Chile: The disintegration of the Dictatorship and the tasks of revolutionaries

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Diego Mocar argues for workers struggle to overthrow the Pinochet regime

"If Somoza fell Pinochet will fall as well" and "The People United will never be defeated!" are amongst the slogans that the workers and oppressed masses of Chile shout most frequently at present. Once again these masses are on the move. They have begun to re-occupy the popular tribunes that "have traditionally been their own - the streets, the shanty 'towns, the squares, the schools, the workplaces and the university campuses.

The working class and the other exploited sectors of the population are the ones who have paid the cost in social, political and economic terms of Pinochet's military dictatorship which is the direct agent of Imperialism. Repression, torture, assassinations, exile. starvation wages, unemployment, have been unable to break the historic continuity of the organised proletariat of our country.

The heroic and selfless struggles of the last year were expressed initially in separate local actions but since May of this year it developed into nationwide strikes. This shows just how much indignation and hatred have accumulated amongst the working masses during the long years of brutal police repression. The last months have also demonstrated the sympathy felt by the petty bourgeoisie, the students and all the exploited and oppressed for the struggles that the workers have been carrying forward. These struggles are part of the political and organisational recomposition of the working class: they advance its centralisation as a class, they generalise the struggle and lead to the decisive final showdown with the beast of reaction.

In addition these struggles have demonstrated the deep crisis that is undermining the dictatorship. They have revealed its deep instability and the make-shift responses with which it is attempting to find a solution to the catastrophic economic, social and political situation confronting it. Deep divisions. confusion, corrupt opportunism and even panic have begun to seize the different factions of the bourgeoisie. Three of the conditions that we Marxists recognise as characterising the prelude to a revolutionary situation are beginning to unfold in the Chilean class struggle. An important section of the working class is willing to fight and to generalise their struggle. Large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie. of the students and oppressed non-proletarian strata are deeply dissatisfied with the regime and disarray and crisis have broken out in the bourgeois camp. Taken together these are the features of a social crisis which could be converted into a revolutionary crisis in the next period.

The militant offensive that the masses have launched in the past year, the political character of the strikes against the dictatorship, have opened up a period in which partial and general demands will be increasingly interlinked and in which vanguard militants can unify the whole of the working class behind them. The struggles developing in our country once again put to the test the theories and the programmes...
of the workers' traditional leaderships and those of the centrist organisations. The intensification of the class struggle is the test of fire for all those who seek to assume the leadership of the proletariat. It allows us to assess their policies and actions.

The working class and the exploited masses are the direct victims of the dictatorship's policies of hunger, repression and assassination. For more than ten years they have been waging a heroic and self-sacrificing struggle against the regime and are now concentrating all their forces on the task of putting a decisive end to the dictatorship. What slogans and tactics are the traditional leaderships of the Chilian proletariat calling upon the masses to adopt? Firstly they are attempting to divert the struggle away from the direct action of the workers, and onto the institutional, parliamentary electoral terrain. Secondly they are doing their utmost to ensure that the bourgeoisie receives the whole benefit of the struggles that the working class has been waging in other words that the Christian Democrats, the party of capital, should form the next government. They further stress that the working class must make their share of sacrifices in the interests of national reconstruction i.e. that the proletariat must pay the price of the harsh austerity measures needed to create the basis for a new cycle of capital accumulation. What the toiling masses are fighting for is completely opposed to this. They instinctively wish to finish with the military dictatorship and with the capitalist system which gave birth to it.

The economic catastrophe
The brutal bonapartist regime that Pinochet installed in 1973 was, in the first instance, a reflection of the historic weakness of the Chilean bourgeoisie which is unable to solve the problems of the poverty and backwardness of the country. The bourgeoisie abandoned attempts to represent itself politically and handed over power to Pinochet. The military junta acted and continues to act in the 'service of large-scale Finance Capital as the agent of Imperialism. The economic model that the military camarilla adopted involved the dismantling of the structures of state supervision and control, the elimination of tariff barriers and the consequent opening up of the Chilean economy to indiscriminate penetration by foreign goods. It has led to the wholesale destruction of national industry and has submitted Chile completely to the full force of the crisis of the world capitalist market.

