The Failure of the Peaceful Road to Socialism: Chile 1970-1973

Trevor Andrew Iles
Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in Political Science at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

Recommended Citation
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/3235
TO: Graduate Degree Candidates who have written formal theses.

SUBJECT: Permission to reproduce theses.

The University Library is receiving a number of requests from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow theses to be copied.

Please sign one of the following statements:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University not allow my thesis be reproduced because

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University not allow my thesis be reproduced because

Date Author

Date Author

dm
THE FAILURE OF THE PEACEFUL ROAD TO SOCIALISM

CHILE 1970–1973

(TITLE)

BY

TREVOR ANDREW ILES

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1978

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

DATE ADVISER

DATE DEPARTMENT HEAD
THE FAILURE OF THE PEACEFUL ROAD TO SOCIALISM

CHILE 1970-73

BY

TREVOR ANDREW ILES

B.A. (Hons) in Political Science
Portsmouth Polytechnic, England, 1976

ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science at the Graduate School
of Eastern Illinois University

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS
1978

363769
On September 4, 1970 Salvador Allende became the first ever democratically elected Marxist president of Chile. In addition he headed a predominantly left-wing coalition government whose program entailed the achieving of socialism by peaceful means.

During the first six months of his administration Allende began to carry out a number of his policies in the areas of agrarian reform, nationalization of industries, and redistribution of income. These policies were populist in nature and succeeded in raising the level of support for the Unidad Popular government as shown by the results of the April 1971 Municipal elections. I argue that the results of the Municipal elections were a "strong mandate" for Allende to progress from populism to a faster and more radical implementation of socialist policies. The reality of the situation, however, was one in which Allende became increasingly reformist and willing to compromise with the opposition. I try to describe and analyze the steadily increasing polarization process which was taking place in Chilean society. The Right, with help from the United States, was slowly beginning to organize itself against Allende by the use of constitutional and violent means. I argue that the United States in particular was instrumental in causing economic disruption and fueling dissatisfaction with the Unidad Popular.

The Right's offensive against the government reached high points in the "Bosses Strike" of October 1972 and the abortive coup d'etat attempted by a section of the armed forces in June 1973. In response to these events, the workers mobilized themselves to defend their communities and factories. However, Allende failed to provide the workers' mobilizations with leadership. Instead, he became increasingly reformist and compromising with his opponents.
During the last year of the Allende administration the polarization process continued to intensify, and it became clear that the Right was committed to the overthrow of the U.P. government. Even so, Allende came to rely increasingly on the armed forces for support, a policy which proved to be extremely naive as he was overthrown by this aforementioned group in September 1973.

Throughout the paper I attempt to analyze the roles played by the respective political actors as the polarization process unfolded, intensified, and culminated in the coup d'etat. Those who come in for special attention include the United States and the M.I.R. (Movement of the Revolutionary Left).

In addition I make a brief study of the left-wing parties in France and Italy at the present time (re: September 1977), and make some tentative comparisons with Chile under Allende, and some predictions for the future.

My main sources of data are books, articles, and newspapers, though I also make use of United States government documents. This thesis is not an empirical study, but is based on closely reasoned arguments which are used to support a particular analytical viewpoint. These arguments are presented in the form of six hypotheses or propositions.
I would like to express my sincere thanks to the faculty of the Political Science Department at Eastern Illinois University for providing me with the opportunity to continue my studies in the field of political science. I appreciate the encouragement they have given me and the interest they have shown in me.

I am also very grateful to the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Jerome Sidwell, Dr. Joe Connelly, and Dr. Margaret Soderberg. In particular I am indebted to Dr. Margaret Soderberg, who was my major advisor, for her advice and encouragement in the writing of my thesis.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE FIRST SIX MONTHS: A POPULIST PROGRAM</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. ALLENDE'S REFORMISM CONTINUES AS THE POLARIZATION</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCESS INTENSIFIES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE FINAL OVERTHROW</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE UNITED STATES' ROLE IN CHILE</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE M.I.R. (MOVEMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. CHILE: TENTATIVE COMPARISONS WITH FRANCE AND ITALY</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

On September 4, 1973 the government of President Salvador Allende of Chile was overthrown in a coup d'etat carried out by the armed forces. There were a number of forces and factors at work during the three years of Allende's administration which contributed to the overthrow. In this paper I will try to observe, describe, and most importantly, analyze those which I feel were the most significant. The Unidad Popular and the revolutionary left. The Christian Democrats, the Right and the United States. I intend to investigate and evaluate the role that each of these actors played.

An analysis of the political situation in Chile between 1970 and 1973 is my main objective, however, it is going to be an analysis conducted from the standpoint of being heavily critical of the Unidad Popular and President Salvador Allende. Critical in terms of the government being too moderate, too slow to carry out policies and far too willing to compromise with the opposition. Throughout the paper I implicitly and explicitly argue that the Left, in general, and Allende, in particular, should adopt a faster and more revolutionary-orientated strategy for gaining complete state power.

In the final chapter I attempt to make some tentative comparisons and predictions concerning the present situations in Italy and France (October 1977), as they relate to Chile during Allende's administration.

For the purposes of studying the issues which I have mentioned above I formulated a set of six hypotheses or propositions. These two
terms will be used synonomously and the use of the former is not meant to imply that these positions are based on a rigorous empirical study.

1) The period immediately after the April 1971 Municipal elections was an opportune time for Allende to press forward quickly with the Unidad Popular (U.P.) program. The fact that he failed to do so not only showed that his policies were basically reformist, but also that his analysis of the deepening class struggle was incorrect.

2) As the polarization process intensified Allende became increasingly reformist and more compromising towards the opposition, causing him to miss another opportunity to move towards the building of a socialist society.

3) Allende misunderstood the intensifying nature of the class struggle, and as a result of this, became increasingly reliant on the armed forces and hence helped bring about his own downfall and that of the working class.

4) The U.S. was directly and indirectly involved in the build-up to the coup in Chile and although it was not solely responsible for the overthrow, its role must in no way be underestimated.

5) Although the M.I.R.'s activities caused the U.P. to move to the left on certain occasions, it cannot be held responsible for provoking the Rightist offensive.

6) The "via Chilena" has important implications for European leftists' attempts to come to power, although any comparisons and speculations can only be of the most tentative nature at the present time.

The ideas for these propositions came out of the almost unique and intriguing aspects connected with the "Chilean experience" of 1970-73. Chile can be classified as a developing nation, however, its history and character seemed not unlike those of Western democracies. Into this system came the first democratically elected Marxist president, heading a left-wing coalition and seemingly dedicated to transforming Chile into a socialist society by peaceful means. Almost the whole of the world's eyes
focused on this tiny country to see if such a unique experiment could succeed. Not only was it of interest to revolutionaries, but the effect of its success or failure would be important, domestically, to left-wing parties throughout Latin America and Europe.

This interest was reflected in the many books and articles written about the situation in Chile. From my viewpoint one of the most important of these is Revolution and Counter-Revolution, eds., Paul M. Sweezy and Harry Magdoff (New York: Monthly review Press, 1974).

This book contains articles that had previously been published in the independent socialist magazine, "Monthly Review." Most of the articles were written before the coup and hence were not written with the benefit of hindsight. However, this has not detracted from the book's analytical qualities or from its usefulness as a historical record.

One of the main themes throughout the book is the question of power; an absolutely fundamental and extremely important question in any revolutionary situation. The Popular Unity (U.P.) government controlled only the executive, and the other branches of government, the legislative, judiciary and armed forces were in the hands of the opposition. These could be used as bases from which to counter-attack the U.P. and overthrow it. As Zimblast and Stallings point out in a later chapter, Allende never really worked out a rigorous plan by which to take complete state control. The book unfolds in a historical manner and Allende and the U.P. are criticized for their misconceptions concerning the peaceful road to socialism. The editors consistently maintain that at some point in the revolutionary process, violent confrontation is inevitable. However, Allende failed to realize or prepare for it.

This source compliments Sweezy and Magdoff's collection and is an extremely useful book in itself as it consists of a collection of articles taken mainly from the international Trotskyist news magazine, Intercontinental Press. As with Revolution and Counter-revolution, most of the articles in this book were written at the time the particular events took place. Given that as the case, the Trotskyist predictions throughout the book are remarkably accurate. The articles stress the reformist nature of the U.P., and in particular the CP, and how by their policies, they are betraying their own followers—the workers. Other themes revolve around the inevitability of violent confrontation, and the need for a popular militia and a mass revolutionary party. The writers in this book are heavily critical of Allende, more so than Sweezy and Magdoff, for not reacting decisively to the dynamics of the class struggle.

This book makes no pretense of offering a balanced argument, but is in fact an analysis of the situation from a mainly Trotskyist viewpoint. However, this should no way detract from its literary importance in this field.

No review of literature in this field would be complete without this next book as it constitutes a valuable source of background information on Salvador Allende.


The main part of this book consists of a dialogue between Regis Debray and Salvador Allende, which took place in January 1971. Consequently, then, this book is different from the preceding two, as it does not offer a historical record or an analysis of the Chilean experience.
However, it is an important book in that it enables one to gain an insight into the background, thoughts and ideas of the founder of the Socialist Party and recently confirmed President of Chile. Debray asks Allende the questions any revolutionary would pose, and which events were later to answer. Can the peaceful road to socialism succeed? Is violent confrontation inevitable, and if so, how will you face it? Allende's responses are generally optimistic even in his appraisal of the future actions of the armed forces and the United States.

The reader comes away with an impression of a sincere, dedicated man who believes that he can lead Chile to socialism, though obviously in retrospect, some of his ideas and strategies seem heavily tinged with naivety.

James Petras has written a number of interesting articles on Chile, and he has also collaborated with Morris Morley to produce a book which documents and analyzes the United States involvement in Chile.


This book is the answer to the apologists who have minimized the United States' role in Chile. Petras and Morley argue otherwise—that in fact the U.S. was deeply involved in the overthrow of Allende. For the most part they support their arguments with congressional hearings, mass media accounts, and interviews with U.S. officials. However, on certain occasions their rhetoric becomes too ambitious in that some of their claims are not substantiated by reference to a primary source. Nevertheless, on the whole, this is a convincing book, as the authors put Chilean-U.S. relations in their historical perspective and also relate to the larger
Latin American context (especially Peru and Brazil). The authors build up a realistic picture of U.S. machinations against Chile and the effect this had on causing economic and social disruption, political polarization and eventually the coup d'etat.

This book, then, constitutes another piece of material to augment the already existing literature on America's global imperialist activities. U.S. imperialism is also dealt with in the work done by the North American Congress on Latin America (N.A.C.L.A.)


This book was prepared by the North American Congress on Latin America (N.A.C.L.A.), a radical research group, and it acquaints the reader with some of the most important issues surrounding the victory of the U.P. in the 1970 elections. The two main sections of the book are entitled, "The First Year," and "Imperialism and the Old Order." The first section covers the first twelve months of the U.P. government, and not only does it serve as a useful historical record of this period, but it also makes clear its anti-imperialistic viewpoint. This is especially noticeable in the articles entitled "The Enemy Within--The Right Responds," and "The Carrot and the Stick--U.S. Aid." This theme is continued in the second section under titles such as "Brought to You by Uncle Sam," and "The Story of Copper and Imperialism." This section is further supplemented by some extremely informative material concerning agrarian land reform. The N.A.C.L.A researchers also contributed some much needed information on the M.I.R. This book contains an article on their activities during the early period of the U.P. government and their official response to the U.P. victory in 1970.
Much "grass roots" research has gone into this book and it provides a good perspective from which to view and undertake further research on the U.P. government and Chilean politics as a whole.


This is one of the more recent books to be written on the Allende period in Chile, and the contributions in this book originally arose out of a series of specialist seminars held at the Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Glasgow. Viewing the articles as a whole, the final effect is to provide a very comprehensive coverage of Chilean politics and society. The first chapter gives an overall analysis of the Chilean class structure and class politics. From this background position the book concentrates on four main areas. An analysis of the main policies of the U.P. government; the response of the working classes; the tactics and strategy of those opposed to the U.P. government; and finally, a brief account of what has been happening in Chile since the coup, and the main lessons to be drawn from the Chilean experience.

Like Revolution and Counter Revolution, and Disaster in Chile, this collection of articles, on the whole, analyzes the situation from a particular viewpoint. This tends to be one which is often critical of Allende and his failure to move at a faster pace and more decisively towards socialism. In contrast to the writers in the books mentioned above, O'Brien, at times, tends to be more supportive of the U.P.'s overall objectives.

Most of the articles are detailed and well-documented, and all of them were written with the benefit of hindsight. An extremely interesting and useful collection of articles.
Although I have already given a brief introduction, in order to more clearly understand the political situation in Chile during the U.P. government, a brief understanding of the historical background is also necessary.

As I am not attempting to give a thorough historical analysis of Chilean politics, I will only go back as far as 1938, the year of the Popular Front's election victory. The Popular Front was a very broad alliance indeed and was composed of radicals, socialists, democrats (members of the Democratic Party), and communists, who came together in the wake of severe repressive measures meted out by President Alessandri. Not only this but there was a substantial Nazi movement operating in Chile at this time, and consequently, the Popular Front's specific aim was to campaign to ensure the election of a candidate who believed in democracy.

The Popular Front ruled for the next fourteen years in a number of different guises, with each government being more conservative than the last. From this the socialist Left of the 1970's learned an important lesson, "not to accept as presidential candidate, someone from the least revolutionary of the parties even though that person might have widespread popular support."1 Pedro Aguirre Cerda, who was elected President on October 25, 1938, typified this. He was a member of the Radical Party; the party which supplied 35 percent of the Popular Front's strength in Congress and held six of eleven cabinet posts. Cerda and other bourgeois elements in the Front were afraid of being too radical in their program and hence nothing really changed. The masses, who's ideals and hopes had voted the Front into power, were seriously disillusioned. In addition, the Left were not united at this time and consequently, no mass mobiliza-
tions were organized to protest against the leadership. Another lesson that the socialist Left in the 1970's should have learned more keenly from this was that, "the unity of the working class and other democratic forces cannot be sustained only by the means of pacts and agreements made at leadership levels, but that it is the continuous organization and mobilization of the working class that really counts."\(^2\)

The masses, then, became very disillusioned with the Popular Front and this feeling of disenchantment helped to usher in Carlos Ibanez (a former dictator of Chile), as president in 1952. He served as head of the government until 1958, during which time he tied the Chilean economy more and more closely to the United States. However, depression, social instability and inflation worsened after World War II, and the IMF's plan of austerity was not welcomed by the Chilean workers. In 1954 and 1955 the number of strikes continued to rise, and these elicited hard repressive measures from Ibanez. Going into the 1958 election campaign a large section of the Chilean population were disenchanted with the prevailing socio-economic conditions and Ibanez's repressive policies and capitalist experiments. The Left became united as the Popular Action Front (F.R.A.P.). In the election, Salvador Allende, founder of the Socialist Party, and losing presidential candidate in 1952, came very close to winning. This election also brought into prominence, Eduardo Frei, founder of the Christian Democratic Party, who garnered 21 percent of the vote. However, Jorge Alessandri, the candidate of the Right, became president, beating Allende by only 33,500 votes. In 1964 F.R.A.P. again contested the elections; this time it consisted mainly of the Communist and Socialist parties, plus the addition of the Radical Party, and some small independent left-
wing forces. However, Eduardo Frei, the candidate of the Christian Demo-
crats, won a convincing victory with 56.1 percent of the vote, as against
Allende's 38.9 percent. 3

During the 1960's the F.R.A.P. disintegrated, and in 1969 a new
alliance was born, Popular Unity. Its composition was to change slightly
during its period in government; however, its original membership was as
follows: the three main parties were the Communist Party (CP), Socialist
Party (PS), and the Radical Party (PR). In addition, there were three
movements: United People's Action Movement (M.A.P.U.), a leftist offshoot
of the Christian Democratic Party; Independent People's Action (A.P.I.);
and the Social Democrats. The latter two movements are both micro-
organizations of the center-left. 4 In 1970 this coalition contested the
elections and this time Allende won a plurality of the popular vote and
became President-elect of Chile.

The results of the 1970 Presidential election were: 5

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allende</td>
<td>1,070,334</td>
<td>(36.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alessandri</td>
<td>1,031,159</td>
<td>(34.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomic</td>
<td>821,801</td>
<td>(27.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Null and Blank</td>
<td>821,801</td>
<td>(1.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The U.P., though, should not be seen as a direct descendant of the
1938 Popular Front, because in actual fact there was substantial difference
between them. The latter was a broad coalition of parties and platforms
which came together to fight fascism. Also, it never envisaged the destruc-
tion of capitalism, as its succession of conservative leaders and policies
showed. The Popular Unity was a more unified and cohesive coalition, which
broadly agreed on its objectives, the carrying out of the U.P. program and
a move towards socialism in Chile. 6 The Popular Front of 1938, though,
can be credited with helping to set a historical precedent, of sorts, for
the U.P., and also to give it a chance to learn from their failures.

In terms of trying to given an historical introduction to the
Popular Unity period, I think it is also necessary to briefly discuss the
seemingly paradoxical situation in which the Communist Party were politi-
cally to the right of the Socialists. The CP was founded back in June
1912 under the name of the Socialist Workers Party (POS), and it was not
until after the Russian Revolution in 1917 that they became the Communist
Party of Chile. 7 It took another ten years before they adopted the
Leninist doctrine of democratic centralism. The CP was the first nation-
wide working class organization in Chile and it built up strong support
in the trade unions.

