socialist Revolution."

"The most important aspect of the subjective weakness of the proletariat is the absence of an international political leadership, marxist, socialist and revolutionary. The MAPU considers it part of its internationalist responsibility to contribute to the greatest extent possible to filling this gap, at least in our continent." It then notes that "the MAPU rejects all subordination of the Chilean Revolution to the interests of any existing international political center," a clear reference to the USSR and (perhaps) China.

Thesis 29 of the Second Congress resolution clarifies an ambiguity in the program of the First Congress regarding the character of the Revolution:

"The Chilean revolution is socialist from beginning to end, and does not need to pass through an 'antimonopoly and anti-imperialist stage', which once established and 'consolidated' could then pass on to another 'socialist stage'."

"...the revolution does not occur as an idyllic evolutionary process....it is a sharp break and not an evolution...."

There are several theses on the subject of building a revolutionary party. It is here that the MAPU's conceptions begin to depart from revolutionary marxism. The resolution begins by tracing the origins and evolution of the workers movement and its political organizations. It arrives at the present period, and argues that today there are two camps within the workers movement: one with an authentically proletarian line which characterizes the revolution as socialist and uninterrupted; the other is a gradualist, centrist current which projects a revolution by stages and the peaceful road to socialism.

Then, the resolution expresses the desire of the MAPU to build a vanguard party on the basis of the revolutionary line. But-- the MAPU asserts that it is not possible today to build an authentically revolutionary movement, in our country, outside of the understanding and joint action of all those Parties and forces which in one way or another express proletarian positions, and in particular, outside of the understanding between the CP, the SP and the MAPU."

It goes on to say that the MAPU will never capitulate to gradualism, etc. But the

main point has already been made. The MAPU refuses to draw a sharp line between itself and the reformist camp.

What seems to be lacking is a clear conception of the revolutionary marxist party and of the united front policy. There is a kind of centrist eclecticism in the Party's ideology, which is even reflected in the political tradition it identifies with. In defining the 'marxism-leninism' it wants to base itself on, the MAPU refers to Marx, and to his principle continuators, "in the first place Engels and Lenin, and moreover Trotsky, Gramsci, Luxembourg and Mao Tse Tung."

The SP and MAPU Today

The unclarity within the MAPU regarding the nature of the Popular Unity and how to construct a revolutionary party left the Party disarmed in the face of the class struggle. The MAPU remained within the UP right up until the coup and even for a number of years following. The central leadership grouping (the Garreton faction) simply ignored the Second Congress line, and concentrated its attention on striking out at the Party's left wing. Utilizing bureaucratic and repressive measures, the leadership managed to disorganize the left for a long period of time.

Today it is no longer possible for the Garreton faction to play this role. This was illustrated by the recent conference of MAPU exile organizations called together by the reformist faction. Organizations of MAPU representing more than 80 per cent of the exile membership boycotted this congress, including the delegations from Germany, Canada, Sweden, England, Denmark, Norway and France. By breaking with the reformist faction, the left has now cleared the way to win the majority of the party to revolutionary positions.

In the current debate in MAPU there are two main positions: Trotskyism and Maoism. The debates are on such questions as the characterization of the Soviet Union (a deformed workers state or social imperialist), what type of party and what international alliances, as well as the strategic line for Chile.

The situation in the Socialist Party is similar. There is a public split between the reformist leadership and the left wing. The strongest segment of the SP left wing is the Coordinadora (which stands for National Coordinator of Regions.)

The SP (C) originated after the coup. The SP suffered perhaps more than any other workers party following the coup. This stemmed from the fact that the SP had been constructed as an electoral machine comprised of numerous factions and little centralization. The top leadership was completely disorganized, in flight or destroyed by the coup. When the SP militants began to reorganize the party after the defeat, they began to work from the base up. Eventually a coordinating body was created to help guide the activity of the local and regional organizations. This is the Coordinadora. It now has its supporter groups in exile, including in Canada.

The Coordinadora has been discussing what type of party the SP should be. It has been moving towards the conception of a more highly centralized cadre party. All of the programmatic texts I have seen that come from the Coordinadora are quite ambiguous. I don't feel sufficiently informed to really assess its ideological positions.

It is clear, however, that the Coordinadora and MAPU take a correct line on

What is the central debate today. What strategy to overthrow the Dictatorship?

Overthrowing the Dictatorship

It is public knowledge that the CP is pursuing a policy today that seeks an alliance with Frei and the Christian Democrats and with the "patriotic" sectors of the military. The CP seeks a change of government, no matter how limited, that gets Pinochet out of power. It has promised to cooperate with all forces seeking such a change.

In order to facilitate bourgeois acceptance of this alliance, the CP is attempting to purge the left within and outside of the UP. It has launched a series of vicious attacks on the MIR, calling it the "trojan horse of imperialism" within the Chilean workers movement, and on the MAPU and SP left.

The situation in the MAPU and the SP is similar. In both cases the CP has been establishing alliances with rightist factions in order to isolate, marginalize and expel left-wing forces who oppose the class collaborationist course of the UP.

The lesson that the CP drew from the experience of the UP government and the coup was simply that the UP had proceeded too quickly. The UP was too radical and went too far too quickly. Needless to say, this opinion fits together nicely with the idea of replacing Pinochet with a CD government, which would not frighten the bourgeoisie and bring on another defeat. But for this to happen, there must be some minimum guarantee of social peace...the UP must be able to guarantee cooperation between the working class and the democratic bourgeoisie. That means wiping out the "ultraleftists."