This economic model implemented by the monetarist disciples of Milton Friedman, known in Chile as the "Chicago Boys" has been totally discredited. It has suffered defeat at the hands of the renewed struggles of the working class. Now the government is obliged to face the ever increasing demands of the country's creditors and the international banks in a situation where the bourgeoisie is riven with factions which are each fighting for their own immediate survival regardless of the overall fate of their class. This occurs at a time when the exploited masses are re-gaining class cohesion and are putting forward class demands which aim at and lead to the destruction of the military regime.

The deep crisis into which the regime has fallen takes place within an international framework. The backward countries have entered into the longest economic crisis in their history as the direct result of the international capitalist crisis. Thirty, three million unemployed tramp the streets of capital list Europe and America. One third of the world's population is suffering chronic malnutrition. One quarter live permanently below the so-called poverty line and one eighth face actual starvation. The policy that the IMF is now imposing on the backward countries in order to obtain "servicing" and repayment of these countries' external debts cannot be complied with except at the price of condemning millions more to death from starvation.

The economic recipe that the IMF has applied in the past and that they are now attempting yet again involves the drastic reduction of public expenditure, the reduction or elimination of tariff barriers against
imports, the elimination of subsidies on exports, devaluation of the currency and punctual repayment of the external debt. These measures are supposed to make each country "more competitive" on the international market." In fact they will simply increase their prostration before Imperialist capital whilst intensifying the sufferings of the masses. In fact these measures clash head on with the advancing resistance struggles of the masses throughout Latin America in general, and in Chile in particular. The present situation in Central America and the Caribbean clearly indicates that Imperialism is prepared impose its exploitative policies with blood and fire if need be. The United States has shown itself willing to intervene militarily whenever the match of social revolution threatens it interests.

The monetarist model, carried out to the limits in Chile, has seen a total fiasco. The government and the various factions of the bourgeoisie are now dreaming longingly of the past and seeking, with short-term and empirical methods, to grope their way back to the "mixed economy". They are attempting to reconstruct the state capitalist apparatus which in the past provided services, credits and a Source of speculation and shady deals. Today practically every sector of the Chilean economy is weighed down by the massive debts and practically the whole financial system faces bankruptcy. The Chilean external debt is the largest in the world in per capita terms, it is practically impossible for any of its 18 billion dollar debt to be repaid and the American banks are unwilling to consider cancellation) deferment or facilitating new loans.

The sheer scale of the crisis is reflected in the fact that in 1982 industrial production dropped by 14%, the construction industry declined by 28.3%, and commerce shrank by 14%. In agriculture cereal production declined from 1.3 million tonnes per annum to 690,000 tonnes and production this year is not expected to exceed 350,000 tonnes."

Unemployment stands at about 30% of the working population. In 1982, according to official figures, the purchasing power of wages declined by 15%. In the last year alone more that eight hundred enterprises have gone bankrupt. At the beginning of the year the Chilean banking system, collapsed, The government was obliged to take control of the nine key banks and finance houses. Chile has been turned into a paradise for speculators. Many finance houses acquired huge loans in dollars which they had no real capital to cover, and with which they had no genuine economic activities to conduct. With the devaluation of the peso by one hundred per cent the majority of the companies went into bankruptcy.