In 1933 a new force emerged on the Left in chile, the Socialist
Party, and its origins required it to occupy a position to the left of
the CP.

In 1931 Ibanez' first administration was overthrown and the CP had
become very noticeable as a result of the Stalinist-Trotskyist feud in the
Comintern. 8 Eventually, then, the Trotskyite elements split from the
Chilean CP and left them to their Stalinist line. The Trotskyists joined
with a number of other left-wing groups to form the Socialist Party. Pre-
viously these groups had separately supported the twelve-day Republic of
Marmeduke Grove and Eugenio Matte in 1932. The Socialist Party, then, was
mainly made up of those whose ideological affiliation was to the left of
Stalin, and although the SP was Marxist, it did not follow the doctrine
of democratic centralism. 9
FOOTNOTES


2 Kate Clark, Chile: Reality and Prospects of Popular Unity (London: Lawrence and Wisehart, 1972), p. 38.


6 Clark, p. 42.

7 Gil, p. 55.

8 Ibid., pp. 64-65.

9 Clark, p. 36.
CHAPTER I

THE FIRST SIX MONTHS: A POPULIST PROGRAM

Hypothesis: The period immediately after the April 1971 Municipal elections was an opportune time for Allende to press forward quickly with the Unidad Popular (U.P.) program. The fact that he failed to do so, not only showed that his policies were basically reformist, but also that his analysis of the deepening class struggle was incorrect.

With the electoral victory of Allende in September 1970 and his ratification by Congress in the following November, Chile, at least potentially, moved into the beginnings of the road towards socialism. However, this potential was not developed by Allende and the U.P., and in reality they carried out what were basically reformist policies. The only sectors who recognized the urgency of pushing forward quickly through this prerevolutionary stage were the "ultra-left," which included the left-wing of the Socialist Party, the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left), and the masses who supported them.

The use of the term, "reformist," here does not mean that Allende's policies were exactly the same as Frei's had been. Whereas Frei's "Revolution in Liberty" had been openly reformist, the U.P. program had underlying potential to move toward some rearrangement of social forces. As James Petras said, "By the middle of 1971, the government had taken a series of measures which, while in themselves not implying a qualitative change in social relations, definitely pointed in that direction."
In this chapter I intend to study the policies and programs of the U.P. from September 1970 until shortly after the April 1971 municipal elections. I will try to show that during this period, although the policies Allende carried out were reformist in nature, in the context of the Chilean political environment, many of them did represent a step forward for the working classes. However, I also intend to show that although they were a step forward for the workers, Allende's analysis of the situation prevented the qualitative acceleration of this process and the construction of a through-going socialist program. It was stated in the Unidad Popular Program of Government that the, "new economy...will play an extremely important role." Consequently, it is on this that I will initially concentrate. Three types of economic areas were envisaged, the first one being the "Area of Social Property." This entailed the construction of a dominant state area made up of already-controlled state enterprises plus those that were to be expropriated. Initially this called for the nationalization of the basic sources of wealth in Chile, i.e., the large mining companies of copper, iron, nitrate and others, which were controlled by foreign capital and internal monopolies. Into this area of nationalized activities will be integrated the following sectors:

1. The large mining companies of copper, nitrate, iodine, iron and coal;
2. The country's financial system, especially private banks and insurance companies;
3. Foreign trade;
4. The great distribution enterprises and monopolies;
5. The strategic industrial monopolies;
6. In general, all those activities which determine the country's economic and social development such as the production and distribution of electrical energy; rail, air and maritime transportation; communications; the production, refining and distribution of petroleum and its derivatives--including bottled gas; iron and steel production; cement, petrochemicals and heavy chemicals, cellulose and paper.
The other two economic areas were private property and mixed property, respectively. The former category would consist of all sectors of industry, mining, agriculture and services other than those which had "controlled the market monopolistically, monopolizing state aid and bank credit and exploiting the other industrial enterprises of the country."^5

The third area, the "Mixed Area," involved a partnership between private and state enterprises. This plan to construct a new economy was seen as the mainstay of the U.P. program, though some of its other objectives must also be briefly discussed. Income redistribution by means of wage and price policies, in the direction of the lower levels of the population, is one of these. In the domestic field the U.P.'s third major commitment was to carry out large-scale agrarian reform, primarily by breaking up the latifundios. In terms of foreign policy and international objectives, Allende pledged "complete political and economic autonomy of Chile...diplomatic relations with all the countries of the world irrespective of their political position and ideology...more national independence...and international solidarity with people's struggle for liberation..."^6

The rhetoric of the U.P. program may sound revolutionary and may sound socialist, but in terms of the spirit in which its measures were interpreted and implemented, they remained populist and reformist. This should come as no surprise if one studies the programs and their implementation, and Allende's political background. Allende was the founder of the Chilean Socialist Party, and was also its perennial candidate for President since 1952, at the head of varying coalitions.^7 In addition he had also been a senator for twenty-five years.^8 Allende himself, then, was
steeped in democratic traditions and had functioned with and within bourgeois political institutions. Consequently then, when Congress imposed constitutional limitations upon Allende, as part of the bargain for his ratification as president, he accepted them. These conditions or constitutional amendments were proposed by the Christian Democratic Party. These involved: the non-interference by the president in the army, navy, air force, or carabineros; non-interference with the press, radio, schools, unions, etc., and significantly, the recognition of the unconstitutionality of "private militias." As Dudley Seers pointed out, "Allende pledged that he would respect the constitutional guarantees....These were not difficult pledges to give. He was already committed to constitutionality." The opposition parties in congress did not insist on these constitutional guarantees because they thought that without them, Allende would overthrow the existing system. Obviously not, because, if they viewed Allende as a true revolutionary, they would not have wasted their time drawing up what would have been, worthless constitutional amendments. However, they knew from his background that a complete overthrow of capitalism was not a point of contention. Their aim was to shift certain constitutional powers away from the presidency and towards them--thereby strengthening their position for the future.

The reformism and respect for legal and democratic processes was reflected in the make-up of the Unidad Popular coalition. Some writers, such as Les Evans, exaggerate the reformist effects the A.P.I. (Independent Peoples Action) and the Radical Party had on the U.P. coalition. Admittedly the API was a center-left group and the Radical Party was bourgeois, bent on political opportunism. However, these two groups did not form a large percentage of the total U.P. coalition. The two main parties, the
Socialists and the Communists, were solidly based on the working class. I agree with Evans though that the U.P. was not socialist in practice, but in fact, reformist. Given the rhetoric of the program, however, and the increasing radicalization of the masses, stagnation at the beginning of the prerevolutionary stage was not inevitable. Notwithstanding Allende himself, Evans saw the brake as being the bourgeois parties in the coalition, whereas I would maintain that the Chilean Communist Party was best suited to fit this role as explained in the introduction. The C.P. was in many ways the most highly organized and powerful party in the coalition; however, it was also to the right of Allende's Socialist Party. Even more than the S.P. leadership, the C.P. stressed constitutionality and legalism, and was prone to advocate slower rather than faster implementation of the U.P. program. As Kyle Steenland put it, "The attitude of the C.P. has crippled the U.P." 

Reformism, then, was seemingly built into the institutional and ideological framework of the coalition. However, as will be seen, this reformism was underlayed by a potential to move in a socialist direction. Consequently, although the measures of the first six months can be criticized for their reformism, early reforms could have been used as a base to move more rapidly towards increased state power and the construction of socialism. This became increasingly clear upon studying the measures carried out by the U.P. during the first six months.

A number of popular measures were initiated almost immediately, such as wage increases of at least 30 percent for workers and lower-level salaried employees, coupled with a simultaneous freezing of prices. Health services were improved; a number of political prisoners were freed and riot police were abandoned. And "in December 1970 Allende began his well-
publicized free distribution of half a liter of milk for all children. In November and December the U.P. gave away land for popular resorts to poor schools and to the central labor council.\(^{13}\) From this necessary popular politiking, Allende's aim was to extend his electoral victory by implementing short-run economic measures which would consolidate his present support and also attract new support.

In terms of agrarian reform the U.P. promised the Chilean peasantry, "a real agrarian reform, which would fulfill the betrayed pledges of the Christian Democrats, while deepening and extending the rural revolution."\(^{14}\) During the first six months the U.P. appropriated 3.5 million acres of land, which represented almost 40 percent of the land area that the Christian Democrats expropriated in six years. Its avowed aim was to end all latifundism by 1973. The U.P. reforms in the area of land reform represented an advance for the agricultural workers and peasants. However, the above figures must be viewed in the light of the fact that this was not really a change from the policy of Eduardo Frei, but merely an extension of it. In fact, the land was expropriated under the terms of the P.D.C.'s own land reform law of 1967. In addition, Allende assured landowners that they would be paid compensation for their land. Land reform under Allende, then, cannot be viewed as a socialistic measure, but more of a social democratic measure.

As so often was to be the case, Allende found that his reformism (however much he felt it was orientated towards the workers and peasants), lagged behind the dynamism of the masses. This was clearly shown by the "illegal" land seizures which began almost immediately after the U.P. came to power and continued at an increasing pace. MacEoin notes that, "By early 1971, hundreds of farms were being seized each month by groups of
peasants." These land seizures centered around the southern province of Cautín, which had Chile's largest concentration of Indians, the country's densest and poorest rural population, and the highest incidence of rural unemployment. The mobilization of the Indians and peasants was organized in part by a section of the MIR, about whom more will be discussed later. In order not to lose the strong support that they commanded from the masses, the U.P. was pressured by these events to speed up the expropriation process, and also to refrain from using actual physical force to prevent these seizures. After a time, however, Jose Toha, the U.P. Minister of the Interior, gave a warning that "the government of President Senor Allende would act vigorously against any armed group operating in rural areas." Mining industries were also expropriated by the U.P. within the first six months; the most important being the huge U.S.-owned copper mines, the latter being nationalized by the middle of July 1971. In much of the North American press, nationalization is synonymous with socialism, however, this was certainly not the case in Chile. Almost all sectors of Chilean society agreed upon the need to nationalize copper in terms of furthering national industrial development and reducing dependence upon foreign capital. The consensus that existed in relation to these measures was begun under Frei's government, by virtue of their Chileanization process. This was extended under the U.P.'s governmental program. However, as Laurence Whitehead pointed out, "...total copper nationalization was proposed not only by Allende, but also by his Christian Democratic rival for the Presidency, Radomiro Tomic..." Even Alessandri, who did not genuinely favor nationalization, tacitly supported it, in view of the widespread support for it right across the political spectrum.
As can be seen, then, from the nature of its support, nationalization of U.S. copper cannot be viewed as a socialistic measure. However, again it does not represent another victory for the masses, the limited nature of which though needs to be stressed. MacEoin maintained that the process of "Chileanization" was dropped in favor of nationalization because "Chile's ownership of 51 percent of the shares gave it no voice in management or policy." This is certainly true, however, the gains to be made from total nationalization of copper must not be exaggerated. As Evans pointed out "nationalization in and of itself does not mean that the working class is in power or that capitalism is being eliminated." As with the policies concerning agrarian reform, the above nationalizations only helped to create preconditions from which the beginnings of socialism could be built. In no way did they themselves constitute socialism. This lack of structural change was further reflected in the very small number of monopoly industrial enterprises that were nationalized. The U.P.'s policy by mid-1971 seemed to be one of intervention only in those enterprises which had paralyzed production. However, "The government has not yet specified what industries it plans to expropriate nor has it established a time sequence." It was estimated that 150 enterprises among the 30,000 firms and workshops were monopolies to be expropriated. This represented less than 1 percent.

The banks were also taken over, eleven of them by April 1971, and all of them by the end of July 1971. With control of the banking and financial structure, the potential was there to fund and develop future socialistic policies.

In the first six months, the U.P. was relatively successful in implementing the economic core of its program in terms of both its own goals and guidelines.
On April 4, 1971, 280 municipal elections were held, and as they were the first public test of Allende's administration, they took on the nature of a plebiscite, for or against the program of the U.P. The results reflected the U.P.'s growing support.

CHILEAN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partido Socialista</td>
<td>631,939</td>
<td>22.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Communista</td>
<td>479,206</td>
<td>17.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Radical</td>
<td>225,851</td>
<td>8.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialista Popular</td>
<td>29,123</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democrata</td>
<td>38,077</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total, Unidad Popular</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,404,196</strong></td>
<td><strong>50.86</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Democristano</td>
<td>723,623</td>
<td>26.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Nacional</td>
<td>511,679</td>
<td>18.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracia Radical</td>
<td>108,192</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrata Nacional</td>
<td>13,435</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,356,929</strong></td>
<td><strong>49.14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only was this a personal victory for Allende, but it was also, "a strong mandate." Allende's own Socialist Party made the biggest gains by garnering 22.89 percent of the vote and becoming the second largest party in Chile. Not only this but it represented a 65 percent increase over the vote it received in the 1967 municipal elections. In contrast the bourgeois wing of the U.P. fared badly, its vote dropping from 16.1 percent to 8.1 percent over the same period of time. The table below shows the increasing support for Chilean left-wing parties since 1964.
THE LEFTS' RISING PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULAR VOTE 1965-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>22.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>17.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Party</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. D. Party</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>26.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Party</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>18.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only did the results legitimize the U.P. victory but they could have been interpreted as representing an increase in support for the views of the left-wing section of the U.P. The left-wing of the Socialist Party, and the MIR, saw this trend outlined above, and particularly the April municipal election results as a mandate to move forward with the implementation of the U.P. program. Paul Sweezy puts forward a logical and constitutional process by which Allende could have moved forward.

A draft law abolishing the two-house legislature and substituting the proposed Popular Assembly could have been submitted to the Congress. It would, of course, have been rejected, thus paving the way for a plebiscite. If the U.P. had then waged an aggressive campaign educating the voters on the underlying issues and raising their political consciousness it is reasonable to assume that the April majority could have been held and perhaps even increased. The next step would have been to win a majority of seats in the new Popular Assembly. With this accomplished, not only could vitally important legislation which had been blocked by the old Congress be enacted; equally significant the judiciary could have been reformed and re-staffed.

In its quest for state power the U.P. would then be left to deal with the military. This would be more complicated and difficult, however, a legal and constitutional path could still be followed. Reactionary officers
could be retired and loyal officers promoted. Pay and living conditions for the rank and file could be improved, and the military link between the U.S. and Chile could be broken. Also of extreme importance would be the construction of a popular militia. A recognition of the fact that at some stage violent action may be necessary.

The writer on page 26 of *New Chile* misinterpreted Allende's aims and analysis of the situation after April 1971. The writer in question maintained that "Allende clearly regarded the results of the municipal elections as a signal for him to move more directly towards the goals set out in the U.P. Program of Government." In reality, this was not the case; Allende did not proceed to implement the U.P. program in any way that bears similarity to Sweezy's suggested scenario. The line that Allende did actually follow post-April 1971 and the subsequent events will be discussed in a later chapter. At this point I intend to argue for why I think Allende should have pressed forward rapidly with his programs at this point, and also to try and offer some answers as to why he didn't.

As the municipal elections showed, Allende and his Socialist Party had, through a number of reformist and populist measures, increased significantly their level of popular support. This support in a large part came from the success of the short run economic policies discussed earlier, as these were aimed primarily at the working class and the lower sections of the middle classes. Not only this but the masses had shown themselves willing to mobilize and to push forward the U.P. program at a fast pace. Allende was also well-versed from his student days with the writings of Marx, Lenin, and also Trotsky. He must have been well aware of the danger of moving toward the revolution too slowly. Unless the speed of implementation and general momentum are maintained and increased,
then the revolutionary process will falter, lose momentum, and be vulnerable to attacks by the bourgeoisie. Rosa Luxemburg makes this point clearly, "...either the revolution must advance at a rapid, stormy and resolute tempo, break down all barriers with an iron hand, and place its goals ever farther ahead, or it is quite soon thrown backward." 27

In addition, the class struggle was beginning to come into the open. Polarization was slowly beginning to take place and hence if Allende wanted to move forward constitutionally, then it had to be done before the classes became completely polarized. Ever since the election on September 4, a slow simmering, but steady process of polarization of classes had been taking place in Chile. Events on both the right and left show this. The presence of the center/right and its links with the U.S. were clearly demonstrated to Allende in the 1964 Presidential election. "Frei's campaign [was] designed to scare the electorate away from Allende. With up to $1 million per month from U.S. sources," 28 Laurence Stern maintained that "Approximately $20 million in U.S. funds was channeled into the Frei campaign, while at least 100 U.S. 'special personnel' were posted to Chile." 29 The report goes on to quote a key U.S. intelligence officer of the time, who recalled that, "U.S. government intervention in Chile in 1964 was blatant and almost obscene." 30 The amount of money pumped into Chile in the next six years by U.S. government and corporations increased substantially, with a politically motivated aim—to directly and indirectly prevent the election of a socialist candidate in 1970. However, their failure to prevent this occurrence did not signal an end to U.S. machinations. Under the Nixon administration the "40 Committee," as it was known, orchestrated and authorized a program of bribes and payments to
anti-Allende groups in Chile to prevent his ratification by Congress. The CIA and U.S. corporations such as I.T.T. were involved in similar activities. William Merriam, I.T.T. Executive Representative for International Trade, summarized a meeting at CIA headquarters. "Approaches continue to be made to select members of the Armed Forces in an attempt to have them lead some sort of uprising--no success to date." Following this, the United States strategy moved to a different plane and the offensive was continued in the economic area with the purpose of creating the right political and economic conditions necessary to precipitate a coup. "A consensus emerged between Kissinger, the CIA and I.T.T. The convergence of views was reached shortly after Allende was confirmed in the Presidency: by common consent the strategy consisted of maximizing external economic pressures on the vulnerable points of the Chilean economy." Economic sabotage by the Right was also being carried out on the domestic front. Wealthy Chileans by the hundreds were withdrawing their savings. From September 1970 onwards, capital flight began. Also, "the inflow of capital from abroad stopped in September and new domestic private investment practically halted." The conservative press publicized the difficulties caused by this in anti-socialist tones, and landowners continued to sabotage the U.P. program by using all their means to block and discredit land reform.

