SUPPLEMENT

WORKERS VANGUARD

13 September 1973

Smash the Reactionary Junta For Workers Revolution in Chile!

SEPTEMBER 12—Yesterday's rightist coup in Chile put a bloody end to the three-year-old Popular Unity government headed by President Salvador Allende. This seizure of power by the military is a serious defeat for the international working class, leading to a naked assault against the workers' organizations and to the massacre of possibly thousands of proletarian militants. It is not yet clear to what extent the Chilean workers and peasants will forcibly resist the putchists; their heroic will to defend their organizations is not in doubt, but the Allende government consistently refused to arm the workers. It is the duty of all U.S. working-class organizations, both trade unions and the committee for immediate, united-front protest against the counterrevolutionary coup. Smash the reactionary junta—for workers revolution in Chile!

The events of the last two days tragically confirm the Spartacist League's warnings that the Chilean working people would pay in blood for the treachery of their leaders. The triumph of bourgeois reaction after three years of the Allende government was no accident! It was prepared by the very nature of the Unified Popular [UP—Popular Unity] coalition.

As the Spartacist League insisted in a leaflet issued on September 4: "The government of the Unified Popular is not a workers government, it is a coalition of workers and capitalist parties. The presence of the 'radical' bourgeoisie and the 'democratic' generals is a guarantee that the Allende government will not step beyond the bounds of capitalism. Their presence is a guarantee that the workers and peasants will be left disarmed and atomized in the face of the impending rightist coup. Rather than participate in the Allende... we must insist on the workers to break sharply with the bourgeois popular front and the government parties, to fight for a workers and peasants government based on a revolutionary program of expropriation of the agrarian and industrial bourgeoisie."

The seductive claims of the dominant workers parties that socialism could be won through elections and parliamentary action and in collaboration with "progressive" sections of the bourgeoisie have again proven to be simply the formula for defeat. The so-called "Chilean road to socialism" was lauded the world over by pro-Moscow Communist Parties as the model of revolution through peaceful coexistence; and the Chilean capitalists—touted as the most "democratic" bourgeoisie of Latin America, with the most "non-political" military—were supposed to passively acquiesce to the transition to socialism.

But only the independent class mobilization of the proletariat to seize state power in its own name can open the road to socialism. A popular front is by its very nature—its alliance with a section of the ruling class—confined within the bounds of capitalism. It can never prepare the way for workers power. It can succeed only in frightening the forces of bourgeois reaction to the point that they undertake a concerted and brutal assault on the workers, in alienating and driving into the arms of the reaction sections of the petty bourgeoisie which would have split if faced with a clear proletarian pole, and in disorienting the workers through class-collaborationist illusions so that they cannot mobilize an organized and united self-defense against the rightist reaction. The lesson of the Spanish Civil War of the 1930's: if the workers do not learn in time that popular fronts, personnelism and peaceful coexistence lead to defeat, they will pay with their lives.

What Was the Popular Unity?

The Popular Unity coalition was made up of the dominant workers parties, the reformist Communists and Socialists, together with the Radical Party and left Christian Democrats. Since the 1970 elections both the Radical Party and the Christian Democrats had split, with pro-UP sections moving leftward and even claiming to support socialism. But the essence of the Popular Unity as a bloc with a section of the bourgeoisie was not changed. The UP government from the beginning rested on a tacit agreement with the dominant bourgeoisie party, the Christian Democrats, without whose votes Allende could not get a single one of his reforms passed by Congress. More recently as the rightist attack on the government sharpened, the role of chief guarantor of the interests of the bourgeoisie within the government was taken over by the military ministers.

The government adopted a policy of appeasing the rightists and increasing repression of the workers. Thus after the "bosses' work stoppage" by the truck owners and shopkeepers during May and June the government promulgated a law which permits unannounced raids by the military in search of arms. This law, though ostensibly directed against both right- and left-wing extremists, has in fact been used exclusively against the union, the occupied factories and the workers parties, while fascist groups such as Patria y Libertad built up sizeable arms stockpiles. Then during May and June the government provoked a copper miners' strike at the El Teniente mine by attempting to do away with the sliding scale of wages (cost-of-living escalator), and turned machine guns on the workers during the course of the strike (see WY No. 25, 22 June 1973).

Popular Front and Parliamentary Cretinism

Although the reformists have constantly attempted to portray Chile as the most radical popular-front government in history (compared to Spain 1936-39, France 1934-36 or Chile at different times from 1936 to 1948), the myth is far from reality. Thus inflating the industrial centers were entirely in the hands of workers militias for most of the period after July 1936 and most of the factories were operated under workers control. In Chile, Allende signed an agreement in 1970 where he promised to permit the formation of workers militia to defend workers and promote officers from the rank and file of the military. But a popular front is a popular front. The Spanish workers were defeated by Franco because they did not have a revolutionary leadership which struggled to overthrow capitalism. Instead the workers and peasants were constrained by the Stalinist Communist Party and the Assault Guards to remain within the bounds of bourgeois democracy. In their more honest moments the Stalinists would justify this in terms of not "scaring the bourgeoisie," but they also had a theory to justify it. While Lenin had made the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" world-famous as the call for a workers revolution, Stalin "discovered" in 1924 that before the stage of Soviets there had to come an intermediate "democratic" stage. In essence this was identical to the position of the reformist social democrats, who called for winning power through parliamentary elections as a "step" in the gradual transformation of capitalism. Now in the 1970's this theory was resurrected by Allende's UP: "Since the National Congress is based on the people's vote, there is nothing in its nature which prevents it from changing itself in order to become, in fact, the Parliament of the People. The Chilean Armed Forces and the Carabineros, faithful to their duty and to their tradition of non-intervention in the political process, will conduct a social organization which corresponds to the will of the people...."—5, Allende, "First Message to Congress," December 1970.

Historical experience again disproved this reformist fairy tale yesterday for the nth time: "Since the National Congress is based on the people's vote, there is nothing in its nature which prevents it from changing itself in order to become, in fact, the Parliament of the People. The Chilean Armed Forces and the Carabineros, faithful to their duty and to their tradition of non-intervention in the political process, will conduct a social organization which corresponds to the will of the people...."—5, Allende, "First Message to Congress," December 1970.

Members of the junta: From left, General Gustavo Leigh, General Augusto Pinochet, Admiral José Toribio Merino.

SL/RCY FORUM

Counterrevolution in Chile

Friday 21 September

Washington Square Methodist Church 135 West 4th Street NEW YORK CITY 7:30 p.m.

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to include the Christian Democrats, they also opposed an extensive program of nationalization. In order to "regu-
larize the economy" CP minister Or-
lando Millas introduced legislation which would prohibit the formation of certain specific sectors and return the factories to the workers to their "legal" owners! The CP not only opposed the forma-
tion of the factories, but in 1971 the CP
rallowed, secretary-general of the party, rejected any form of arming the work-
ers. During the 20 September insur-
ances, of course, never show distrust in the bourgeoisie army. Thus even after yester-
day's coup, the CP still claimed only "a section of the armed forces were involved," par-
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Shortly before the coup, French CP leader Bernard Fajon returning from Chile held a press conference in order to denounce:
...certain economic theories which put the accent on the destruction of the old structures...
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As well, the CP was clamoring to unite with the Christian Democrats and to give "popular support" to the government, in order to help the workers to give up the factories to their legal owners, the Soviet Union giving "wise economic aid to Chile. The utter cyni-
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