In the sphere of agriculture the military Junta followed the advice of the "Chicago Boys" to the letter. They eliminated all state intervention in the countryside following on the reprivatisation of the land. The government opened the door wide to full market forces allowing the elimination of inefficient producers supposedly to "take advantage of international competition." To facilitate this they removed all import and export restrictions on agricultural goods, This produced an accelerating polarisation in the countryside. At one extreme were a number of landowners who produced for the internal and international market - at the other the poor who produced for the poor, Of the latter some 300,000 families were deprived of their land and simultaneously denied the right to organise in their own defence. The state denied any technical, credit or mutual insurance facilities to these small proprietors, owners of tiny plots of land (minifundistas). This led to a situation where they had to engage in a fierce competitive struggle with one another for economic survival.

Even on the large estates (latifundias), those owners who possessed little capital or whose land had a low yield or output were left without protection to compete with imported agricultural products. These imports were often subsidised in their country of origin thus enabling them to undercut Chilean produce. At the opposite extreme to the impoverished peasantry stood a tiny number of latifundistas in whose hands are concentrated the rich lands of the central valley and a plentiful supply of capital. They produce only beef, wines, poultry, fruit for the tables of the Chilean bourgeoisie and for the North American and European
market. Production of the staple items that make up the diet of the poor dropped dramatically. Thus the production of the fourteen traditional Chilean agricultural products - wheat, barley, rice, beans, lentils, peas, potatoes, sugar beet, sunflower seed oil etc, has dropped in some cases by 50% because the lands on which they were grown have been taken over for wine production, for fruit, onions, garlic and other products for "out-of-season" sale in the northern hemisphere. The "Chicago Boys" free market doctrine led directly to a sharp deterioration in the already meagre diet of the popular masses and to the destruction of the agrarian economy in order to feed the insatiable metropolitan capitalist octopus.

The military regime has acutely accentuated all the features, of backwardness, poverty and submission to the dictates of Imperialism. The semi-colonial character of the country has been intensified to a barbaric degree. The present stage of the development of the class struggle in Chile, the central role that the proletariat plays will again put on the agenda all the democratic and national independence problems that the country faces. Once again we see demonstrated in the clearest fashion the historic inability of the bourgeoisie to resolve the whole question of backwardness. The economic programme or the military junta has ended in the most complete debacle imaginable. The working class is again intervening in political life with their own class methods of struggle. The prime condition for success is that the proletariat's vanguard develops a programme for power and embodies it in the construction of a revolutionary party.

The tasks of national independence, agrarian revolution, the expulsion of Imperialism, are all questions central to propelling forward the masses. Everyone poses the urgent necessity of changing the political, economic and social order. Agitation around anti-imperialist slogans - the renunciation of the foreign debt, the breaking off of all counter-revolutionary military pacts, the expropriation of all imperialist property and holdings, the slogan of the United Socialist States of Latin America, all help unify the Latin American revolution. Furthermore they mercilessly expose the illusion that the Latin American bourgeoisie, already in its dotage, can break with the system of barbaric backwardness that imperialism has subjected the whole continent to.

The bourgeois opposition

At the beginning of the junta's life all fractions of the bourgeoisie approved of this new system of domination and its essential features savage repression against the workers' movement, the utilisation of fascist methods and the restructuring of the economy. The deep crisis which has befallen both the economy and the regime no longer allow the junta to aggregate and represent all the fractions of the bourgeoisie.

As the economic and social plans of the junta were carried out contradictions began to develop within the bourgeoisie itself. To the extent that the junta served as an essential defence of their interests as a class they continued to support it. Its policies Soon began to adversely effect the immediate interests of certain sections of the bourgeoisie. However the leading sections of the bourgeoisie at that time considered that the dictatorship satisfied and reproduced the conditions essential for their businesses, and alone; secured a base for super-exploitation. The so-called period of shock-treatment of the economy led to serious protests against the "excessive and rapid liberalisation" of the economy. The critical bourgeois factions showed their concern from two positions. From inside the regime itself the military bureaucracy and technocracy tried to create pressure groups and camarillas: aimed at shifting the balance of policy in their favour. Another faction outside the regime, the Frei-led Christian Democrats, played the role of a critical conscience. Frei made certain criticisms of the regime's policies but was opposed to any action which might destabilise it. During the period of Pinochet's plebiscite, the Christian Democracy's renewed oppositional activity corresponded to a situation where the workers' movement had begun to re-organise itself. At that time the Christian Democrats came forward as an opposition bourgeois party. It became the
rallying point for discontented sections of the business community, for the disaffection of the petitbourgeoisie and indeed for the popular masses. That the latter looked to the CD was largely thanks to the
good offices of the traditional bureaucracies of the workers" movement.