The assassination of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Rene Schneider, on October 22, 1970, was another reminder to Allende that he was dealing with an opposition which was prepared to use subtle and unsubtle means to bring about his downfall. Although not working together in any cohesive manner, the differing elements on the right were united on one thing, opposition to Allende. This opposition was present before the
September elections and continued to grow after it, through covert and overt actions (a number of which have been mentioned above). As yet rightist opposition was not unified or mobilized on any large and organized scale; this was not to happen until the Bosses Strike of 1972. However, the portents for the future were clear. The power of the right with backing from the U.S. could not be underestimated. They were slowly growing in strength and in unity, biding their time until they felt that conditions were favorable for them to strike at the Allende government. The conditions or situations they were primarily interested in were those of the other slowly polarizing sector of Chilean society—the working class.

The masses then, were also going through a polarization process; the evidence of which showed itself clearly in the results of the municipal elections. The Socialist Party in the coalition significantly increased its vote. The "ultra left" wanted the socialist spirit of the U.P. program to be carried out to the socialist letter. The land seizures already discussed demonstrated that concrete action was what was wanted, and fast. Also, workers in industries during the first few months demanded from Allende that they be allowed to take over and run the factories. Much of the initial workers' demands and mobilizations occurred with backing from the MIR, the revolutionary left group, which gave critical support to the U.P. program. The masses, after years of poor living and exploitation, saw the Allende government and the measures that it had already carried out, as a sign, a hope, a path out of poverty. By virtue of their life experiences pre-U.P. government and their present rising expectations, they developed a sense of urgency which could not always be contained within the legal, constitutional reforms put forward by Allende.
A radicalization and polarization, then, has been taking place among the workers, and again the writing was on the wall for Allende. If he could not move at the same speed as the masses then they would leave him behind. This was especially true in the area of building a popular militia. The workers did not have the same faith in the neutrality of the military and police as Allende seemed to have. His refusal to arm and/or mobilize the masses on any continuous basis, pushed the masses even more into the arms of the MIR. Allying with this group became a natural progression as their radicalization and polarization increased. Unfortunately, the MIR were also incapable of providing the type of leadership necessary to build a mass revolutionary movement.

I have tried to illustrate here that during the first six months the polarization process was beginning to occur, but as yet had not reached coup d'etat conditions. The forces of the Right were still partially disoriented by Allende's presidential victory; however, they were increasingly beginning to agree on a basic strategy. One of the reasons they were still disoriented over their strategy was the problem of how to deal with the increasing mass support for Allende, which itself was radicalizing and polarizing.

In summary, then, Allende had conditions in his favor, post-April 1971, economically and politically. Why then did he not press on and quickly implement the U.P. program?

Without doubt there were a number of factors which accounted for this; however, one of the main ones revolved around Allende's mistaken analysis of the situation. Allende's long-standing respect for constitutionalism, legality and bourgeois institutions, overshadowed one of the
basic tenets of the philosophy he himself advocated. In his conversations with Regis Debray, Allende said, "...we have not forgotten a fundamental principle of Marxism: the class struggle." However, his failure to implement the U.P. program after the April 1971 election illustrates that his analysis of the situation showed a severe misreading of the class struggle and the polarization process. For an avowed Marxist, Allende did not have a very clear picture of the role of the military. On the one hand, he half-believed the now shattered myth of the apolitical and non-interventionist nature of the Chilean armed forces. "I have absolute confidence in the loyalty of the armed forces. Our forces are professional forces at the service of the state, of the people." However, the military statistics were ominous. In relation to its population, Chile had the largest armed forces of any South American country, and was also the largest recipient of U.S. military aid, outside of Brazil. Chile also received substantial military training from the U.S. (much of which was carried out in the U.S.). For example, for the period 1960-65, 2,064 Chilean soldiers were trained in the U.S.  

Alain Joxe, a French sociologist, concluded, after a study of the Chilean armed forces, that it is not that they are apolitical, but that they usually manage to play their role inconspicuously. Their non-intervention is "a latent and permanent participation in the political game, not a simple abstention. When they intervene, as in 1891 and from 1924-1931, they remodel the state to serve the upper and middle sectors and the bureaucracy. One intervention in Chile is worth ten in other countries."  

The other half of Allende's mistaken analysis stemmed from his fear of provoking military intervention by the armed forces by pushing
forward too quickly with the U.P. program. The analysis was mistaken again in that as the polarization of classes continued, violent intervention at some stage was inevitable. A more realistic analysis would have been to realize that violent confrontation would have to occur, and consequently must be prepared for. The optimum time to prepare for such an eventuality was again after the April 1971 elections.

However, Allende, although an avowed Marxist, failed to diagnose the class struggle in Marxist terms. The April 1971 elections, the end of the first six months in power, marked a tremendous opportunity for Allende, and the workers to move toward a construction of the beginnings of socialism.

However, he failed to do so, and as a result of the path he did follow, he left the very people who supported him, the workers, open and vulnerable to the intensifying Rightist offensive.
FOOTNOTES


4 Ibid.


15 MacEoin, p. 83.

17 Provides for government ownership of 51 percent of the industry in question, N.A.C.L.A., pp. 121-2.


19 MacEoin, p. 84.

20 Camejo, p. 35.


22 Ibid.


27 Steenland, p. 4.


30 Ibid.

31 Sobel, pp. 174-5.


33 Ibid., p. 35.

34 N.A.C.L.A., "The Enemy Within--the Right Responds," p. 27.


36 Debray, p. 81.


CHAPTER II

ALLENDE'S REFORMISM CONTINUES AS THE POLARIZATION PROCESS INTENSIFIES

Hypothesis: As the polarization process intensified Allende became increasingly reformist and more compromising towards the opposition, causing him to miss another opportunity to move towards the building of a socialist society.

The full significance of the April 1971 municipal elections only became fully apparent upon a closer study of the changing electoral vote of the political parties in Chile. Referal back to the table on page 10, Chapter I, helps to show this in part. In the last chapter I used the data in the table to show the rising percentage of the popular vote garnered by the Left from 1965-71. However, a second examination of the results showed a growing polarization of the Chilean population. The traditional workers parties, the Socialist and Communist parties, both increased their percentage share of the vote in the last two congressional and municipal elections. Not only this but the conservative National Party also made significant gains, partly at the expense of the P.D.C. and partly at the expense of the smaller parties. In fact, its percentage gain from the 1965-69 Congressional elections was larger than both the Socialist and Communist respective gains put together. These results and the ensuing political maneuvers within and outside the U.P., reflected the growing politicization and polarization that had been taking place. Lawrence notes this polarization process.
Another important change in the Chilean political climate is the polarization of the electorate and the political leadership. This polarization can be seen in a variety of ways, in the inflamed political rhetoric of the 1960's, the serious increase in political violence, the platforms of the major competing parties, and the results of the recent elections.

The varied makeup of the component parts of the U.P. and its lack of unity of purpose was shown by the increasing fragmentation of some of its members. On August 31, 1971, the Radical Party convention ended in a split among its ranks; a new group being formed called the Independent Radical Movement (Movimiento Radical Independiente-MRI). In addition the P.D.C. underwent another split in that M.A.P.U. lost a number of top leaders to the new Christian Left (Izquierda Cristiana). The most notable of these leaders being Jacques Chonchol, the Minister of Agriculture. Both the Christian Left and the MRI gave support to the Allende government, however, the latter eventually went over to the ranks of the opposition. At this time, then, the U.P. government was on the way to becoming "little more than a convenient label attached to whatever combination of parties and groups may from time to time support the Allende administration."  

Not only was polarization reflected in electoral trends and political maneuverings, but in other Left/Right mobilizations also. The MIR interpreted the U.P. gains in the April elections as a reason to move forward and increase its organizational activities among the masses of students, peasants, and workers. MIR spokesmen claimed that their membership had quadrupled and that they were increasingly becoming the moving force in new revolutionary workers and peasants organizations. Some MIRistas claimed that they could put from twenty to thirty thousand people
into battle immediately, armed with weapons stolen from armories during the past three years, and trained during people's militia training sessions during the past year. Its strength was impressively demonstrated at the funeral service for one of their most important leaders, Luciana Cruz, who died in a car accident on August 14. Thirty thousand people marched through the streets in his funeral procession, refuting those who predicted that the MIR would disappear if it didn't join the ranks of the U.P. The retention of this support, and the increasing autonomy of the workers movement was shown by the setting up of a "People's Assembly" in July 1972. This brought together many of the working class groups and organizations to discuss the concept and implementation of "people's power."

Without doubt the "ultraleft" was increasing its mobilization activities, and as polarization continued so its supporters increased in number. Part of these activities were aimed at penetrating the army's lower echelons in an attempt to split and weaken the armed forces. However, in the area of the armed forces, the terrorist groups of the Right had more influence in the shape of "Patria y Libertad" (Fatherland and Freedom), "Grupo Anticommunista" (G.R.A.C.O.-anti-communist group) and NECH (We won't sell out Chile). These all had strong links with the upper ranks of the army. The battle lines were being drawn by both the extreme left and right. But whereas the "moderate left", in the shape of the U.P. Leadership, was continuing its strategy of adhering to the Constitution, the Christian Democrats were increasingly throwing their weight behind the conservative right. The summer of 1971 marked the beginnings of a closer alliance between the aforementioned parties, both in and outside of Congress.
In October 1971 the P.D.C. and the rightist parties attempted to assert legislative control over the expansion of the public sector by means of a constitutional amendment which Allende refused to accept. By January 1972 "Frei...returned to active political campaigning to 'save democracy' by means of a fully fledged electoral and congressional alliance with the Right, and the Christian Democrats approved their first impeachment of one of Allende's ministers." On the electoral front an informal alliance of the P.D.C and the conservative right led to striking victories for them in two January Congressional by-elections. Apart from being a political setback for Allende, it had added significance in that the opposition had ran on the platform of giving the voters an opportunity "to take a stand against the government's program to construct socialism in Chile." The cementing of relations on the right was further demonstrated by the formation of C.O.D.E. (Confederation Democratica), whose job was to prepare joint lists for the March 1973 Congressional elections. Cooperation between the opposition parties was also evident in the organization of street demonstrations, business and paramilitary groups and the intensification of propaganda and political indoctrination by the conservative media. As Petras noted, "All the Right's organizational efforts, political and military, were directed toward mass mobilization to create the basis for a change in government or at least in program." The mounting offensive by the Right reached its high point in October 1972, with what became known as the "Bosses Strike". The situation and conditions surrounding this strike will be discussed in detail later, however, at this point I am going to discuss why, post-April 1971, the class struggle intensified and also examine the U.P.'s response to this intensification.
The Allende government, during its first months in power, had been able to stimulate the economy in the short run by a number of populist measures. Pedro Vuskovic was Allende's Minister of Economic Affairs, and his program had three main objectives: (1) To restructure the Chilean economy into three spheres of ownership; a socially-owned property sector, one of joint ownership and a private property sector; (2) To achieve a rapid and substantial growth in the wage earner's share of national income; (3) These above changes will form the basis of a new development model from which the "socialist transformation of the Chilean economy is begun." However, these were largely based on using up unused industrial capacity and correcting inefficiencies and corruption. In addition, they were carried out at a time when the Right was disoriented and disunified. By the fall of 1971 this excess capacity had been exhausted and unemployment was low. The only way the U.P. could have increased production rapidly would have been by the expansion of the state sector, coupled with the implementation of a more rationalized plan of production. The uplift in the economy, then, had come to a standstill and its expansion was not possible due partly to sabotage by the Right and U.S. covert intervention. As Kyle Steenland pointed out "...the Chilean bourgeoisie..." by use of "...its Congressional majority and its control of the majority of the media (65 percent of the newspapers printed, for example, support the Right) was able to block the expansion of the state sector." Also, in June 1972, Vuskovic was replaced by Orlando Millas, a Communist who followed a policy of limiting the size of the social-property area in order to placate the middle sectors and the Christian Democrats. This showed Allende's increasingly reformist line.
Actions by the U.S. and a number of its corporations played a large part in bringing about worsening economic conditions. The question of intervention in Chilean affairs by the U.S. government and U.S. corporations will be examined in detail in a later chapter. At this juncture I intend only to discuss it briefly as it related to the increasing economic sabotage and class polarization.

Having failed to prevent the election and confirmation of Allende as President, the White House and the National Security Council "settled on an overall strategy of controlled escalation of hostile measures in which periods of conflict would alternate with periods of negotiation." Its main objective seemed to be to try to instigate situations (such as the October strike), which would bring about economic dislocation. With the benefit of hindsight, Petras speculated that there were three parts to the U.S. plan for economic dislocation: (1) an international credit squeeze, (2) the elaboration of an ideology of "lack of credit-worthiness" based on poor economic conditions. (Conditions which the U.S., in large part, had manufactured themselves by the credit blockade), (3) the identification of gradual economic deterioration with internal government policy, thus creating the economic basis for polarizing Chilean society in a manner favorable to the groups of owners of large properties.

The U.S., through the World Bank, Export-Import Bank, and the IMF, denied new credits to Chile. The latter institution, also on government orders, hindered the renegotiation of Chile's foreign debt in the Paris talks of early 1972. Pressures such as these, in addition to the drop in world copper prices, cost Chile dearly in foreign exchange. The Chilean economy has a historic dependence on copper and hence when its price
dropped this had serious consequences for the economy. In 1969 copper sold for 66.56 cents a pound, but by 1972 it fetched only 48.20 cents. Chilean authorities estimated that for every cent decline in the price of copper, they lost $15 million each year. In addition, American companies such as Anaconda and Kennecott were partially successful in blocking Chilean copper sales to Europe. This was especially damaging as Chile's economy was (and is) closely tied to the American market and the dollar. Goods became scarce, especially food and machine parts, as fewer dollars could now be spent on imports. Yet, as a result of Allende's social measures, demands for goods had increased, and this, tied to the printing of large amounts of new money, caused inflation to rise to incredible new levels. By December 1972 inflation was running at 164 percent. The U.S. did not limit itself to the use of credit squeezes, but it also strengthened its contacts with the Chilean armed forces by increasingly offering them opportunities to buy armaments and vehicles. Following the compromise solution to the October strike, bilateral talks were proposed by the U.S., and they did take place. However, this seemed as though it was nothing more than the "negotiation phase" of the U.S. strategy. It can be argued that meaningful negotiations never took place, nor were they intended to (by the U.S.). The American government used the talks to gain first-hand knowledge of the mood of the Chileans and their feelings toward the U.S.

Polarization, then, apart from being the natural concomitant of the class struggle, increased in intensity due to the economic disruption brought about by the U.S. and the Chilean bourgeoisie. As a reaction to the above, small businessmen and lower middle-class elements who once
supported Allende, now went over to the side of the opposition. The working classes showed great tolerance of the situation, though some of them became demoralized by Allende's indecisiveness and fell prey to rightist propaganda. The class struggle was going on all around him and yet it seemed that Allende could not grasp the solid logic of the situation that was being played out with every passing day. His failure to do so was to be a fatal one. Pablo Lira had this to say about Allende's vacillations.

"...in Chile in 1972 as in other historical experiences, political weakness in the face of the middle classes' political representatives, was not only no help in cementing a class alliance, but actually drove the middle sectors toward those classes or class factions that showed greater political strength."17

The increasing polarization and severe economic problems eventually exploded openly in the October 1972 strike. It is my contention that the situation brought about by the strike gave Allende the opportunity to move ahead again with mass mobilization and the chance to begin building towards a socialist society. His last opportunity had been in April 1971, and he had failed to take it. In October 1972, even though the conditions were much more difficult, if he had acted swiftly and decisively, then there was a chance of success. In fact, the course he did take reinforced the reformist and capitulatory nature of the U.P. leadership.

In the second week of October the crisis began when a nationwide truck strike caused serious shortages of gasoline and flour. This resulted in a declaration of martial law by the Allende government in a number of provinces. The truckers' strike was precipitated by the government's refusal to meet the demands of the Confederation of Truck Owners for higher
cargo rates. Allende attempted to stop the strike by arresting the president of the Confederation, Leon Vilarin, and 160 owners and drivers. Two days later on October 12, the small businessmen, retailers, builders and large farmer associations came out on strike in sympathy with the truckers. The momentum of the situation continued to increase as civil servants, bank employees and some high school and university students also came out on strike. These were quickly followed by doctors, dentists, and lawyers. Without doubt this was a politically motivated strike against the Allende government by the rightist elements in Chile. O'Brien saw the objective of the strike as being "to make the existing shortages acute by preventing the flow of food and fuel to consumers and paralyzing production and trade. This economic offensive, together with the activities of terrorist groups, was intended to create a climate of chaos and lead to the kinds of clashes that would provoke workers into a violent reaction, thus inviting the intervention of the armed forces and the overthrow of the government."18 However, this did not seem to have been the avowed intention of the Christian Democrats who had strongly supported the strike.19 Jaime Castillo, a political analyst for the Christian Democratic Party, maintained that the aim of the strike was not "to overthrow Allende, or make him renounce his program, but to put him back in his place, within the Constitution and using only laws to carry out his program."20 At this point in time, then, the P.D.C. were the guiding force of the Right, and Frei the master coordinator. David F. Belnap saw him as "a behind the scenes compromiser...an elder statesman" with an "...ambition to lead a united opposition."21 This again demonstrated clearly the machinations of the opposition in that if they could not bring him down immediately, they certainly could
bend the rules in their favor again, while waiting and planning for the eventual overthrow.

