

## Document Citation

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# Bay Area Premiere

## Battle of Chile: war of two worlds

By CRAIG ROCK

*The palace is being bombed by its own military . . . a fire breaks out on the upper floors . . . an order to surrender is ignored . . . the president holds a machine gun.*

"Battle of Chile: the struggle of unarmed people," makes its Bay Area premiere tonight in Wheeler auditorium. The film is a unique journalistic achievement in its objective portrayal of the people and events leading to the 1973 military takeover.

It's also an exciting sociology lesson that conveys the over-all relationship between classes of people divided by affluence, power and philosophy. In this respect it is comparable to the French "Battle of Algiers" and the TV version of "Roots."

Using a "you are what you do" theme, the film portrays both the supporting and opposing forces in this continent's first experiment with elected socialism. The Chilean film crew effectively penetrated various bastions of

power, from that of the Nazi-type storm troopers to those of the panic-stricken middle class and the doomed and divided workers' government.

This approach — filming from several points of view — not only gathers the combatants into the arena, but also creates a haunting reality, because the images presented to the viewer are the self-images of the competing forces. Perhaps this is why there has been no official condemnation of the film by the current military government.

Filming for "Battle of Chile" began seven months before the coup, according to producer Federico Elton. The film was originally intended to give the Chilean public a better understanding of what was happening as their country moved from a nation dependent on foreign interests to a self-sustaining socialist democracy, he said.

Although the film shows many of Allende's leftist supporters, Elton said he wasn't worried



about possible repercussions. "Half the people shown are dead, the others are missing or in prison," he said.

Part I of the two-part film uncovers the strategy to "destabilize" Allende's government by U.S. policymakers and right-wing Chileans. Revealing the mechanics of one conspiratorial plot after another, the film outlines an extensive network of espionage and sabotage. The viewer can only guess who designed the master plan. Was it the Chilean fascists, using the middle class to achieve power? Or was it another move by U.S. agencies to insure the defeat of any Latin American nationalists committed to radical social change?

A combination of the two makes the film a textbook in the art of

manipulating people through the use of terror and induced economic hardships.

It begins with a U.S. economic boycott. After three years, the middle class is disgruntled by a shortage of food and other necessities. A third of the public transportation system is shut down for lack of parts. A month before the coup, gasoline is not available to the public. The stage is set.

The film delves beyond the official U.S. policy of "discouragement" and exposes secretive CIA strategies, all utilizing distortions of the old Lincoln adage, "a house divided against itself, cannot stand." The viewer is able to appreciate the effect such interference has on a developing country.

Military support for the takeover is explored, and the close association of the Chilean military with its U.S. counterpart is shown. Assassination of military leaders sympathetic to the constitution is linked to right-wing groups, such as Fatherland & Freedom, who allegedly had CIA advisors.

Half way through the 3-hour film, the viewer can not help but ask: Have the interests of superpowers made peaceful, democratic change impossible in small nations of strategic or economic importance? Will this interference

force those nationalists committed to social change to use violent methods to rid themselves of those who cater to foreign interests?

In Part II, the film looks at Allende's commitment to constitutional change despite numerous indications of an impending right-wing coup. Allende remains firm but his socialist alliance divides on how to respond to the right. Cries to arm the workers and poor are disregarded by Allende in his desire to avoid a bloody civil war. The fascist forces make their move.

Elton, who will be at tonight's showing, stressed the importance of letting the viewer decide the film's message. A sequel is planned that will analyze the forces within the Chilean military and the various parties of Allende's popular unity government.

Elton said he wished President Carter could see the film. Considering Carter's official position on human rights, this statement could be indicative of new hope in South America. Perhaps **Battle of Chile** will create some commitment here to our tarnished ideal of letting all peoples set their national priorities and decide on their own methods of solving problems.

## Announcement

Two Chilean exiles currently on an international speaking tour will appear at noon Thursday, April 21, at the Pacific Film Archive in the University Art Museum.

Dr. Maria Elena Carrera was a senator of the Socialist Party of Chile during the Popular Unity government. Carmen Gloria Aguayo was President Allende's Minister-designate for Women and the Family.

They are in the United States in order to appeal

to U.S. public opinion on behalf of the more than 2,500 political prisoners who have been jailed by the Chilean secret police since 1973. These Chileans are being held incommunicado in secret detention centers throughout the country.

Welcoming the women at the rally on behalf of the campus community will be sociology Professor Harry Edwards, Margy Wilkinson of AFSCME Local 1695 and Laura Rodriguez, a Puerto Rican student activist.