From the outset the CD offered itself as the card of change which the bourgeoisie could play the moment
the dictatorship showed that it was finished. In this role they had the support of some sectors of US
Imperialism, the favour of the Church, international connections ,via other Christian Democratic parties and
above all the miserable subordinating of the apparatuses of the workers' parties.

The oppositional role that the CD plays today corresponds to the needs of the bourgeoisie to re-establish
their coherence as a class, to regain control 'of the state apparatus from the military caste. The Christian
Democracy has attempted to build a political framework for the bourgeoisie to conduct discussion amongst
themselves in a efficient and centralised manner, The problem that faces them now is how to construct that
framework so as to exclude the popular mass movement. The Christian Democrats have been obliged to
carry on a demagogic campaign around democratic slogans in order to prevent the workers' movement
intervening in an independent manner.

We can see in the recent "days of struggle” the limitations and difficulties that the CD encounters when
trying to smother the independent expression of the masses, despite the fact that in this task they have the
full support of the union and party apparatuses of the working class. From the moment of its birth the
Democratic Alliance had the collaboration of the socialists and the Stalinists' apparatuses even though' they
did not participate directly in it as organisations, The DA put forward a programme which concentrated
on demanding the resignation of Pinochet, the creation of a Civil-Military government to last for eighteen
months and the convocation within that period of a Constituent' Assembly with strictly limited powers -
namely to draw up a new constitution.

The DA's self appointed task is to separate Pinochet from the Armed Forces, in other words to achieve the
collaboration of the armed forces in excluding only the person of Pinochet himself, Any change in the
political situation is thus predicated on the willingness of the military to sacrifice Pinochet. Thus we can see
that in the last period the bourgeois opposition keeps the junta alive, Their method is discussions and
conversations with government representatives, This is ?responsible opposition” and as such receives the
support of the Church which has declared !hat "It is necessary to distinguish between legitimate peaceful
protest on the one hand and vandalism and violence on the other.

The role of the reformist bureaucracies

The class collaborationist policy of the Popular. Front, which politically and organisationally disarmed the
proletariat, culminated in the bloody counterrevolution carried out by the bourgeoisie and imperialism in
1973, Because in Chile there existed no revolutionary party the proletariat was unable to resolve the
revolutionary situation in its own favour.

After the military coup, the proletariat was likewise unable owing precisely to its lack of such a, party, to
draw up a balance sheet of the experience of the Popular Unity period, This. made it impossible to settle
accounts with the organisers of the most colossal defeat the Chilean proletariat has ever experience~,
Different attempts to draw the lessons of this period by class militants of the traditional parties were
subjected to the concerted attack of the Stalinists and the fragments of the Socialist Party, Other militants
drew ultra-left conclusions or, via the medium of centrist organisations, capitulated to the policy of the
apparatus. On the other hand those International formations that claim continuity with Trotsky's Fourth
International such as the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFJ)
and the United Secretariat (USec) contributed to the fragmentation, the confusion and to the liquidation of
the class conscious elements that existed in the mass organisations. They exhausted these forces in
diplomatic and opportunist manoeuvres.