There were two main reasons why the strike did not precipitate a coup; the actions of the workers and the armed forces. The armed forces cooperated to a certain extent in organizing, with the workers, the transportation and distribution of fuel, and hence, showed they had a certain formal loyalty to the government. As yet, the armed forces were not completely decided about their future stance, in relation to the carrying out of a coup d'etat, and hence the plotting of the "ultraright" elements of the Rightist alliance did not reach fruition in the October strike.

One of the main reasons for the behavior of the armed forces and the failure of the bourgeoisie to realize their strike objectives was the clearly demonstrated power of the workers during the strike period. Industries were taken over and kept running by the workers and distribution organizations were set up. In each cordon (industrial sector) a committee representing the workers of all the factories was formed. Its role was to order the seizure of any factory closed by its owners, name a new management team, and resume production and distribution. Simultaneously, organizations were established to mobilize and train the members of the community in maintaining order and defending the factories. In the housing areas and slums, residents were organized into "commandos comunales" (community commands). These incorporated such previously existing units as, industrial unions, health boards, neighborhood committees, student and farmer-worker organizations (the latter in semi-rural areas). The prime role of the commandos was the distribution of food and other supplies, political education, and the creation of self-defense forces. The spontaneity of the workers in
the organization of these bodies, however, should not be overestimated. O'Brien saw the situation as one in which "Almost spontaneously workers came together at local and regional levels, unified their organizations and resolved the concrete problems caused by the strike." A more realistic assessment of the situation was one of crediting the MIR with an initiating role. As McEoin maintained, "MIR played a principal part in the organization of the response to the October lock-outs." This was certainly true because up until this point the workers had always channelled their struggles through the CUT and the unions. However, the workers' movements were not tightly controlled by the MIR and the workers did not regard themselves as being under MIR's control or restricted to their guidelines.

In my opinion there were a number of important lessons for Allende to learn from the steadily increasing polarization period, post-April 1971, and in particular from the October crisis. However, Allende refused to accept the dynamics of the situation and the possibilities that evolved from the workers' mobilization. So reformism and compromise continued. Allende ended the strike by following the path of compromise, as strongly advocated by the C.P. He accepted the resignation of the whole cabinet and appointed military men to head three key ministries: the Interior, Mining, and Public Works. Two workers' representatives were also brought into the cabinet: Luis Figueiou, as Minister of Works and Rolando Calderon, as Minister of Agriculture. However, this was more of a token sop to the Left as it was very clear that the military representatives held the powerful positions.

In terms of the struggle for socialism, Allende's handling of the October 1972 strike showed again clearly the reformist and conciliatory
nature of the U.P. leadership, and its lack of long-term insight. As I have tried to show throughout this paper, Chilean society had become increasingly polarized, and Allende showed his weakness by not responding decisively to this. Morris pointed out one of the consequences of following such a path "...the government would continue speaking the rhetoric of socialism, yet would become increasingly conservative, leading the masses astray and providing no leadership at the critical moments of Chilean history." Not only this, but by his vacillations, Allende lost much of his earlier middle class support (as discussed earlier). Fidel Castro, when he visited Chile, summed up the situation, "You're going through that period in the process in which the fascists—to call them by their right name—are trying to beat you out of the middle strata of the population. There is a specific moment in every revolutionary process when fascists and revolutionaries engage in a struggle for the support of the middle strata." By his weakness Allende lost this struggle. Decisive action by Allende could have resulted in the polarization of the middle class to the left, however, the reverse was the case, and they polarized to the right.

Allende's reformism seemed to have propelled him on the road of short-run compromises, which would stall any attempted coup d'etat while waiting for the March 1973 Congressional elections. If this was ever an alternative, it had by post-October 1972 lost much of its viability. In order for Allende to have fundamentally changed the present balance of power, he would have needed to have secured more than 50 percent of the vote, or alternatively get less than 33.3 percent of the vote. Given the political strategies of both the major political forces at the time, neither result
seemed likely. As we know, neither of the above results were accomplished. The U.P. made some significant gains, however, Allende must have been naive to think that an increase in their vote in March would help halt the polarization process and end violence and disruption. The Right was already geared to overthrow Allende when the conditions became favorable. Adherence to the constitution was only viable when it suited their strategy, and Allende should have realized this and begun his own mobilizations immediately to defend himself and the workers. I am not suggesting that Allende should not have participated in the elections, but what I am suggesting is that to base his whole political strategy around it, was a mistaken analysis. Political power and initiative was moving into the streets and Allende's plans and strategies should have reflected this.

A stalemate situation came about after the elections and Allende was now set on playing the role of compromiser to the bourgeoisie until the 1976 Presidential elections. As Steenland pointed out, "This would mean the Allende government resting on the laurels of its most anti-imperialist and anti-monopolist reforms, while indefinitely postponing the building of socialism—in other words, the strategy of the C.P."28

The reformism of the U.P. and the increasing influence of the C.P., then, has been clearly demonstrated. Allende solved nothing by his action of bringing the military into the cabinet. James Petras analyzed the situation after the October strike, "The dramatic confrontation in October 1972 posed the question of social power in the most decisive manner; Allende's "compromise"—bringing the armed forces into the cabinet—has only temporarily postponed the final denouement. The economic problems of
the country can be dealt with only when one or the other social class is firmly in control of the process of production."^{29}

If socialism was ever going to be built, then the social class that had to gain control was the working class, and the opportunity came again to Allende to attempt this in October 1972. Increasing political polarization was by this stage a fact of life, however, Allende allowed the balance of the class struggle to be tipped against him by his reformist policies.

The working class and peasants had fought a strong defensive battle against the opposition's economic sabotage attempts which culminated in the 1972 strike. Factories were occupied, production was continued and the distribution of goods was carried out—all by the mobilization of the workers. "Punto Final" realized the significance of this, "...the working class has successfully invaded various prerogatives of the state. It has shown that it is perfectly capable, not only of excluding the bourgeoisie from the economic life of the country but of taking the state into its own hands. That is the great lesson of the crisis."^{30}

Here, then, were popular organizations of "dual" or "counterpower" which had grown up in response to the Right's offensive.^{31} The very growth of these organizations and the role they played showed the increasing class consciousness of the workers and a self-realization of their part in the revolutionary process. The strengthening and development of these workers' organizations could have been the beginnings of a move towards the building of socialism. In addition, the workers' organizations should have been armed by Allende as a logical outgrowth of the formation of vigilante groups to protect the factories from right-wing
sabotage. As Evans said, "...if there were a mass workers militia it is likely that soldiers and police taking the side of the people would be attracted to it."\(^{32}\)

Without doubt the obstacles to constructing socialism at this point were much greater than in April 1971, however, the condition of the class struggle, if it was to be won by the workers, demanded such action. The Right was plainly intensifying its offensive strategy, and hence Allende should have responded in kind. As mentioned previously, the workers' organizations should have been strengthened, developed and a popular militia formed. Potential new institutions of dual power should have been created in addition to the ones thrown up by the October strike, and an aggressive policy of mobilizing the masses should have been undertaken. Due to the U.P.'s continued failure to mobilize the masses and the MIR's failure to provide adequate leadership, there still remained in Chile, large sectors of the masses which had not yet been mobilized. Only one-third of the proletariat was organized in unions, and also the shantytown and community dwellers (the poorest strata of Chilean society), had not been organized to their fullest potential. "In the Popular Unity view they remained passive agents.... Thus the tendency for Allende's government to rely fundamentally on the proletariat in large dynamic industries continued."\(^{33}\) As Steenland claimed, "There are more than enough popular forces to mobilize, once these dispossessed and exploited groups are convinced that they are struggling for real social and political power and not just the replacement of a few Congressmen, by a few others."\(^{34}\)

The need to move away from the C.P. line to that of the revolutionary left, should have been seen as a necessity by Allende, even though there
was a fear of provoking a military coup. However, if Allende had followed the teachings of his own avowed Marxism, he would have realized that the class struggle would sooner or later, have produced a violent confrontation. Hence, a move toward the line of the revolutionary left and mass mobilization should have been the most logical alternative to take in that at this stage of the polarization process, the impending inevitability of confrontation should have been realized and prepared for. Admittedly, the above alternative would have required an end to inter-party sectarianism within the U.P., and a closer cooperation between the MIR and the U.P. Again, this would have required strong, decisive action by Allende to struggle against the difficulties involved in such a move. But as we know what happened was the continuation of the "timid and permissive policies of the Allende-Communist Party leadership toward the bourgeoisie."35

The populist reformism of Allende's first six months, then, evolved into weak, ever-rightward moving policies which increasingly ignored the aspirations and mobilizations of the masses. As political polarization intensified, the compromising of Allende and the U.P. leadership, pushed it into a vulnerable "centre" position in the ensuing class struggle.
FOOTNOTES


3 Ibid.


5 This article was written by the Ligue Revolutionnaire des Travailleurs (Revolutionary Workers League), the Belgian section of the Fourth International "One Year of the Unidad Popular," in Disaster in Chile, ed. Les Evans (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974), p. 75.


9 The most famous of these street demonstrations was the "March of the Empty Pots," in December 1971. Thousands of middle and upper-class housewives marched through the streets of Santiago, banging pots and pans, to protest the food shortages.


15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.


18 Ibid., p. 43.

19 The Confederation of Truck Owners who initiated the strike were affiliated to the P.D.C.


21 Los Angeles Times March 1971.

22 Patricia Santa Lucia, "The Industrial Working Class and the Struggle for Power in Chile," in Allende's Chile, ed. Phillip O'Brien, p. 141.


24 Morris, p. 299.

25 Ibid., p. 291.


27 Results of the March 1973 Congressional elections will be given and discussed at the beginning of Chapter III.

28 Steenland, p. 21.

29 Petras, "Chile After the Elections," p. 22.

30 Editorial in Punto Final, 7 November, 1972, quoted in Disaster in Chile, ed. Les Evans, p. 140.

31 McEoin, p. 140.


34 Steenland, p. 22.

35 Petras, "Chile After the Elections," p. 22.
CHAPTER III

THE FINAL OVERTHROW

Hypothesis: Allende misunderstood the intensifying nature of the class struggle, and as a result of this, became increasingly reliant on the armed forces and hence helped bring about his own downfall and that of the working class.

I have already discussed some of the implications of the March 1973 elections in the previous chapter, however, the concept of its position as a "watershed" in the class struggle merits further discussion. Without doubt the Right had been increasing its offensive against the government prior to the March elections, but even at that time sections of the Right such as the P.D.C. were still considering legalistic means of eventually defeating Allende. It was clear that the Right was stunned and dismayed by the election results. To reiterate on the results briefly, Allende won 44 percent of the vote in March 1973, compared with the 36.3 percent that elected him in September 1970. As Zimblast and Stallings pointed out, "This made Allende the first Chilean president since the Second World War to increase his election support after two and a half years in office." This achievement was all the more significant as it happened within an environment of dire economic and social difficulties. The message, as interpreted by the Right, seemed to be then that even in the face of some of the worst social and economic conditions to face the country in modern history, the government's strategy of shifting the
pattern of rewards and punishments had payed off, politically. The leaders in the U.P. government saw the results as a sign of electoral support for their reformist policies and the strategy of the peaceful road. Allende failed to realize, however, that the class struggle had reached such a point that the electoral mandate he received was no longer viable for his proposed course of action. In fact, the election results by their very nature precluded "the peaceful road" to socialism.

Parts of the bourgeoisie, who earlier had entertained ideas of a legalistic solution (as advocated by the P.D.C.), now saw the support of the Left growing and prospects of increased U.P. activity in the implementation of their program. This left the way open for the most reactionary element of the Right to increase its dominance of the bourgeoisie. The Right was also inclined to move more wholelistically towards extra-constitutional maneuvers due to the fact that in its opinion, "...the government was no longer in control of the revolutionary process and however much it might be prepared to surrender, the masses would not accept any deals." The idea of serious negotiation and compromise with the government was then eventually discarded by the Right.

In this particular instance, the analysis of the situation by the opposition had been more accurate than that of Allende's. By giving the U.P. 44 percent of the vote the workers were not necessarily endorsing Allende's policies, but trying to ensure the position of the U.P. whose existence was an absolute necessity for the prospect of any revolutionary advance. Although the U.P. was not a revolutionary government, without it, the implementation of socialism would have little or no chance. The Right was already aware of what the masses were saying, and they realized that they (the masses) had the potential to realize their aims.
Lawrence saw the March 1973 election results as being almost the single factor which caused the intervention by the military and Allende's overthrow. He maintained that, "...intervention came about because of the success rather than the failures of the Allende government....The outcome of the congressional elections of March 1973 were crucial to the fall of the Allende regime." To a certain extent the election was a "watershed" in the political polarization process, but it did not in itself bring about the military coup. The class struggle had been going on now for two and a half years, and its own dialectic would sooner or later have caused one side or the other to take control. The election, then, was just one part of this class struggle, and although it did intensify the confrontation, and increase the influence of the reactionary elements, its importance must not be over-exaggerated. Lawrence's theory that it was Allende's successes rather than failures which caused his downfall is also an interesting one, although it is very subjective and incomplete. I would maintain that it is just as valid to argue that it was Allende's continued failure to mobilize the masses and move towards a revolutionary situation that was the cause of his downfall.

The effect of the March election results are then open to differing interpretations, however, without doubt it reflected the ever-intensifying polarization process.

Not only did the U.P. expand its base of support, but the right-wing National Party won an additional three seats in the Senate and a substantial number in the Chamber, partly at the expense of their ally, the Christian Democrats. This was interesting as the National Party had consistently campaigned on the platform that they wanted "...Allende's head,
and the elimination of the Communist Party." The Christian Democrats, on the other hand, in their campaign, had claimed that they didn't want to overthrow Allende, but only hoped that he would rectify his errors. The increasing polarization process was also noted by Jonathan Kandell in the March 6, *New York Times*. "Splinter parties on both sides lost heavily as Chileans cast their votes for the big parties in the two electoral alliances, the Christian Democrats and Nationals, and the Socialists and Communists." The political forces in Chile, then, were allying themselves into two opposing camps.

The period from the March 4 elections to the eventual coup d'état was characterized by an escalation of the Rightist offensive. It is my contention that because of Allende's indecisiveness and failure to move to the left, he became more reliant on the military and eventually placed himself in an untenable position from which there was no escape. At this point, though, Allende's and the military's actions need to be put in the context of the overall intensification of the Rightist offensive.

On March 27 Allende announced a new all-civilian cabinet after accepting the resignation of the three generals, a move by the generals which on the surface seemed to be at odds with the increasing political polarization and the role of the military. Some saw the resignations as a concession to the Left, however, it could and was also viewed as a tactical maneuver. The Right saw the situation as one in which a violent overthrow of the government was going to be necessary and hence, for the generals to remain in the cabinet would have served little purpose, and would, in fact, have restrained their movements. Not only this, but the resignations were intended to allay the growing fears (especially among the "ultra-left") of a coup, whereas in reality the battle lines for Allende's overthrow were more clearly being drawn.
The Right continued to undermine the economy in a number of ways. In Congress the P.N. and P.D.C. joined together to drastically reduce the government's budget, and this consequently left many social programs and the state sector of the economy underfinanced. The only way the U.P. could pay for these (within the legalistic framework in which they worked), was by deficit spending, a measure which further aggravated Chile's inflation rate. The U.P. also presented a bill which made it a civil crime to hoard or engage in black market activities and economic sabotage; the P.N. and P.D.C., though, combined to defeat it. The opposition also introduced constitutional amendments which attempted to dismantle much of the Social Area, and reverse the agrarian reform.

These Congressional maneuvers were supplemented by increased agitation and calls for civil disobedience. In the October owners' strike, the bourgeoisie had failed to achieve its objectives because the working class had not supported them, but in actual fact had actively opposed them. Consequently, the Right realized the value of causing intra-class conflict among the workers in an attempt to divide the working class and lessen its power. In April 1973 the Right took the opportunity to carry out such a maneuver.

Due to a misunderstanding between the U.P. and the El Teniente miners there was some confusion caused concerning wage increases to cover the cost of inflation. The miners became convinced that they were entitled to more than they received, though their expectations would have put themselves in a privileged position vis-a-vis the rest of the working class. No small part of this convincing came as a result of Right-wing organization at the mines and eventually the miners were convinced to go on strike. The strike did not in any real terms achieve the object of dividing the
working class as the other large copper mines refused P.D.C. entreaties to stage a sympathy strike. The strike finally ended after the abortive coup on June 29. However, the strike wreaked havoc with Chile's already weakened economy, and it also demonstrated Allende's weakness and poor grasp of the situation.¹⁰

Allende's distance from the masses, and his weakness allowed a situation to develop in which the Right was able to organize and provoke a strike which caused great confusion among U.P. supporters. A New York Times editorial set the picture. "It was Marxist managers not Yankee oppressors who fired men for striking and brought strikebreakers to El Teniente. And it was a Marxist-led government that ordered police to use tear gas and water cannon to break up a march on Santiago by 4,000 miners ..."¹¹

The masses, then, were treated to a scenario in which the bourgeoisie supported the demands of the working class, while the U.P. called the workers' demands "fascist."¹² This paradoxical situation caused great confusion among the masses and Allende must be blamed for not involving himself with the miners and exposing the role played by the Right in this whole affair. Because of his failure to do so the situation "resulted in the Chilean proletariat suffering the most bitter episode of enemy penetration into its ranks."¹³

On the morning of June 29 an attempted military coup, which consisted of a tank attack on the Presidential palace and the Ministry of Defense, was crushed by troops loyal to Allende. The rebel troops consisted of troops from the Second Armoured Regiment, led by Colonel Roberto Souper. In collaboration with the Patria-y-Libertad and the
National Party and possibly with sectors of the P.D.C., they had hoped to set off a series of uprisings throughout the country. The small number of troops who participated in the coup attempt showed that the military was still not completely unified behind the idea of a military confrontation with the Allende government.