The MAPU left wing, which has now broken with the reformists and apparently has a majority of the party, rejects collaboration with the Christian Democrats to establish a democratic bourgeois government. The Coordinadora likewise rejects this alliance. This places both of these groups objectively outside the UP. These groups will fight together with Christian Democrats in specific struggles for specific goals; but they will not agree to any strategic bloc of the type proposed by the CP.

The MIR, which was until now outside the UP, which despite many ambiguities never mixed its banners with the Popular Unity, has now endorsed the CP line of unity with the Christian Democrats. This has created a profound disorientation in the ranks of the MIR, and now MIR comrades in several countries are coming over to the Fourth International as a result.

The MIR serves objectively to give a left cover to the Popular Unity. In its declarations it prefers to leave ambiguous the object of this new alliance. It tends to argue that the government created when Pinochet is overthrown will be decided by the balance of class forces at that particular moment. It tends to avoid saying that the government will be a bourgeois government. But it has agreed to this new strategic alliance, which is effectively a popular front formation, which seeks to install a bourgeois government.

Line of the LCC

This is the situation into which the Liga Comunista is intervening. It is a very favourable situation, as comrades can see. I spent an especially large amount of time going over the program of MAPU to give a flavor of the possibilities. The decisive element required to unlock this situation is, of course, a clear political line... a line such as that of the LCC. That line is summarized in the governmental formula: For a Workers and Popular Government. (For us, this is identical to Workers and Farmers Government.)

The other important element in the present situation is a non-sectarian policy. The size of the forces gravitating towards revolutionary marxism, represented in the MAPU, Coordinadora, and sections of the MIR is significantly greater than the forces represented by the LCC. In this situation, the strategic perspective for building the revolutionary party must be one of regroupment and convergence.

The LCC expresses this perspective through the tactic of the united front. In the struggle against the dictatorship the LCC wants to work with all forces possible. Towards this end it proposes the construction of an Anti-Fascist United Front. This front would struggle against the dictatorship, for various reforms and liberties, to strengthen the workers movement and weaken the dictatorship. Although it could include the Popular Unity parties, Christian democratic workers, and so forth, it would not be a strategic alliance. All organizations would retain their autonomy and freedom of action.

Whether such a front will actually be realized is a speculative question. The important thing is the idea it involves, namely, that all those who oppose the dictatorship can work together in some measure to weaken its authority and strengthen the workers movement.

This line, of the anti-fascist united front, however, does not yet draw out all of the possibilities inherent in the present situation. In particular, it does not project a credible alternative strategic pole against the UP's project of a new popular front. It does not project the perspective of a convergence of revolutionary forces towards the creation of a unified revolutionary marxist party.

In order to crystallize that perspective, the LCC projects the formation of a permanent and strategic alliance... a Revolutionary United Front. This alliance would contain those forces which base themselves on a proletarian program. 'Proletarian program' is generally understood to include the notions of permanent revolution, the revolutionary road to power, the need for a marxist-leninist party. This revolutionary united front would be the framework for discussions aimed at clarifying political theory and line as well as a vehicle of united action within the anti-fascist front. It is within the framework of this front that the revolutionary party will be constructed. The front is not a substitute for the party but a framework for its formation.

The conditions under which such a front could be constituted do not exist today. The debates within the MAPU and Coordinadora are just beginning and it will be some time before a clearer ideological definition is achieved. It is also hard to judge the possible difficulties that might arise in forming such a front, given that the degree of ideological convergence is not yet defined, nor the forces that would agree to join the front, nor the correlation of forces within it. It is clear, however, that this perspective is a very

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powerful and attractive one for all revolutionary militants who oppose a new popular front. The pressure for unity is great and the need for a revolutionary alternative is evident to many. This is illustrated in the fact that, in the exterior at least, the Coordinadora and the MAPU, as well as sectors of the MIR, are willing to discuss this perspective and other questions of line and program with the LCC and the F.I.

Today, there are objectively two camps, broadly defined, in the Chilean left: the popular frontist and the revolutionary. The former is probably somewhat larger, although I am not at all sure that the difference is any more than quantitative. The task of the Fourth International is to drive a deep political wedge between these camps, and to ideologically clarify the programmatic questions within the revolutionary wing.

Our Task

Today, in Canada, there are discussions taking place between the Montreal branch and the Coordinadora, between the Vancouver branch and the Coordinadora, in Edmonton I believe the LCC is probably having discussions with the Coordinadora and MAPU. In every single branch of the RWL in English Canada, except Toronto, we are having some kind of discussion or collaboration with the MIR. Last night, Pablo and I talked with leaders of the MAPU. In the near future, we will also talk with the Coordinadora.

If we are to take advantage of the opportunities we must be organized. In Montreal we must have the same line as in Vancouver. What the RWL says to the MIR in Regina must parallel what the LCC says to the MIR in Edmonton. This is essential.

In our conversations with the MAPU last night I was struck by what one of its leaders said. He was remarking on the MAPU's failure to resolve the question of its international outlook, its international alliances, despite the great emphasis it puts on internationalism. He said to us that "the MAPU is a young organization and you can't decide these things overnight." "But," he said, "by the same token you can't wait forever. Today we are discussing this question and the two clear poles are Trotskyism and Maoism."

I was absolutely struck by this remark. MAPU is a mass organization, not just a small groupscule. The crisis of the Chilean left is not only an "opening" for Trotskyism and the Fourth International, it is a real challenge. I think it's going to demand a lot of attention from the Canadian section and as well the United Secretariat.

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