The non-existence of a revolutionary party in Chile is partly the result of the liquidationist activity of these centrist organisations which claim to be Trotskyist - both within Chile and on an International level. The lack of a revolutionary party hampered the proletariat from bringing their traditional leaders and their policies to account. Contrary to the claims of the centrist MIR and centrist currents inside the Socialist Party that the coup would force the reformists to miraculously understand their errors and be transformed into revolutionaries, the CP leaders and the different fractions of the SP have not changed their counterrevolutionary political nature in the slightest, On the contrary their opportunist, bureaucratic, repressive and class-collaborationist features have become accentuated, These parties did not put themselves forward as the focus for the re-composition and reorganisation of the workers' movement in the combat against the dictatorship, Indeed they ceded the political initiative to the Church and the Christian Democracy.

Four years after the military coup - and what years! - the first meeting of the Central Committee of the Chilean Communist Party took place, One of its primary conclusions was to advance the slogan of a government of the Armed Forces and the Christian Democrats. In other words they stubbornly refused to advance independent working class and democratic demands, Corvalan in his report to the Central Committee said:

"We must keep in mind that in the heart of the armed forces there are and always will be truly patriotic soldiers and because of this the CP considers that in a government which expresses the fullest unity, one which we wish to aid the construction of - there must be a place for the democratic sector of the armed forces,. The Communist Party puts unity foremost today and with respect to the past record of the military it calls into question or will call into question in the future only those who were personally responsible for massacres, execution or torture. Thus we extend our hand to the Christian Democracy with those exceptions that every body knows who participated in the preparation of the coup. We extend our hand to the anti fascist military men, not to the fascists, as long as their hands are not stained with blood."

From the outset of the dictatorship the leaders of the traditional parties began to practice what Trotsky described so well in the Transitional Programme: "The émigré People's Front is the most malignant and perfidious variety of all possible People's Fronts. Essentially, it signifies the impotent longing for coalition with a non-existent liberal bourgeoisie."

This "impotent longing" is not confined to the Stalinists, Clod mira Almeida in the document convoking the XXIV Congress of the Partido Socialista de Chile, dated March 198 expressed the self-same policy under the slogans "Towards a Democratic Coalition formed in struggle - For a Democratic Coalition Government:'. He continued: ?For us the enterprise of unity is not exhausted at the boundaries of the Left, On the basis of the development of the Left's own forces we se this unity extending to other trends and parties that are consistently anti-dictatorship, in particular the Christian Democratic Circles, Our objective is to bring together the widest and strongest democratic, coalition, able on a pluralist basis to unite the whole Chilean People. thus progressively isolating the military-plutocratic minority that oppresses the country.

We can observe that from a programmatic viewpoint no significant differences separate the. Democratic Alliance and the leaders of the "Left" who have in turn created the "Popular Democratic Movement". The Bourgeois Opposition, the Stalinists, the Socialist Convergence and the Social Democracy all, in different ways of course, strive to strangle the masses offensive against the dictatorship. They try to prevent the generalisation extension and deepening of the workers' struggle, fearing above all that this will crystallise around revolutionary slogans for national and democratic liberation which put in question the very social system that gave birth to the dictatorship. Corvalan is actually horror-struck by such a perspective. He has
used all his political ability in an attempt to liquidate the workers’ class initiative including playing suppliant to the bourgeoisie, begging for their assistance in avoiding a revolutionary crisis when the dictatorship falls. His ruling passion is hatred and fear of revolution. Thus, in his article “The bankruptcy of Imperialist Policy in Chile?, dated May 1983 he observes:

“We communists consider that it is necessary and possible to avoid an interregnum and to work from the first days after removing the dictatorship to overcome the principal difficulties. Certain members of the bourgeois opposition carefully test the ground before taking a further step. They rightly consider that Pinochet will leave ruins behind him and so they would like someone else to assume the initial burden of the struggle against economic dislocations. We think this attitude is wrong to say the least. The country must not be left to the mercy of fate, which threatens chaos. Selfish calculations should not over ride one’s patriotic duty? This calls for agreement amongst all opposition groups, left and right alike. Such an agreement whilst not easy, is feasible. The communists are willing to devote all their energies to bringing this about.”