However, at this point the most important effect of the attempted coup was the working class' response to it. Allende broadcast a call to the workers to take over their factories and, if necessary, to come into the streets to defend the government. The C.U.T. (Central Labor Confederation) reinforced this call. C.U.T. was the main trade union organization in Chile, however, less than 30 percent of the working class were unionized. Traditionally though, working class demands had been channeled through C.U.T., and in 1969 it had been C.U.T.'s influence which had mobilized the workers against Roberto Viaun's attempted coup d'etat in October 1969. However, the low amount of people actually unionized in C.U.T. reflected the fact that there were many people who were excluded from popular power. Consequently, as the class struggle intensified, the workers took it upon themselves to mobilize and organize their own power bodies. Although the C.U.T. was involved in the building of the "cordones" the process was not under their control. The workers, then, had passed by the formal trade union organization. The C.U.T. tried to insist that all mobilization efforts should be coordinated by them, but they were not successful in this. If anything, the C.U.T. was a brake on the revolutionary mobilizations of the workers by attempting to make them subordinate to their more moderate guidelines.

The response of the working class was again impressive as it was in October of 1972, and it increasingly showed their militancy. The
"cordones" were quickly revitalized, and over 350 factories and several hundred farms were taken over. Trucks and buses were also requisitioned in order that transport facilities would be ensured. In addition, an important aspect of the workers' mobilizations occurred: "the strengthening and partial arming of their defense committees." Also, rumors of further military conspiracies were rife and consequently new cordones were formed and long-term preparations were made, such as the organization of medical and food supplies and firearms training.

The working class, then, had taken control of many sections of industry and was more united and highly mobilized than ever before. They saw their actions as a defense of the gains made by the working class against yet another assault from the Right. A revolutionary situation, then, was potentially in the making and even though this particular coup attempt had failed, the workers "...remained on the offensive awaiting a revolutionary lead for the next stage in the struggle."17

However, Allende did not provide this lead, but by his compromising and seeming naivety concerning the class struggle, attempted immediately to "stabilize" the situation. The U.P. brought pressure to bear on C.U.T. to organize the return of the factories that had been taken over. This was not completely successful as many workers absolutely refused to turn them over. Allende then turned to the armed forces to ask them to "restore law and order," and a decision was also made to recollect arms that had been distributed to the workers. Finally, Allende called for compromise talks with the Christian Democrats.

These actions by Allende were another clear example of his inherent reformism and lack of ability to take decisive action. This type of vacillation and indecisiveness has characterized many of Allende's
actions, maybe because he never really had a definite strategy or master plan. Allende himself said, "The revolutionary struggle may be a guerilla campaign, a people's war, an insurrection, or a general election, depending on its specific content." However, at this point in time there was no real choice left even if Allende could have made one. The polarization process had reached a stage where confrontation was becoming inevitable. The masses had already chosen the path of a "people's war," but Allende was still dithering. As the masses became more unified, militant and ready for a move towards revolution, Allende moved nearer and nearer to compromise solutions with the armed forces and the bourgeoisie. The opportunity had again presented itself to Allende to utilize the mass support he had, but again he failed to do so. Not only that but these attempts to give back the factories and recollect arms was a demoralizing blow to the workers who had so instantly rallied forth to his defense on June 29--many of them unarmed or carrying only sticks and clubs.

Allende's refusal to give any real power to the workers left him with only the military as a means to defend the government in the face of the ongoing terrorist activities of the Right and the "gremios strike" of July 26. The truck owners announced an indefinite strike and other "gremios" (owners unions) came out on strike to support the truckers. Commerce was halted for several days and industries were forced to operate at below optimal capacity. The opposition failed to close the industries completely because the workers, as they had done in the previous bosses strike, activated the cordones and comunal commands to preserve some level of production and distribution.
Allende's response was again reformist and of a compromise nature; he reopened talks with the Christian Democrats, again shunning the mobilizations organized by the workers. The P.D.C. insisted on the re-entry of the military into the cabinet and on August 10 Allende complied, and heads of the military assumed important cabinet posts.¹⁹

The theme I have been trying to illustrate and analyze, then, is one of continued reliance on the military in response to an intensified Rightist offensive, even though the workers increasingly demonstrated their power and readiness to support the government and move towards a revolutionary situation. Allende was mistaken in his policy towards the armed forces and he eventually placed himself in a position from which they were able to overthrow him. As Sandri pointed out, "The fact was that the positioning of the forces in the arena of the class struggle had cut down his room to maneuver."²⁰

The armed forces had a "tradition" of respecting the constitution and being the guardians of the legal government; a tradition which Allende continually attempted to maintain. However, history does not completely vindicate this tradition, as Alain Joxe pointed out, "Historically they (the armed forces) have always intervened at political conjunctures that were critical for capitalism and imperialism as they did in 1891 to bring an end to President Balmaceda's brief attempt at economic nationalism and almost continuously during the prolonged period of crisis from 1920-33."²¹ It was not so much that Allende was completely naive concerning the historical role of the armed forces. Obviously not, as he spent a lot of energy attempting to appease them. However, he was naive in seeing the military as neutral territory which could be won over by the working class.
The military as a whole should have been viewed as an inherent part of the bourgeois state structure and as an active participant in that structure when it felt that the status quo was being overly threatened. This is not to say that propaganda techniques, as utilized by parts of the Left, to split the armed forces was an incorrect policy. On the contrary, such a policy, as partially attempted by the MIR, was the only realistic one. By succeeding in causing the disaffection of parts of the rank and file, the strength of the military itself could have been weakened, and a more effective popular militia could have been formed. However, the MIR did not have the ability to carry out such a policy in any concentrated way. The U.P. refrained from doing so, because of a fear of provoking a military backlash, and hence their policy revolved around appealing to the armed forces "constitutionalist" nature.

As I mentioned previously, Allende's attempts to keep the military neutral or win them over to his side and his failure to respond to the masses leftward movements, resulted in a situation where the military became more and more involved in the class struggle. During the time of the U.P. government, the armed forces were called in by the U.P. on a number of occasions to act as arbiters in the ensuing class struggle. However, as the military became more and more solidified behind the Rightist point of view, their actions as arbiters became increasingly repressive against the Left. After periodically being invited by the U.P. to play the role of arbiter, it was not surprising that the military themselves were to take it upon themselves to play the role of final arbiter.

Allende first called upon the military on the occasion of the "March of the Empty Pots" in December 1971. This was a march organized
by the Right in an attempt to spark off confrontation and elicit a reactionary response from the armed forces. However, when violence did break out between members of the Partia-y-Libertad party (who formed a "guard of honor" for the march), and construction workers, the armed forces moved in to support the workers and hence Allende. Many wealthy young men were arrested and a State of Emergency was declared in Santiago in which soldiers enforced a curfew in the city's wealthiest suburbs. In March 1972 the armed forces again moved to support the government. They raided the headquarters of the Fatherland and Freedom group and requisitioned a large cache of arms which were reportedly going to be used in a forthcoming "March for Freedom," organized by the opposition. 23

Incidents such as these in the earlier days of the U.P. government tended to reinforce Allende's view that the armed forces would remain neutral or maybe even be won over to the side of the working class. 24 In an attempt to do just that Allende consistently praised the military and ensured that officers' salaries and supplies were not unduly eroded by inflation. It was almost an attempt to isolate the armed forces from the class struggle, however, it was an attempt that became increasingly unsuccessful.

It is not my purpose to list a chronology of military events which were aimed at repressing the Left. This would be far too simplistic a route as it would also be possible to list a number of events which could be interpreted as being supportive of Allende. However, I will try to point out and analyze a few situations which illustrate the danger involved in the reliance that Allende had on the military.
Another "March for Freedom" was called for by the Right, this time in Concepcion, and again it seemed with the intention of causing large-scale violence. A counter-march was organized by the Left, but permission to hold it was refused. However, in actual fact, both marches took place and the police were brought in to prevent a clash. The tactic employed by the police to prevent a clash was to attack the Left-wing March. One person was killed and forty injured.\textsuperscript{25}

The police also frequently harrassed poblaciones. For example, in Lo Hermida a man was killed and many were injured and arrested when the police came looking for an "ultra-leftist who was being hidden in the poblacion.

The fact that the June 29 attempted coup was only supported by a few sections of the military showed that complete polarization had not yet taken place. However, without doubt "a change in the attitude of the armed forces was becoming steadily more obvious."\textsuperscript{26} This was again shown by the military's interpretation of the new law which gave them power to search for illegally held arms. They used it almost exclusively against the workers while ignoring the paramilitary forces of the Right.

Slowly, then, the military moved away from Allende's control and became polarized to the Right. The military, in spite of Allende's efforts to the contrary, began to be effected by inflation and black market prices. In addition they saw themselves as part of the middle class whose position in society was being threatened by Allende. The revolutionary Left's analysis of the armed forces had proved to be more accurate than Allende's. They (the armed forces) were acting out the role expected of them in the State structure, namely, the protection of the domination of the ruling class when it became threatened.
The truck owners strike was still continuing and it was clear that its aim was to bring down the government. The military, though, were clearly unwilling to move against the truck owners. The new Minister of Transport, General Ruiz Danyau, advocated that the government give in to them, and he refused to take any further action against them. Obviously Allende had to respond to this and he forced Danyau to resign from the Cabinet and the air force. This caused loud rumblings of discontent among the armed forces. Allende felt threatened enough by this to fire Faivovich, who was Undersecretary of Transport, and who had advocated that the workers take over the owners' trucks. Even at this advanced stage of the polarization process, Allende was still making desperate efforts to ward off the inevitable clash. Efforts which were a totally inadequate response to the Right's overtly confrontationist maneuvers. Allende should have realized that the bourgeoisie could no longer be stalled with compromises and cabinet reshuffles.

Shortly after this General Prats resigned in order, as he put it, "to preserve the unity of the armed forces," and Admiral Montero did likewise. The military, then, were closing their ranks against the U.P. government. The military coup of September 11, 1973 must be seen in the context of the right-wing offensive which had been growing in intensity in the preceding months. The military, by purging "constitutionalist" soldiers, terrorizing the workers, and withdrawing their support from Allende, were testing the strength of the opposition, while at the same time cautiously moving into a position to stage a coup. However, Allende accepted all this "in the name of compromise, security and reconciliation." Allende had a preoccupation with constitutional strategy, legality and reformism. This prevented him from seeing that by his reliance on the
military and by his attempts to compromise with them, he was, in fact, strengthening the very force which was to overthrow him. The Right was no longer interested in compromise solutions; the polarization process had reached its zenith, and consequently, on September 11, 1973, the Presidential palace was attacked and Allende killed. The military junta, headed by General Pinochet, which was formed just prior to the coup, moved swiftly to take over lines of communication, industries and attack and crush the workers. 30 Owing to Allende's refusal to mobilize and arm the workers, most of them were unarmed and easily crushed by the military. However, some industries had been able to obtain some weapons, but they were eventually defeated by the superior organization and firepower of the armed forces.

Throughout the last six months of the U.P. government the Right had been moving closer and closer to a coup d'état position. They were in the process of mobilizing and organizing the final confrontation. Yet Allende did not respond in kind, even though the workers clearly showed they were ready to move towards a revolutionary situation. It seemed as though the more intense became the Rightist offensive—the more desperate became Allende's attempts at compromise. By doing so he ignored his only base of support, the workers, and in addition, increasingly left them open to right-wing terrorism. By failing to mobilize and arm the workers, Allende became reliant on the armed forces for support politically, and on the streets. As a result of this the Right, as a whole, was able to strengthen its position while the working class became more isolated from Allende and increasingly vulnerable.

Given the above balance of forces, the military were able to take over and crush the workers, and Allende's heroic stand in the Presidential
palace could not change the fact that his analysis of the class struggle had been tragically mistaken.

As Monthly Review Press pointed out, "...the time had come for a definitive answer and it came from the Right."
FOOTNOTES


4 Lawrence, p. 125.


10 The El Teniente miners strike forced Chile to halt her exports, and an estimated $50 million was lost.


12 Hugo Blanco, "In the Aftermath of the Coup Attempt," in Disaster in Chile, ed., Les Evans.


14 Zimblast and Stallings, p. 135.

15 Kate Clark, Chile: Reality and Prospects of Popular Unity (London: Lawrence and Wisehart, 1972), p. 54.
16 Hugo Blanco, p. 200.


20 Sandri, p. 207.

21 Alain Joxe, "Las fueridas armadas en el sistema politico de Chile (English Translation), in Allende's Chile, ed., Phillip O'Brien, p. 244.


23 Sobel, p. 81.

24 Gerry Foley, "The Counter Revolutionaries Step up the Pressure," Disaster in Chile, ed., Les Evans, p. 212.


26 McEoin, p. 163.


28 Foley, p. 215.


30 General Pinochet took over General Prats position as Interior Minister when Prats resigned.

31 Petras and Petras, p. 160.
CHAPTER IV

THE UNITED STATES' ROLE IN CHILE

Hypothesis: The U.S. was directly and indirectly involved in the build-up to the coup in Chile, and although it was not solely responsible for the overthrow, its role must in no way be underestimated.

With the 1970 election victory of Allende, "U.S. policy-makers and CIA and private corporate officials were thrown into disarray..."1 Although ITT officials had kept a close watch on the build-up to the 1970 election, their concern over a possible Allende victory had not been listened to very closely in Washington.2 This was partly due to the fact that the U.S. Ambassador to Chile, Edward Korry, had confidently predicted a victory for Jorge Alessandri, the right-wing candidate.3 So confident had he and others been that no coordinated machinery had been built to deal with the situation that faced them in September 1970. Initially, then, in the period between Allende's election victory and November, frantic, confused, and for the most part, uncoordinated efforts were made to block Allende's confirmation. Because of the confusion and lack of coordination it was difficult to determine who was actually initiating U.S. policy at this time. The ITT memo's for this period, though, provide a useful insight into U.S. machinations against Allende.

As I mentioned earlier ITT had been concerned about the possibility of Allende winning the election, and when this became a reality, they met with the CIA again and tried to impress upon them the need to form a plan...
of action to prevent Allende from being confirmed as President. ITT also
tried to inform Kissinger that they were willing to financially contribute
towards such a plan. This was revealed in an ITT memo in which William
Merriam, executive representative for ITT, informed Jack Neal, inter-
national relations director, "I telephoned Mr. Kissinger's office and
talked with Pete Vaky, who is the State Department's Latin American adviser
to Kissinger....I told Mr. Vaky to tell Mr. Kissinger...that we are pre-
pared to assist financially in sums up to seven figures." It was also
claimed that the State Department gave Ambassador Korry "maximum authority
to do all possible--short of a Dominican Republic-type action--to keep
Allende from taking power."  

Without doubt the reaction of the White House to Allende's victory
was one of shock and hostility and "the most significant challenge to U.S.
policy since the Cuban Revolution." The U.S. government's interdepart-
mental "Committee of Forty" met soon after the election to discuss the
implications of the Chilean results and to plan countermoves. Although
it is not known if anything was decided at that meeting, "...there were
hints that the United States' line toward Chile was hardening and that
some form of intervention was being considered." This was partly
reflected in an off-the-record briefing given on September 16, 1970 by
Henry Kissinger. He saw Allende as "...backed by Communists and probably
a Communist himself..." who represented, "a non-democratic party, which
tends to make his election pretty irreversible." Kissinger also viewed
the situation as an extremely serious one. "...I don't think we should
delude ourselves that an Allende takeover in Chile would not present
massive problems for us, and for democratic forces and for pro-U.S.
forces in Latin America, and indeed to the whole Western Hemisphere....
So we are taking a close look at the situation....It is one of those situations which is not too happy for American interests."8 Kissinger's views were more bluntly revealed in the New York Times. They quoted him as saying. "I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people."9

On September 29 the head of the Clandestine Services, Western Hemisphere Division of the CIA, William Broe, met ITT Vice President Edward Gerrity. The content of their meeting came to light in the testimony of Broe before the Senate Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations. There was a fear on the part of the U.S. that, "...the Christian Democrat Members of Congress were showing indications of swinging their full support to Allende in the belief that they could make a political bargain with him..." However, they were not totally certain of their move to support Allende and hence ensure his confirmation as President because, "At the same time the economic situation had worsened because of the reaction to the Allende election and there were indications that this was worrying the Christian Democratic Congressmen." As Broe then further explained, "There was a thesis that additional deterioration in the economic situation could influence a number of Christian Democratic Congressmen who were planning to vote for Allende."10

Without doubt there was economic chaos in the weeks following Allende's election. Bank deposits dropped sharply as did the sale of goods. The inflow of capital from abroad stopped in September and the Santiago Stock Exchange suffered a trading decrease of 60 percent. Not only this but on October 22 the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General
Rene Schneider was assassinated during a kidnap attempt on him by an extreme Right-wing group. These attempts to cause panic and economic sabotage failed however and Allende accepted a statute of guarantees and hence ensured his official confirmation as President, by the Congress.