Thus it is possible to confirm yet against the reformist workers’ parties are carrying out to the full their counter-revolutionary functions. Precisely in a period of the developing mobilisation of the working classes and indeed of all the oppressed and exploited masses they advance a grand national accord. They offer a negotiated exit for Pinochet and try every means available to avoid any explosion of the mass movement and a confrontation with the bourgeois state.

**The tasks of the moment**

A crisis of a revolutionary character is maturing in Chile. The fruition of that crisis depends, first and foremost, on the degree of class independence of the proletariat.

The task of building a revolutionary party in Chile, is alas in the earliest stage. This is itself a product of the crisis of leadership of the proletariat but it is made worse by the legacy of the political and organisational destruction of the Fourth International at the hands of renegades from Trotskyism. The building of the party is in its artisan stage. But this does not mean that we can avoid the revolutionary task of elaborating a programme. In the present period this assumes a precise meaning. It entails a ceaseless fight against the programmatic positions of the reformists and centrists through propaganda oriented primarily to the vanguard of the working class. This task is an essential component in the preliminary stage of party construction. From such consistent and regular work it will be possible to establish organisational and political links with groups of advanced workers as the first step towards the construction of a solid revolutionary nucleus in the heart of the proletariat. Only on that basis can we advance steadily towards the consolidation of a revolutionary party in Chile.

The developing class struggle not only exposes the counter-revolutionary operations of the reformist leaders. It also reveals the rotten opportunism of certain groups that claim to be Trotskyist. In the 11th July 1983 copy of the magazine International Viewpoint which is published under the auspices of the United Secretariat, two points are raised which we cannot let pass. They reflect this organisation’s opportunism, political confusion and adaptation to forces alien to Marxism.

Firstly they characterise the June 23rd General Strike in Chile as a semi-failure. These gentlemen thus demonstrate their inability to understand the long march of the Chilean proletariat under the repression of one of the most brutal of all military dictatorships. They cannot understand these struggles as a vital and necessary part of the political and organisational recomposition of the proletariat. The strike was carried out against the will of the traditional leaderships and of the union bureaucracy.

These “leaders” called for the cancellation ‘or suspension of the strike to facilitate a dialogue’ with the
government, yet despite this working class militants carried on with the strike. In the conditions operating in Chile, the organisation of a strike, however modest is a political triumph because it constitutes a direct confrontation with the whole regime.

The second major error of the USEC is its failure to comprehend that when the mass base of the workers movement, enters into contradiction with its traditional leadership, this represents a step forward in the process of political clarification for the proletariat. The lesson that we draw from this is diametrically opposed to that drawn by the United Secretariat.

In late 1983 the USEC became more frank about the programme of its Chilean section - the Revolutionary Socialist Party. True to form it is advancing a "radical democratic programme" which it urges the proletariat to mobilise around. For them the 'permanent revolution' means that the struggle for key democratic demands has an objectively anti-capitalist logic. Thus their programme contains no demands for the building of the organs of struggle with which the proletariat could seize power. We consider that the construction of a revolutionary party in Chile requires a vigorous fight against the USEC's centrism and its programmatic capitulation to Stalinism via Castroism.

The break in the continuity of the construction of a revolutionary party in Chile has produced a situation where certain groups that claim adherence to the Transitional Programme on the one hand ignore a number of tactics and slogans fundamental to this period of struggle to overthrow the dictatorship and on the other pass over in silence the collaborationist policies of the bureaucracy.

In a period of mass ups urge tremendous pressure exists to seek short cuts to the creation of a party. This opens the road for centrist tendencies to concentrate entirely on "activism" and to push into the background the task of developing and fighting for a programme. The reorganisation of the workers' movement commenced its development within the framework of the unions and in such organisations as democratic struggle committees. Here the tactic of United Front retains all its validity - this means fighting to develop the independent activity of the proletariat through the unions and other ad hoc organs of struggle. It means fighting to unite the militants of various political parties and even intervening within the traditional parties for a class independent fight for democratic rights. This must be sharply counterposed to the Anti-Fascist Front- which is no more than a variant of the Popular Front- and against the hopelessly sectarian "Revolutionary Front". Our policy must be the workers' United Front.