These early, frantic attempts though failed, and now as far as the U.S. was concerned. "A more coordinated long-range strategy for defeating Allende was needed." Petras and LaPorte sum up the stance and attitudes held by the respective U.S. actors in the months prior to Allende's confirmation. "Nixon's position and the measures, speeches and behavior of the lame-duck Frei administration were intended to create economic collapse over a protracted period of time--while the CIA and ITT seemed to see it as their immediate goal. The political assessment in Washington of the relationship of forces in Chile appears to have been more realistic than the CIA's. The prudent course chosen--limited to economic pressure--was based on a long-term strategy of political and economic attrition."

From November 1970 onwards those U.S. companies who had interests in Chile and were opposed to the U.P. government, met regularly to discuss their strategy against Allende. President Nixon also realized the need to coordinate and centralize U.S. foreign policy towards Chile, and consequently he made the National Security Council headed by Henry Kissinger, his main foreign policy body. The aforementioned U.S. companies kept in touch with, and coordinated their efforts with, the National Security Council. A consensus emerged, then, between Kissinger, CIA, and ITT, "...by common consent the strategy consisted of maximizing external economic pressures on the vulnerable points of the Chilean economy creating
political conditions for a coup within a time span longer than that originally envisioned by the early opponents of Allende."  

Without doubt, then, the U.S. had committed itself to large-scale intervention in Chile by means of clandestine interference, and diplomatic and economic pressures. This strategy of destabilization gathered momentum after Allende nationalized the U.S. copper companies with virtually no compensation. ITT also reinforced its efforts after Allende appointed an interventor to manage ITT in Chile. The subsequent actions of the U.S. became known as the "invisible blockade"; a strategy in which the U.S. refused credit and aid to the dependent Chilean economy and encouraged other private financial institutions to do the same in an attempt to cause economic chaos. This invisible blockade formed part of the U.S. government's destabilization policy towards Chile. The other part consisted of "assistance and encouragement to Chilean internal opposition to Popular Unity in order to create a mass basis for a military intervention."  

The basic components of this invisible blockade will be outlined here, however, it is the analysis of the effect of the blockade which is of the most importance.

In dealing with the period between Allende's inauguration in November 1970 to early 1972, Sigmund maintained that the actions of the U.S. government, private banks and multi-lateral lending agencies, needed to be analyzed in the context of "motives". A distinction was needed between "legitimate reasons for not making loans and credits available (serious doubts about Chile's likelihood or capacity for repayment) and illegitimate ones (economic warfare in defense of private corporations or in order to promote a military coup)." Sigmund supported his "lack of credit-worthiness argument with the assertion that the Chilean economy
was in trouble by the end of 1971. Copper prices were down, food imports were rising rapidly and investment, especially in the private sector had dropped sharply. However, as Elizabeth Farnsworth pointed out, this was not a satisfactory explanation of why the U.S. refused new loans and credit to Chile. In order to determine the real motives, the situation must be looked at in a historical perspective, and political considerations must be taken into account.

The point that needs to be made clear is that Chile has always been a dependent economy and hence has never been particularly credit worthy. In the past U.S. government and U.S. private sources have had little hesitation in propping up the Chilean economy during the years that Alessandri was President (1958-64). Eleven billion dollars of aid was also pumped into Chile during Frei's administration (1964-70). In total in the post-war years (until 1971), Chile received $540 million in "development" loans from the Agency for International Development and its predecessors. These loans flowed into Chile largely to bolster the economy and prevent the election of Allende in 1964 and then to facilitate Frei's "Revolution in Liberty." In a 1966 Senate study of foreign aid, Senator Ernest Gruening described the U.S. rationale behind this. "In Chile, A.I.D. continued budget support and balance of payments assistance during the 1964 election year, to prevent economic deterioration which would have sparked unemployment and discontent and presumably a swing to the far left politically."

When the actions of the U.S. government, private banks, and multilateral lending agencies concerning foreign aid are placed in a historical context, then the political nature of their maneuvers becomes all too clear. Whereas in 1964 the U.S. attempted to support the economy for their
political ends, the scenario described by Senator Gruening became completely reversed between 1970-1973. Credit support was withdrawn to try and cause economic deterioration, discontent with Allende and a swing to the right.

The U.S. Export-Import Bank was one of the first to take a hard-line stance towards Chile in early 1971 when it denied the Allende administration's first request for a loan, $21 million, to purchase three Boeing passenger jets. At the time of the request U.S. officials admitted that Chile's "credit-worthiness" was the simplest part of the problem. This implied that the denial of the loan was political, a fact which was made all the more clearer by the fact that "...at the same time...the Export-Import Bank...was loaning liberally to such economically unstable countries as Haiti and Bangladesh."

Then in August 1971 the Export-Import Bank announced that Chile could expect no more loans or guarantees. The State Department indicated that this decision was "made on the White House level." The Nixon administration, then, was intent on erecting a credit blockade, and pressure was successfully exerted on the multi-lateral banks toward the attainment of this goal. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank were instructed to "reject all requests for loans to countries that expropriate North American holdings without compensation." Also AID "immediately cut off all U.S. aid to Chile from the moment of Allende's victory, and even went so far as to refuse to disburse loans signed with the previous Chilean government."

In addition to the invisible blockade enacted by the U.S. government, multi-national corporations with interests in Chile, also implemented
plans to disrupt the Chilean economy. On September 28, 1971, Merriam, in an ITT memo, put forward an 18-point plan of action to overthrow Allende. He proposed this plan to the White House with the recommendation "that everything should be done quietly but effectively to see that Allende does not get through the crucial next six months." As revealed by earlier memos, ITT was heavily involved in scheming against Allende and the U.P. government. However, there is no evidence that the ITT individually attempted to implement Merriam's 18-point plan, though the events that actually occurred bore a striking resemblance to the plan. Credit and loans were restricted; there was a dollar shortage in Chile; the CIA was involved; right-wing sources were funded. This is not to suggest that ITT initiated American foreign policy at this time, though its suggestions were obviously listened to.

ITT's actual involvement from late 1971 onwards was unclear because of the lack of memos, however, Anaconda and Kennecott maneuvered openly against the Allende government. These two U.S. copper companies were nationalized by Allende and they were determined to fight to get what they felt was adequate compensation. Kennecott attempted to disrupt Chilean copper sales to Western European countries by legal means, by the announcement that they (Kennecott) regarded the copper as their property. Legal action on this basis was initiated in France, and had some success. "Kennecott also successfully initiated a similar action in a German court (Hamburg, on January 5, 1973)."  

Paul Sigmund may have balked at calling these measures an "invisible blockade," however, I think without doubt the actions taken by the U.S. government and private corporations, collectively constituted a consciously planned blockade. An assessment of the effect of this blockade
will not only reinforce the reality of its very existence, but will also help to answer the question, "to what extent was the U.S. responsible for the overthrow of Salvador Allende?"

An assessment of the situation must start with the early hard-line policy of the Export-Import Bank, as this was to set the tone for what was to follow. Their refusal to give loans to Chile was an indicator to private banks and countries around the world that the U.S. had "black-balled" Chile. The Export-Import Bank has great influence and its refusal to grant loans, certainly encouraged others to follow their lead.

One of the most important points that needs to be stressed is that Chile was a dependent economy dependent on the U.S., as a result of having received large amounts of money, for many years, from the Alliance for Progress. Hence Chile needed dollars to import parts for U.S. machines and vehicles, for fertilizers, medicines and food available only from the United States. 31 The U.S. was well aware that the Chilean economy was closely tied to them and consequently they (the U.S.) knew the harmful effect their blockade would have. 32 Sigmund maintained that Chile was able to acquire "alternative sources of loans and credit to Chile which more than counter-balanced reductions from U.S. and U.S. influenced sources." 33 Admittedly Chile received credits from a variety of sources; mainly other Latin American countries. The most significant credits, though, came from socialist countries; the USSR topped the list with $259 million. 34 However, they were mainly medium and long-term credits to be used for importing capital or transport equipment. What Chile needed was short-term credit for consumer items and replacement parts for machines. Because of the high level of dependency on the U.S., Chile needed short-
term credit, and it needed it in dollars. This was reflected in the fact that only a fraction of the loans committed to the Allende government by the socialist countries had ever been disbursed and utilized. These alternative sources of credit, then, in no way "counter-balanced" the restrictive policies of the U.S., but in reality they did great damage to the Chilean economy. The credit cutback caused a halt in existing production and expansion and facilitated unemployment and inflation.

Economic disruption by both the domestic opposition and the U.S. had helped to cause problems in the state sector, which at this time was expanding under the auspices of the U.P. program. However, as it expanded huge deficits were incurred and as a result inflation increased rapidly. Allende had also felt it necessary to increase the money supply by 100 percent. In addition, the workers' wages were being eroded by inflation and a black market had developed in certain food stuffs and textiles and automobile parts. The net result of this inflationary situation was that the annual rate of inflation for 1972 rose to 40 percent. By the time of the final coup d'etat, inflation had risen to over 100 percent.

From this economic chaos, discontent and political polarization quickly followed. The U.S. also attempted to pressure Chile by making her foreign debt renegotiations with the Paris Club, in April 1972, conditional upon compensation being paid for the nationalized U.S. copper companies. However, the other members of the Paris Club (who were mainly European), bilaterally negotiated the rescheduling of the debt Chile owed them. The U.S. failed, then, to internationally isolate Chile, but nevertheless the U.S. itself still refused to renegotiate and, as Kyle Steenland pointed out at the time, this was of crucial importance as "Chile's foreign reserves are extremely low and its shortage of dollars is notorious."

The Paris
Club renegotiations, then, cannot be used as an argument to lessen the impact of the U.S.'s role.

The resultant lack of foreign exchange should not be underestimated in its effect on the evolving situation in Chile during 1972. The scarcity of foreign exchange forced the Allende government to use what was available to buy food and spare parts and cut back on consumer goods. This caused discontent among the middle-class who were the main consumers of U.S. style goods, and as the situation worsened and polarized, they went over to the right-wing camp. Evidently, they became active supporters of a coup d'etat solution. As Farnsworth pointed out, by the above action, "U.S. policy facilitated the right-wing's organizing efforts."37

This, then, was the second facet of the "destabilization" policy, the facilitating, financing and encouragement of right-wing organizational strength which would create the basis for a military intervention. O'Brien took rather a simplistic view of this. "When one looks at the continuous series of mass mobilizations of the Right in December 1971, March 1972, October 1972, May-June 1973, and August 1973 (just to tally up the peaks of frenzy reached by the opposition campaign) it would surely be giving to much credit to the CIA's political and organizational ability to claim that it or any U.S. agency was responsible for these movements..."38

Few, I think, would question this analysis; the idea that the CIA could have singlehandedly created such demonstrations was not feasible. However, O'Brien does not analyze the situation correctly or at least does not place it in a relevant context. The United States' invisible blockade had significantly helped to create economic conditions which resulted in much middle and upper-class discontent. The polarization process had begun, and the
stage was set. Following on from this the role of the CIA was to "organize and politically direct that discontent."\textsuperscript{39}

They did this partly by financing opposition activities and demonstrations, a prime example of this being the truck-owners' strike "...evidenced by the large influx of dollars which...stabilized for over a month the price of the dollar on the black market."\textsuperscript{40} The\textit{ Sunday Times} (London) also claimed that Chileans from the gremios and unions were trained in America and returned to become "the cadres for the truck owners and other Right-wing strikes."\textsuperscript{41} Money was also poured into \textit{El Mecurio}, an extremely conservative newspaper, in order to foment right-wing ideas and activities. The increasing number of unannounced U.S. officials operating in Chile at this time, reflected this commitment to organizing opposition activities. The State Department officially listed only 89 functionaries in Chile, however, there were other claims that there were over 1100.\textsuperscript{42} Also the "pots and pans" demonstration by middle-class housewives in Santiago against Allende was strikingly similar to the 1963 "pots and pans" demonstration in Sao Paulo, Brazil, which preceded the junta coup against the Goulart government.\textsuperscript{43} A coup which the U.S. had been successfully involved in and was now seemingly trying to repeat its tactics.

However, the crucial group remained the armed forces, as there could be no overthrow without their support and participation. The U.S. realized this and had always maintained close links with the Chilean armed forces. The stance of the U.S. was clearly revealed during the "invisible blockade" in that military aid was exempt from it. In fact, during the Allende years, U.S. military aid increased: in fiscal year ending 1970 it was $800,000; by mid-1971 it had increased to $5.7 million; and in 1971-72 it was $12.3 million.\textsuperscript{44} The majority of the navy and air
force officers eventually came round to the idea of bringing about a coup. As the polarization deepened the military purged its ranks, and became ready to act. Without doubt, "U.S. military officials encouraged their Chilean counterparts to act." 45

In the final assessment of the U.S. role, it must be noted that considerable sums of money were spent assisting right-wing groups and the military. Advice and technical assistance were also given amply. The "invisible blockade" did exist and it did great damage to the Chilean economy, and the polarization process was intensified by U.S. actions.

Some observers assessed the situation as being one in which "... The United States assisted in the making of the Chilean coup, but was not the prime promoter of the coup." 46 This has a certain amount of validity, but it does not fully convey the impact that U.S. involvement had. I admit that there was by October 1972, the emergence of civilian and military groups determined to overthrow Allende. This emergence and organization was a response to the internal class struggle. These two factors--the internal class struggle and U.S. involvement--were so closely tied that neither factor on its own can be labelled "prime promoter." I don't see the situation in Chile as having been the result of purely Chilean forces or solely of machinations by the U.S. government and agencies. However, an assessment which pigeonholes U.S. involvement as "assisting in the Chilean coup", relegates it to an unjustified secondary role. The U.S. was massively involved, directly and indirectly and the part they played should in no way be underestimated.

The coup became, then, the combined efforts of the shared interests of the U.S. and the Chilean bourgeoisie and their military allies. 47
FOOTNOTES


4 ITT memos, p. 599.

5 Ibid., pp. 608-609.

6 James Petras and Robert LaPorte, Jr., "Can We Do Business with Radical Nationalists: Chile: No," Foreign Policy, 7 (Summer 1972): p. 133.


12 O'Brien, p. 229.

13 Petras and LaPorte, Jr., p. 132.

14 Petras and Morley, p. 35.
This is an indirect form of nationalization.

O'Brien, p. 230.


Elizabeth Farnsworth, "Chile: What was the U.S. Role? More Than Admitted," Foreign Policy 16 (Fall 1974), pp. 133-4.

Ibid.


Elizabeth Farnsworth, "Chile: What was the U.S. Role?" p. 134.


Farnsworth, "Chile: What was the U.S. Role?" p. 133.


O'Brien, p. 232.

ITT Memos, pp. 939-42.

Ibid.

COFLA, "Vindictive Measures," p. 11.

Farnsworth, "Chile: What was the U.S. Role?" pp. 135-36.

"Aid as Imperialism," Chile: Unmasking Development, COFLA.

Sigmund, p. 336.

A complete table of loans made by socialist countries to Chile can be found in, Farnsworth, Feinberg, and Leenon, p. 366.

Ibid.


Farnsworth, "What was the U.S. Role?" p. 139.
38 O'Brien, pp. 236-37.

39 Petras and Morley, United States and Chile, p. xiii.


41 Sunday Times (London) 27 October 1974.


45 Petras and Petras, p. 154.


47 Petras and Petras, p. 151.
CHAPTER V

THE M.I.R. (MOVEMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT)

Hypothesis: Although the M.I.R.'s activities caused the U.P. to move to the left on certain occasions, it cannot be held responsible for provoking the Rightist offensive.

Prior to the 1970 election of Salvador Allende there were four principal factions which made up the revolutionary left in Chile at that time. These consisted of: (1) The left wing of the Socialist Party, within which there existed a guerrilla wing. However, it always remained part of the main Socialist Party, and the U.P. coalition, although as the polarization process intensified it often found itself advocating solutions which were clearly outside Allende's "constitutionalist" strategy. (2) Maoism was represented in the revolutionary left by the Revolutionary Communist Party (P.C.R.). Although it was a small party it had had a certain amount of influence among the students of Santiago. However, its demise was greatly enhanced by its call for a mass boycott of voting for Allende in order to illustrate the uselessness of the electoral road to socialism. Allende's electoral victory, then, plus his avowed desire to recognize Red China, syphoned off much of the P.C.R.'s internal and external support. (3) A collection of micro-groups, mostly Trotskyist, who remained largely underground, and their activities were limited to small-scale terrorism. The fourth and most important faction of the revolutionary left was the M.I.R. (Movement of the Revolutionary Left). This was formed in 1965 "from a variety of left-wing factions, notably
Trotskyites and dissident socialists. Though as Evans pointed out, "The M.I.R. began as a Castroist current," with many of its ideas and strategies originating directly from those employed by the Fidelists in Cuba.\[3\] The M.I.R. was initially organized at the University of Concepcion from students and other leftist groups. From these humble beginnings the M.I.R. evolved to become the most powerful of the insurrectional organizations; the only one that made any significant inroads among students and slum dwellers, and sustained its underground activities. Groups which it initiated and which came under its influence, comprised the Revolutionary Peasant Movement among Indians and migrant farm workers; the Front of Revolutionary Workers in the factories, and the Movement of Revolutionary Slum Dwellers in the "callampas" and campamentos.\[4\] In addition the M.I.R. organized the University Movement of the Left for college students and the Front of Revolutionary Students for high school students of twelve years and up.\[5\]

The M.I.R. was organizing sections of the masses, especially homeless people, well before the election of Allende.\[6\] This organizing continued throughout the Presidential election campaign of 1970, and although they did not openly support Allende, it seemed as though they did not actively oppose him, as they refrained from armed guerrilla actions during this period. The M.I.R. did not believe in the electoral road to socialism, and this had been one of the main reasons why they had not attempted to formally ally themselves with the U.P. They often criticized the U.P. for its insistence on following such a strategy. Peaceful revolution was impossible and armed struggle was inevitable. "The seizing of power by the workers," they wrote, "will be possible only through armed struggle." The ruling class will not surrender its power without a struggle and revolutionary war is the inevitable result.\[7\]
The victory of Allende on September 4, 1970, not surprisingly, threw the different factions of the revolutionary left into disarray. Their philosophy of the non-viability of the "electoral road" had, at this point, seemingly been repudiated. The M.I.R. and the left-wing of the Socialist Party were the only two groups of the "ultra-left" to successfully weather this crisis. As outlined above the M.I.R. gave the U.P. critical support, but was always pessimistic about Allende's chances of being elected or inaugurated. When Allende became president, the M.I.R. was faced with the problem of what course to follow. As Evans said, "Should it support the government or continue preparing for guerrilla war?" Initially it attempted to do both, though as the polarization process intensified, it became increasingly critical of the reformist line of the U.P., and in particular, the Communist Party.

Its activities within the government were mainly in the area of intelligence and security, rather than policy making. Allende used MIRistas to form his personal guard (a move which was criticized by the Right). However, the M.I.R. was not part of the U.P. coalition and only gave it tacit support and consequently most of their activities were carried out outside the government apparatus.

The main role of the M.I.R. was to "dedicate themselves to the mobilization of workers and students," because for them "...the workers have already gained the right to make the foreign enterprises, the banks, the factories, and the land, the property of all the people." The M.I.R. seemed to have taken upon itself the role of the revolutionary conscience of the U.P. in that it attempted to carry out actions which would "push the U.P. from the left so that the U.P. would act on the most revolutionary aspects of its program."
This activity was most evident in the outbreak of land seizures, most of which occurred between November 1970 and January 1971. They started on a massive scale in the Mapuche Indian regions of the south where Mapuche peasants had traditionally claimed land from the latifundia as theirs and had a history of land invasion. These Indians and also non-Indian peasants were organized by the M.I.R. into the MCR (Revolutionary Peasant Movement), and this movement led many of the land seizures. Cristobal Kay documented the dramatic rise in the number of land seizures under the Popular Unity government, "...in 1967, 9 seizures; in 1968, 26 seizures; in 1969, 148 seizures; in 1970, 456 seizures; and in 1971, 1,278 seizures." Evans saw the situation as one in which "the timeliness and effectiveness of the organizational and agitational work carried out by the M.I.R. among the peasants have turned these actions into an example that is spreading like an oil slick, from the south towards the center and north of the country."

Allende saw that the movement of these armed peasant groups was spreading across the countryside, and he was afraid that a response by the landlords and the Right would provoke armed conflict. For Allende, this would be extremely bad timing as the U.P. government had not yet consolidated its political power. Eventually, then, although Allende voiced his understanding of the plight of the poor and hungry peasants, his adherence to legality caused him to act. On May 16, 1971, a confrontation occurred between the police and landless peasants at a fundo in Santiago province. Five peasants were arrested and the rest expelled. Following this on July 31, the government warned that it would no longer tolerate these land seizures and Interior Minister, Undersecretary Daniel Vergara said, "The full force of the law would be used to insure that private property was
respected. The M.I.R. berated the government for compromising with the opposition; however, they eventually agreed not to carry out any more land seizures unless the landowner abused it or the government failed to redistribute it.

The important question that needs to be asked here is: "To what extent did the M.I.R.'s activities push Allende to the left and consequently help to precipitate the Rightist backlash?" Without doubt the M.I.R.'s intention in organizing and mobilizing the peasants in the countryside had been to try and force Allende to move to the left. They took over the lands and presented Allende with a "fait accompli," especially as they claimed that they were "only helping President Allende carry out the agrarian reform and increase production for the country." To a certain extent the M.I.R. viewed their actions as supportive of Allende in that they were ensuring that the Right could not subvert the agrarian reform program. However, their actions challenged the U.P.'s hegemony over the mass movement, and it was in response to this that the U.P. government took up the challenge and rapidly but legally expropriated a large number of farms throughout Chile. By this maneuver the U.P. outflanked the M.I.R. and took away a lot of the credit due to the M.I.R. for their organizational activities among the masses. This is not to suggest that every land seizure that took place was organized by the M.I.R. On the contrary, many of them were spontaneous actions by repressed and hungry peasants who acted once they realized that the armed forces would not be used to suppress them.

The M.I.R. has been blamed for provoking the Right into action and for causing the disaffection of the middle class to the right by their
"ultra-leftist" activities. A more accurate analysis of the situation was one in which the right-wing press took advantage of the disagreements on the left between the M.I.R. and parts of the U.P. and exploited them to the full using vastly inaccurate headlines. For example, in reference to the land seizures, the conservative newspaper, "La Prensa," played on the fears of the middle classes with stories of kidnapped landowners, raped wives, drugged Indians, and general rural chaos.\(^1\) Also, the "illegal" takeovers of land, many of which were carried out without the help of the M.I.R. "were immediately exaggerated and used by the bourgeoisie to attack the government for its inability to keep the political process within legal confines."\(^2\) The bourgeois press was helped in its efforts to exaggerate and exploit the role of the revolutionary left by the Communist Party's hostility towards the M.I.R. The C.P. saw the rural and urban land seizures as undermining middle class support for the U.P. and consequently, their anger over this was directed at the M.I.R. At one point relations between the two parties deteriorated to such an extent that in December 1970, during an election campaign at the University of Concepcion, a gun battle broke out and an M.I.R. student was killed.\(^3\) Of course these kinds of confrontations were gleefully accepted by the Right, and exaggerated to scare the middle class and moderates away from a left-wing solution and towards the right.

Although the M.I.R. was most visible through its role in the land seizures it was also involved in the organization of "campamentos." The U.P. also was involved in this area; however, its activities were limited compared to those of the M.I.R., who viewed the movement "as a political front of the class struggle."\(^4\)
During the last year and a half of the U.P. government the polarization process intensified greatly and the mobilizations in the "campa-mentos" took a qualitative leap forward in the creation of organs of "peoples power." These became known as "comandos comunales" (Communal Commands), and were created as a reaction to the "Bosses Strike" of October 1972. The MIRistas and militants of the Socialist Party were in the vanguard of the "comandos comunales" in which workers, housewives, students, soldiers and the unemployed united together to take charge of production, distribution and defense in their communities. In the industrial belts "cordones" were organized to lend solidarity to the workers who took over the factories. 23

The working class's resistance to the strike caused it to eventually peter out, and unfortunately, the organs of "popular power" that had been created fell, at least temporarily, into disuse. However, the masses' socialist consciousness had been raised to new levels, and it resisted the return of the factories they had occupied and demanded the expropriation of new ones.

The M.I.R. was involved in many other similar activities during the period of Popular Unity; the "gremios" strike and the abortive coup of June 1973, being the most important. In these latter situations the M.I.R. again agitated and organized among the masses in order to offer a resistance against the Rightist offensive, which by this time was almost ready to deal its final blow.

So far in this chapter, then, I have tried to outline the activities that the M.I.R. was involved in and analyze the extent of that involvement. Without doubt they and the left wing of the Socialist Party were involved in urban and rural land seizures, and in the creation of organs
of "peoples power." However, a certain amount of this was spontaneous, though admittedly some of this spontaneity may have come from the momentum created by the M.I.R.'s activities. Also, in certain cases the M.I.R.'s activities did cause Allende to move further to the left, and at a faster pace than he had originally intended. However, the theory that the M.I.R.'s activities pushed Allende off his constitutional course and hence precipitated the Rightist offensive, accredits a far more important revolutionary role to the M.I.R. than in actual fact it had.

As the polarization process intensified so obviously did right-wing pressure against the left, and within this context, the masses on the left acted to defend their class interest. However, the masses who formed the "cordones" and "commandos comunales", and those who so swiftly rose up to support Allende on the occasion of the abortive coup, were not members of a mass revolutionary party led and organized by the M.I.R! At no time was there such a party. In order to be able to accredit the M.I.R. with precipitating the Rightist offensive, the M.I.R. would have had to have been the leader of such an aforementioned mass revolutionary party. This was a position that the M.I.R. never held or acted out. In reality it had done some organizing and mobilizing and this, plus its conflicts with the rest of the left, was vastly exaggerated and exploited by the Right. The latter followed this course of action in order to give itself "justification" for its offensive and eventual coup against Allende. This "theory of provocation" cannot accurately be applied to the M.I.R. as its organization was too weak to be held responsible for mass actions. As Roxborough, O'Brien and Roddick pointed out, "if the theory of provocation is seriously held, then it was the bulk of the working class and peasantry who were provocative. For it was they who took over factories and farms in response
to the right-wing threats of October 1972 and June 1973, and it was they who demanded that Allende and his government take a firm hand against the Right."\(^{24}\)

The M.I.R.'s role, then, was overexaggerated by the Right; however, this conclusion begs the other important question concerning the M.I.R.: "Why did it fail to gain the leadership of the masses and present itself as a viable revolutionary alternative to the U.P?"

The M.I.R. had had an organizational base and significant influence in the shantytowns and poor neighborhoods of Santiago, Concepcion and other Chilean cities. Also, it had had links with important sectors of the peasantry and in the student movement. Of all the diverse and faction-ridden groups of the revolutionary left, the M.I.R. seemed to have been the "key element in forming a revolutionary rallying point, if not itself serving as the rallying point."\(^{25}\)

However, the M.I.R. was incapable of working out an overall, rigorous, revolutionary strategy, and was guilty at times of changing its orientations, and as a result, confusing the masses. From the time of its formation until Allende's election victory, the M.I.R. remained very much a clandestine organization, carrying out bombings and robberies to fund its activities.\(^{26}\) When Allende came to power the M.I.R. moved towards a more opportunist position, critically supporting the U.P. when it felt it was necessary. Admittedly, much of its critical support was intended to protect Allende from the Right, but it also resulted in the M.I.R. failing to present itself as a clear revolutionary alternative to the Allende government. Not only that but it also failed to make clear to the workers how openly reformist the U.P.'s programs and policies were. As I have discussed in earlier chapters, Allende did not fundamentally alter the
the capitalist structure of Chile, and in addition strongholds of the bourgeois state, such as the armed forces, police, courts and constitution, were left intact.

Although the M.I.R. may have been correct in trying to protect the U.P. from the Right, it should at the same time have pointed out clearly to the masses that they should have no confidence in the U.P. Instead, they should have stressed more clearly than they did the need for the masses to rely on their own mobilization and create their own organs of power (especially a popular militia). Groups on the left, inside and outside the U.P. coalition, encouraged the masses to begin to develop their own organs of popular control. The local leadership of various groups were involved in this; the left wing of the S.P.; MAPU (United Popular Action Movement); I.C. (Christian Left); P.C.R. (Revolutionary Communist Party) and the M.I.R. As Zimblast and Stallings pointed out the problem here was, "The fact that this leadership was not centralized, however, left the working class without a coherent strategy for the conquest of state power." The M.I.R., because of its weaknesses, was unable to establish itself as the revolutionary leader.

Not only did the M.I.R. display general political weaknesses, but it also followed incorrect policies which showed that it did not have a true understanding of the nature of the class struggle.

They seemed to have had a confused policy towards the armed forces. On the one hand they warned the masses against the reactionary nature of the military and yet they entertained possibilities of "winning the armed forces or large sectors of the officer corps to supporting the revolution." Possibly this particular orientation in the M.I.R. camp was one of the
reasons why they failed to split the rank-and-file away from the officer corp to any significant extent. Whatever the explanations, the M.I.R., being a Marxist party, should have realized that in the final analysis of the class struggle, the vast majority of the officers would defend the established system against the workers.

Another policy which the M.I.R. followed, which again seemed to ignore their own Marxist philosophy, was their lack of contacts and mobilizing efforts among the working class. The M.I.R. did work among the working class; however, they (the M.I.R.) did not accord it the primacy which its position in the class struggle historically warranted. For many years they worked with the peasants and slumdwellers; however, for a mass party to be built and for the revolutionary struggle to be waged successfully, the working class had to form its base. In the mobilizing and organizing that took place after the abortive coup of June 29, 1973, the M.I.R argued strongly that the "comandos comunales" should be the leading group of "peoples power," and the industrial cordones should be subordinate to them. This downgrading of the workers' role again showed a misreading of the class struggle.

Also the M.I.R. was never able to conceive of building a mass revolutionary party. They relied heavily on an elitist type of guerrilla warfare, which excluded mass involvement. Consequently, many years went by in which the reformist parties were able to capture and strengthen their hold over the working class.

The M.I.R., then, had many weaknesses which prevented it from becoming "a revolutionary mobilizing center to the left of the Unidad Popular." However, it had enough visibility on the far left, for the Right to exploit and exaggerate its activities and intra-left conflicts.
Even with all the above points taken into consideration, however, the M.I.R. still played an important role. It may not have been a huge force on the left, but it did do some very useful mobilizing and organizing work and helped the masses raise their level of socialist consciousness.

The mass movement in Chile largely acquired its own momentum from the ongoing polarization process, but the M.I.R. played a significant catalyst role.
FOOTNOTES


4"callampas"--slums.
"campamentos"--improved slum dwellings and working class communities.


8Gerry Foley, "The Deepening Political Polarization," Disaster in Chile, ed., Les Evans.


12Ibid.

13Evans, p. 72.


15"MIR--The Underground Surfaces," p. 31.


19 McCoin, p. 83.


21 Ibid.


23 Andrew Zimblast and Barbara Stallings, "Showdown in Chile," in Revolution and Counter Revolution in Chile, eds., Paul M. Sweezy and Harry Magdoff, p. 125.

24 O'Brien, Roxborough et al, p. 265.


27 Zimblast and Stallings, p. 125.


30 Jean-Pierre Beauvais, p. 69.
Hypothesis: The "via Chilena" has important implications for European leftists' attempts to come to power, although any comparisons and speculations can only be of the most tentative nature at the present time.

The Chilean Experience of 1970-73 has received much attention throughout the world especially in France and Italy where left-wing forces appear to be in a position of unprecedented strength. The question that needs to be asked is, how similar are the political situations in France and Italy, and are they in any way comparable to those in Chile between 1970-73? If reasonable similarities can be identified then some limited form of speculation concerning future left-wing coalition governments in France and Italy would be useful. However, even if reasonable similarities cannot be found, then, this in itself would also be a useful conclusion.

My first intention is to try and outline the political situation in France and Italy in terms of the make-up, structure and strategies of the differing political parties. An attempt can then be made to form comparisons with the Unidad Popular in Chile.

The Italian Communist Party under Enrico Berlinguer is at the moment acting out its strategy of the "historic compromise." In essence this involves dialogue with and support for the Christian Democratic minority government. The "historic compromise" was first voiced
by Berlinguer in the fall of 1973. He maintained that a Communist party's strategy must be realistic and reflect the internal distribution of power in the country. Consequently, he saw that for the Italian Communist Party (PCI), its best strategy was not to form a left-wing coalition with the PSI (Italian Socialist Party), but with the center. "Great changes cannot be brought about by antagonizing powerful oppositions by splitting, as it were, society into two hostile camps. Rather, such changes can be accomplished only by forging alliances with a variety of different social groups and with the mass parties which represent them." Berlinguer, as this quote showed, had been following the events in Chile and was attempting to ensure that his party did not suffer the same fate as Allende's coalition. However, this "historic compromise" was not purely a reaction to the events in Chile, but was also a blueprint for moving out of, and staying out of, political isolation. In 1962-63 the PSI joined a center-left government with the Christian Democrats and consequently, the PCI was isolated. Therefore, in order to move out of this isolation it needed to ally itself either with the Socialists or the Catholics.

During the 1970's the PCI enjoyed an upsurge in electoral support as the regional elections in June 1975 clearly showed. The PCI then became the single largest party in Italy. The reasons behind their gains in popularity need not be delved into too deeply here; suffice it to say that the worsening economic crisis and thirty years of corrupt, inefficient D.C. government, persuaded the voters to look for new solutions. This new solution seemed to be the PCI rather than the PSI. The PSI had suffered from a long coalition with the D.C., and had lost the confidence of many of its voters. The PSI's long-term hopes were pinned on a united-
1975 Electoral Results in Percentages Compared to Previous Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Regional 1970</th>
<th>National 1972</th>
<th>Regional 1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCI (Communists)</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI (Socialists)</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PdUp, DP, etc., (Revolutionary Left)**</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Left</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C. (Christian Democrats)</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSDI (Social Democrats)</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRI (Republicans)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLI (Liberals)</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSI (Fascists)</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In recent years the administrative regions of Italy have been given increased economic, political and certain legislative powers.