The slogan of the reconstruction of the CUT, (the Chilean Trades Union Congress) is fundamental in this period. It is vital from the point of view of centralising and unifying the workers' movement. It is also a step forward in developing the independence of the workers' movement. The bureaucracy obdurately refuses to raise this slogan because it is an obstacle in their negotiations with the bourgeoisie who want either "non-political" unions or to split up and seize control of a section of the union movement. Some centrist organisations likewise refuse to raise this slogan and raise instead the call for genuine revolutionary unions". They fail to realise that in a period of upsurge the workers will flood into their traditional unions and indeed, in the absence of a revolutionary alternative, into their old parties in order to utilize them for struggle. Certainly they will have illusions that the apparatus of these bodies will lead that struggle. In such periods of sudden mass growth in the tumult of struggle the workers can shake the conservative apparatus to its foundations and create the conditions favourable to the building of a conscious revolutionary leadership that can challenge the apparatus and fight to transform the unions into organisations of revolutionary struggle.

Revolutionaries who are not able to carry out systematic work in existing unions will never be able to create their own "revolutionary unions" either.
While we must fight to centralise the unions, we must also fight to totally transform them. We must fight to take them into the hands of the mass of the workers and to build factory committees and strike committees that can begin to challenge the capitalists for power at every level of society. Our programme is a programme of fighting systematically within the existing unions to win militants to the construction of soviet-type bodies with which the workers can take power. Of course they will not spring forth as fully formed soviets according to some abstract model.

They will be built out of the strike committees and struggle organisations of today's and tomorrow's battles. Indeed in the "cordones industriales" of the early 70s we see the first phase of development of such bodies. Revolutionaries will have to draw the lessons, positive and negative of the experience of these in the last year of the Popular Unity Government.

In preparing the proletariat for power, revolutionists must also advance a programme that will enable the proletariat to lead all the oppressed and exploited layers by taking up their causes as its own.

It must fight for the right of the middle and poor peasants and rural proletarians to form their own unions and to seize and administer the big farms and estates. It must demand the nationalisation of all land and guarantees of credit to the rural poor.

It must take up the cause of the urban poor in the shanty towns. It must support their neighbourhood committees which have been created in struggle against the dictatorship and fight to centralise them. We must fight for a massive programme of public works in these areas of urban squalor which shall be administered by committees of the inhabitants themselves. In the army Revolutionaries must fight to break up the army as a force upon which imperialism and the bourgeoisie can depend. By this we do not mean - as the Stalinists and Social Democrats do- searching out "democratic" friends in the highest ranks. We mean fighting to forge an alliance between the working class and the rank and file soldiers by struggling for the soldiers' right to organise and the building of soldiers' committees in every barracks. In this context the Anti-Imperialist United Front tactic is applicable for the developing revolutionary party which must fight for the political and organisational independence of the proletariat. Transitory agreements struck between the working class and other strata oppressed by Imperialism and the bourgeoisie in the struggle against the existing order- a struggle in which the proletariat can rise up as a leader of all the oppressed of the nation- does not imply strategic or programmatic agreement. The fight for the Anti-Imperialist United Front today means most crucially a struggle against the bloc that the Stalinist and Social Democratic reformists want to build with the bourgeoisie, a struggle to prevent the developing organisations of the proletarian and oppressed masses becoming subordinated to the bourgeoisie.