**The 1970 figure is for PSIUP candidates. The 1972 figure is for PSIUP Manifesto and MPL (left catholics). The 1975 figure is for PdUp, DP (an electoral front of PdUp and Avanguardia Operaia), and a few other revolutionary candidates.

left coalition, but the PCI did not favour this as they were afraid of polarization and also they did not see the PSI as being capable of giving them enough support to constitute a left-wing coalition government. Hence the only way was for the PCI to ally themselves with the D.C. The Italian Socialist Party withdrew their support from the D.C. and consequently precipitated a national election in June 1976. The D.C. emerged with a minority government and with the realization that it would be impossible to govern Italy without the involvement of the PCI in some form or other. A bargain was struck, then, and in return for sustaining the D.C. in power, the PCI would receive explicit recognition of its increased importance in the House and Senate, several important chairmanships, and the chairmanship of the House.
In a number of ways, France has some similarities with Italy. They both are traditionally Catholic and yet both have Communist organizations which enjoy widespread popular support. However, due to the strategies which were inherent in the left of each country, the political situation on the left in France can be differentiated from that in Italy. Whereas in Italy the Communists and the Socialists at different times have allied themselves with the Catholics, the French left has never felt the need to do so. The main Catholic party in France, the MRP (Movement Republicain Populaire) lost much of its support in 1947 when de Gaulle broke his tacit alignment with them, and took over many of their conservative voters when he formed his own "Rassemblement du People Francais."

From then on the MRP lost votes in every subsequent election until 1967 when it officially disbanded.

In France at the present time, Catholicism as an influence on politics, seems minimal. There is no major Catholic political party, and the increase in support for the parties on the left shows that religion is not an overriding consideration in terms of political affiliation. Although Catholicism is still the major religion of France, there seems little prospect of a strong Catholic party coming into being in the foreseeable future.

In Italy, however, the situation is rather more complex. In France the MRP had been a party, mainly for leftists Catholics. However, the Italian Christian Democratic Party (D.C.) is the party to which almost all Catholics belong, regardless of class or political belief. How important is the "Catholic factor" in Italy at the present time, and how important will it be in the future?
Time magazine maintained that Enrico Berlinger is trying to come to terms with the Roman Catholic Church. They report that he recently sent a conciliatory open letter to an Italian bishop in which he gave "assurances that his party not only respects religion but sees it as a possible stimulus toward building a true socialist party." These quotes reflect the present strategy of the PCI in regards to Catholicism. Not only are the PCI attempting to court the DC and the Catholic Church, but also the huge mass of Catholic voters in the country.

Berlinger is aware that there is a growing trend of secularization in Italy, and he is trying to re-fashion the image of the PCI so that it can most successfully capitalize on this trend. By lessening the PCI's image of being hostile to religion, and by giving Catholicism a role to play in the building of socialism, many traditionally Catholic voters can be won over to the communist camp.

The table below illustrates the changing portion of the public who view communism and Catholicism as compatible. In addition to the statistics shown in this table, recent electoral performances reflect this diminishing influence of the Church in political matters. The DC was defeated in the 1974 Divorce Referendum, and the PCI gained substantial support in both the 1975 regional elections and the 1976 national elections.

If this secularization trend continues, and the signs are that it will, it will be interesting to see how many traditionally Catholic voters the PCI can woo away from the DC. If it is successful at this, it may replace the DC as the largest political party in Italy, and if this happens, the DC may be forced to relinquish their tenuous control of the government.
This aforementioned lack of a Catholic party in France meant that the parties on the left in France, the PCF and the PSI, had to ally themselves with each other in their search for electoral victory. Eventually in 1972 the two parties formulated the Common Programme with the smaller Left-Radical party. Without doubt the programme was weighted in favour of the Socialists as they were the stronger party, and this resulted in tensions in the coalition as the PCF always envisaged themselves as the "vanguard" of the Left. Whatever the tensions between the three parties of the Common Programme, they are all aware that their best chance to win the national elections is to remain united. Their unity so far has brought them significant electoral success. In 1974 the Presidential candidate of
the Left, Francois Mitterand, came within a percentage point of defeating Valery Gisgard d'Estaing in the race for the Presidency.

In the cantonal elections in the spring of 1976, the Left, for the first time since the formation of the "Fifth Republic," gained an absolute majority of the votes cast on the first ballot, 56.4 percent (Socialists, 26.5 percent; Communists, 22.8 percent, and other parties the remainder). These levels of support have been sustained in the parliamentary by-elections of November 1976 and the municipal elections of March 1977. If this trend is continued in the General Election of spring 1978, then the Left is likely to obtain a parliamentary majority.15

As in Italy this move to the left by the electorate was in part prompted by the worsening economic conditions that the West as a whole was experiencing. In 1974 the French rate of GNP growth moved in negative figures, the rate of inflation went over 15 percent, and unemployment exceeded 500,000 for the first time since World War II.16

In both Italy and France, then, in the 1970's Communist parties have enjoyed an upsurge in support. As I have indicated this has partly happened as a reaction to socio-economic conditions and also dissatisfaction with the existing leadership. However, it also reflects the fact that both the French and Italian Communists have made great efforts to publicize their acceptance of democracy and their distance from Moscow and hence, hopefully, their acceptance by the electorate. Can the "historic compromise" situation in Italy and the "Union of the Left" in France be compared in any useful way to the Unidad Popular coalition in Chile?

The Unidad Popular was also a coalition mainly involving the two main working class parties, the Socialists and the Communists, as in France. The U.P. did contain some small center-left parties; however,
the strategy of Allende in the earlier part of the government was not to form a "historic compromise" of his own with the Chilean Christian Democrats. The reason being that he did not need to, as he had won a plurality of the vote. Once he had accepted the "constitutional guarantees," he was legally able to govern by the support of his own coalition. However, in the closing stages of the Allende government, overtures were made to the Christian Democrats in an effort to halt the increasing political polarization process. A strategy which by then had no hope of working as the class struggle had become too intense for a compromise solution to be successful.

The similarity here is especially strong as regards Italy. Berlinguer saw the implications of the Chilean tragedy very clearly. Allende had won a plurality, not an absolute majority of the vote and consequently, he was faced constantly by an opposition which had almost as much support as he did. An opposition which was not only entrenched in the governmental institutions, but throughout the middle and upper classes of the entire country. As we know, the result was political polarization and the destruction of the Unidad Popular.

Berlinguer is faced with a similar problem. By a combination of alliances on the Left and a future increase in electoral support, theoretically a Left coalition could come to power in Italy. However, any increase in support would still leave a large DC party and a staunch Catholic electorate behind it, in opposition. For Berlinguer and the Communists this scenario is frighteningly similar to Chile, and hence they have for the time being decided to pursue their "historic compromise."

The failure of the "via Chilena" obviously caused much theorizing among the French and Italian Communist parties concerning the prospects of
a peaceful road to socialism. The prospects for a peaceful way were subjected to further scrutiny by the events in Indochina in the spring and summer of 1975. Here it seemed the opposite strategy, that of armed struggle had succeeded. In South Vietnam the sudden collapse of Thieu's regime's military resistance quickly led to the Communist takeover in Saigon on April 30. As Tiersky pointed out, "...the Thieu regime had been finally beaten down by military force rather than by political machination," and this "served to amplify the signal of a power transfer in Southeast Asia as a whole." The Italian Communists' assessment seems to remain the same and the French CP's assessment also, at least publicly, does not seem to have wavered from a commitment to the peaceful road. However, in the aftermath of the Armed Forces Movement revolution of April 25, 1974 in Portugal, the PCF declared complete solidarity with the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP). The leader of whom, Alvaro Cunhal, had declared that there would be "no parliament in Portugal." By such actions the PCF strained the tensions inherent in the "union of the left" and also brought into question its commitment to democratic procedures.

The basic tenets of the Common Programme are, by design, vague, but as it is likely that the Socialists would be the controlling force in a left-wing coalition government, the wording would be interpreted in their more moderate fashion. Both the Unidad Popular program and the Common Programme call for certain basic social reforms, such as reorganizing the economy more socialistically, income redistribution and institutional reform. However, given the above, that the French socialists are likely to be administering the program, its impact would presumably not be as great as that of Allende's program, and hence possibly not invoke such a
violent response. Neither program was or is a program that would destroy capitalism, but Allende's was the more radical. It was mainly intended as a program to "lose on". In other words, the reality of victory was not seriously considered at the time the program was drawn up, and hence it became more of a radical rallying call than a more moderate program to "win on". However, Allende won and came to power having promised to carry out relatively radical reforms; reforms which evoked a rightist offensive against him and his eventual downfall. This election victory, which reflected the increased support for the left, was partly a response to the socio-economic conditions prevailing in Chile. Large-scale poverty, economic instability, inflation and the unfulfilled expectations generated by Frei's "Revolution in Liberty" were the conditions Allende inherited. Obviously, this socio-economic condition was far worse than those now prevailing in France or Italy, and hence any rigid comparisons would be of a precarious nature. However, a trend of worsening socio-economic conditions could and can be seen in all three countries.

Chile, France and Italy, then, all suffered a trend of worsening socio-economic conditions and dissatisfaction with the existing administration. Partly as a consequence of these factors, they all experienced an upsurge of support for parties on the left. Also they have had to deal with strong Christian Democratic parties (especially in Chile and Italy), and a large section of the electorate which is of the Catholic faith. Given such a background, the Unidad Popular came to power. What are the chances of leftist parties in France or Italy duplicating this feat, and if either of them do, what form is it likely to take; and are they likely to run into problems similar to those that Allende faced?
At the present time the "Union of the Left" in France seems the most likely candidate to "formally" come to power in the Spring Legislative elections in 1978. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, their support has been increasing in recent cantonal and municipal elections, and the trend, if continued, should ensure the left a legislative majority. 23

In addition, the French President has not only been losing support to the left, but he has also been under attack from the Gaulist Right. 24 Although this cannot be directly compared to the right-wing split in Chile which allowed Allende to gain victory, dissension between the elements of the center-right in France may be important if and when the left becomes elected and begins to carry out its program. Presuming the "Union of the Left" does win the spring elections, the spirit of the program is most likely to be interpreted and implemented by the Socialists. However, the PCF will constantly try to push the Socialists into interpreting the program more radically and at a faster pace. In some ways this would be similar to the role that the MIR played in Chile, although they were not a part of the governing coalition and were more "ultra-left" than the PCF.

A governing coalition of the left in France seems destined to be riddled with tension and conflict. The parties on the coalition may not act in a very united fashion, as indicated by their present conflict (re-September-October 1977). In addition it is quite possible that the Right will react to a Communist-Socialist government with some degree of economic sabotage, just as the Right did in Chile. This could cause worsening socio-economic conditions and political polarization. This would seem to set it down a path similar to that trod by the U.P. However, the theory that the situation could reach such a crisis point that the army would attempt a
coup d'état seems an extremely unlikely scenario for a country such as France.  

The situation at the moment (September-October 1977) is one in which the PCF has recently made its latest attack upon the Common Programme and has seemingly withdrawn its support from the "Union of the Left." Some of this conflict is over the number of industries to be nationalized and in general over the reformist nature of the program. However, the conflict is also over the PF's "ranking" in the coalition, and consequently, this latest PCF maneuver may be an attempt to "jockey" for position within the coalition in terms of trying to secure the best cabinet positions that it possibly can. However, it is also a distinct possibility that the PCF will pull out of the Union of the Left for good. It is still too far away from the date of the elections to make any definite statements concerning this at the moment.

Another similarity to Chile can be seen in the fact that a "Union of the Left" government will not control all the governmental institutions, just as Allende did not. Allende controlled the presidency but not the legislature, whereas in France, the Left would control the legislature but not the presidency. The French Presidential election is set for 1981 and if things go badly for the Left in the early stages, there is no reason why Giscard d'Estaing could not win re-election. The possibility exists, then, for a constitutional crisis to develop in France similar to the actions of the opposition in Congress in Chile, blocking Allende's proposals. Though, of course, in France, the institutional situation would be reversed.

A number of different scenarios can be depicted and I have speculated on some of them. However, as far as the future is concerned, the
three more probable scenarios seem to be:

a) The "Union of the Left" will fail to unify for the spring 1978 legislative elections, and hence will fail to win the election or at the very least seriously jeopardize their chances of electoral success.

b) The "Union of the Left" will come to power, but after a short period of time will be racked by internal dissension and political and economic pressure from the Right. As a result the coalition will collapse most probably by a withdrawal of support by the PCF.

c) The "Union of the Left" will come to power and the French Socialists will follow a moderate course and act in the mold of a social democratic party like the British Labour Party. The PCF will act as their left-wing conscience, but will be tempered by the responsibilities of office.

In Italy the situation does not indicate any great changes in the future. At the moment the PCI seems intent on continuing and consolidating its alliance with the D.C. as part of their historic compromise strategy. Berlinguer obviously sees the situation as being similar enough to the events in Chile for him to shy away from a united left coalition with the PSI against the Christian Democrats. However, the Communists can be expected to ask for payment for their political support in the shape of cabinet seats and program reforms. If it became clear that none of these were to be forthcoming to the satisfaction of the PCI, it is quite possible that at some time in the future they would withdraw their support. The probable outcome would be new elections and continued bargaining concerning the possible make-up of a governing coalition. However, the D.C. realizes that the Communist Party commands almost as much support as they do, and consequently, whatever governing combination is experimented with, it must take full account of the position and strength of the PCI.

If the PCI cannot deliver some of its program reforms to its followers by the tactic of the "historic compromise, then they may begin
to lose support. There are three main parties of the revolutionary left in Italy—the Avanguardia Operaia, the Hotta Continua, and the PdUp. 28 The tactics of the PCI could leave a vacuum on the left into which any or all of these could move. 29

Certain aspects of the Chilean experience, then, can be seen reflected in the politics of the left in France and in Italy. These similarities lead to some interesting speculations for left-wing parties in France and Italy. However, the political situations in each of the three countries in question are not so similar as to allow really rigid comparisons or rigid extrapolations of events from one to another. As I have tried to illustrate, certain aspects can be compared, but these comparisons must be of a limited nature and the speculations tentative. Even so, there is no doubt that the "via Chilena" has important implications for left-wing parties in Europe, and without doubt had, and will have, an effect upon their political behavior.
FOOTNOTES


6 Ledeen, p. 56.

7 Giacomo Sani, p. 43.

8 Ibid, p. 45.


10 Ibid.


12 Giacomo Sani, p. 33.

13 d'Arcais and Moreth, pp. 35-37.


19 Ronald Tiersky, p. 20.

20 Ibid., p. 21.


24 Nugent and Lowe, p. 272.

25 "Chile, France and Italy, A Discussion," Government and Opposition 7 no. 3 (Summer 1972), pp. 407–408.


27 Ian Campbell, p. 262.

28 PdUp (Party of Proletarian Unity).

29 Paolo Flores d'Arcais and Franco Moretti, pp. 43–45.
CONCLUSION

In this paper I have tried to analyze the intensifying political polarization and the heightening of the class struggle until its culmination in the violent overthrow of Salvador Allende. The focus has been on the Unidad Popular government and their attempts to carry out their program while faced with growing opposition from the domestic Right and the United States. The key themes concerned the speed at which the U.P. program should be implemented and Allende's policy of being overtly compromising with the opposition.

Ultimately, the matter comes back to a question of strategy. Allende picked a strategy which turned out to be peaceful, reformist, and often times slow. It is this strategy and Allende's handling of it that I have tried to criticize. A peaceful road to socialism is not such an unfeasible idea, if and only if, the proponents of this peaceful road recognize and prepare for the inevitability of a violent confrontation at some stage. This may sound paradoxical but it can be distinguished from a purely violent strategy of building socialism. The latter strategy preaches from the outset that participation in the system is meaningless and that it must be overthrown by a workers' insurrection or some form of coup. Fidel Castro's takeover in Cuba was an example of this latter type. However, the situation in Chile was different. A populist government had been elected which contained two very strong working class parties. To the left of them was a small, vigorous, but mainly ineffective group (in terms of revolutionary leadership) called the Movement of the Revolutionary
Left (M.I.R.). Given the relative strength and support for the existing political parties in Chile in 1970, any advance towards socialism had to be done under the auspices of the U.P.

One of Allende's biggest mistakes was that he did not mobilize his supporters, the workers, and prepare for the inevitability of violent confrontation, even though the Right was consolidating its position and openly challenging the U.P. government, both legally and illegally.

A whole history of class struggles throughout the world and specifically the events in Chile, bring me to the conclusion that a completely peaceful road to socialism is impossible. No ruling class has ever yet given up their money, capital, and power without a fight, and I see no prospect that they ever would. However, in certain countries such as Chile, and possibly in the future, France and Italy, the use of the electoral process and populist programs could be followed advantageously up to a certain point. Once this point is reached the benefits to be accrued from working within the system are outweighed by the restraints of being shackled by it. As I have tried to show, Allende used the system advantageously during his first six months, but he did not recognize the situation, post-April 1971, as being one from which he could advance more radically and rapidly towards socialism. Allende's own adherence to constitutionality persisted even though his opponents were themselves clearly operating outside of the constitution. Probably Allende's last chances to break away from the shackles the peaceful road was imposing on him were in October 1972 and June 1973. These were, respectively, the "Bosses Strike" and the abortive coup d'etat. The workers' response to these events
showed clearly that they were prepared to move into the violent con-
frontation "stage" of the peaceful road to socialism.

Allende did not provide the leadership they needed and the 
ensuing desperate compromises he attempted could not prevent the Right 
from overthrowing him.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Agor, Western H. The Chilean Senate: Internal Distribution of Influence (Austin: Published for the Institute of Latin American Studies by the University of Texas, 1971).


JOURNALS


"Chile, France and Italy, A Discussion." Government and Opposition 7, no. 3 (Summer 1972): pp. 389-408.


DOCUMENTS


NEWSPAPERS


Los Angeles Times, 23 March 1971.