This new Popular Front is a brake on the proletarian revolution and a safety valve for Imperialism. The radicalisation taking place within the petit-bourgeoisie and the possibility of turning it to an alliance with the proletariat can only be accomplished if the workers pursue a resolute revolutionary strategy, based on united action against the exploiters and the military camarilla. In this context a determined fight for the cancellation of Chile's crippling foreign debts, for the expropriation of imperialist assets, for the annulment of the concessions that have placed Chile's natural resources in the hands of the imperialists will enable the proletariat to offer a decisive lead to all those strata of Chilean Society who suffer under Imperialism's yoke.

The slogan of a Constituent Assembly that the Bourgeois Opposition advances as a means of preserving its class rule and in which the workers' leaders are willing accomplices could become the basis for integrating the working class, allowing for a new cycle of capitalist accumulation with all the costs of reconstruction being discharged onto the backs of the workers and oppressed masses. It is for this reason that some centrist groups fear to raise the slogan of the Constituent Assembly giving as their excuse the
claim that to do so would create bourgeois-democratic illusions. They thereby show their inability to utilise
the slogan in a revolutionary manner - i.e. to challenge and help overcome existing democratic illusions.
The appeal for a Constituent Assembly gains its strength from the existence of unsolved democratic
problems. We must utilise tactics to expose the fact that the root of these problems lies in the system of
exploitation and in Imperialism's stranglehold. The revolutionary tasks that are associated with the
Constituent Assembly slogan by Trotsky in the Transitional Programme are agrarian revolution and
national liberation. Launching revolutionary agitation around these questions, mobilising the masses to
demand thoroughgoing measures on these questions as well as on those of political liberty and the
demands of workers, peasants, the urban poor, women etc, permits the revelation of the limits of
bourgeois democracy. It will unmask the bourgeois oppositionists and the treacherous "workers leaders".
Further it allows revolutionaries to expound their programme and to rally around them the forces necessary
to put an end to exploitation and misery - to pose the need to reorganise the country on a new basis; Doth
economic and social.

This agitation does not run counter to agitation build soviets or armed workers militia. Such agitation is
linked to that of building and centralising factory committee, soldiers committees, peasant committees and
shanty town committees. In no way do we not should we argue that they should restrain their actions
against the old order until the Constituent Assembly has been convened. On the contrary we fight for them
to establish workers control in the plants for example. We fight for the workers and peasants councils
themselves to expose the spinelessness of the bourgeoisie by being prepared to convene the Constituent
Assembly itself - by revolutionary means. To this extent the call for a Constituent Assembly therefore, can
assist in opening the road to the 'dictatorship' of the proletariat.

The political situation in which the Constituent Assembly is resolved is necessarily linked to the intervention
of revolutionaries and the task of constructing a party. Our country is a backward one, subject to imperialist
domination and the struggle around democratic demands is unavoidably on the agenda. The effects of
combined and, uneven development on the economy dictate that the demands for political democracy, for
transitional demands and the tasks of social revolution do not occupy separate historical stages as the
Stalinists and those who accommodate to them claim. The steps in which they are presented, the order of
the slogans are determined by the concrete conditions of the class struggle.

The masses are themselves instinctively advancing towards a general strike with the aim of definitively
putting an end to the military dictatorship. There has been no defeat and no important modification of this
tendency. The working class combatively is increasing. It is rising on a national scale at the head of the
exploited against the political regime of the bourgeoisie. Against the reformist leaders Revolutionaries must
fight for an unlimited general strike to destroy the military dictatorship. They must not flinch from the task of
agitation and fraternisation aimed at promoting the disintegration of the armed forces thereby creating the
conditions for mass armed insurrection.

As we have indicated, the military regime has brutally aggravated all the features of backwardness in the
semi colonial character of the country. Revolutionaries must systematically agitate for revolutionary-
democratic demands and expose how both the bourgeoisie and the apparatuses betray these goals. They
must intransigently advocate the necessity for the proletariat to rise as the leader of the whole oppressed
nation in the fight for a Workers' and Peasants' Government, for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

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