

Document Citation

Title	'Power of the people'
Author(s)	Patricio Guzmán
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	
Type	article
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	24
Subjects	
Film Subjects	<p>La batalla de Chile: La lucha de un pueblo sin armas - Tercera parte: El poder popular (The battle of Chile: The fight of an unarmed people - Part 3: The power</p> <p>La batalla de Chile: La lucha de un pueblo sin armas - Segunda parte: El golpe de estado (The battle of Chile: The fight of an unarmed people - Part 2: Coup d'</p> <p>La batalla de Chile: la lucha de un pueblo sin armas - Primera parte: La insurrección de la burguesía (The battle of Chile: the fight of an unarmed people - Par</p>

Film One

"POWER OF THE PEOPLE"

Part One

It was here, in the studios, at the editing table, where we are presently working on a series of TV films on Latin America, it was here that the terrible, grievous and shocking news of the military putsch in Chile reached us. Once again we heard about a junta, generals, bloodshed, concentration camps, and brutalities...

The Chilean junta tells the world that everything is quiet, that law and order has been restored, and that the country has been rid of Marxist danger...

We recall the painfully familiar words heard over the air forty years ago: "The sky is cloudless over the whole of Spain!" This had also been a signal for a fascist putsch, for a generals' putsch.

Those people who talk so pompously about human rights and democracy are generous when money is used for the spilling of human blood and for the support of juntas. They murdered Salvador Allende, an upright, wonderful man with a noble, revolutionary spirit. His dream was not simply going down in history as one of Chile's presidents. He dreamt of being a people's president. They called him "Companero Presidente." He had complete faith in his people and the people had complete faith in their Comrade President.

The junta and its supporters sentenced him to death

They killed him...

I recall my meeting not so long ago with Salvador Allende in the presidential palace, where already at that time one sensed a troubled period. The reactionaries were acting more brazenly, more openly, more brutally.

Our meeting took place after Allende had seen the film, "The Flaming Continent." It was presented to him as a gift from the government of the Soviet Union.

We had a cordial, heart-to-heart talk. He spoke about the film, and about the national-liberation struggle of the Latin American countries. He mentioned then, in that conversation, that he would not leave the presidential palace alive...

And now the junta and its backers have murdered him...

I look with different eyes now at the scenes which we filmed in Santiago. I cannot tell you how I feel when I look at the people in these scenes: many of them are most likely no longer alive.

It seems as though it was only a week or so ago that we took shots in these streets, where tanks now rumble; in the streets which are empty on account of the curfew; in the streets where military patrols are engaged in a terrifying round-the-clock manhunt.

What grim trials have fallen to the lot of the Chileans!

There was a different time, when the streets of Santiago were like a turbulent stream.

I believe I shall never forget that time! How fresh were the revolutionary sentiments of the youth, what great hopes and plans they had as they joyously moved down the streets manifesting their loyalty to the Popular Unity government, and hatred for fascism.

Were they too carefree?

Perhaps they had no idea of the treachery, cruelty, and, lastly, the strength of the enemy.

We filmed these people when they celebrated independence day in the outskirts of Santiago.

Workers and peasants danced. They danced, because they felt relieved and hope and confidence had risen in them that their children would have shoes, that the older ones would go to school, and that the whole family would move into new living quarters.

The people rejoiced; they believed in the righteousness of their cause. I read pride in the eyes of the workers of Chuquibambilla. Yes, the copper which they were smelting now was theirs, Chilean copper.

I saw the same feelings of masters of the country in the eyes of the oilmen of Terra del Fuego. They were now obtaining oil for their people.

And yet, already in those peaceful days, when these scenes were shot, the hearts of the people were troubled.

The morrow was viewed with anxiety by everyone, in his own way. Those, whom the victory of Popular Unity had brought hopes for a better future, were worried by the actions of the reactionaries, while those, whom the revolution

and eagerly snatched up every bit of news from outside. The enemies of the Chilean revolution threatened it with an economic blockade and all sorts of other trouble.

Indeed, why shouldn't they make such a threat? Only yesterday this bank belonged to foreign capitalists, whereas now -- it happened in front of our eyes -- it began carrying the name of O'Higgins, a national hero of Chile. The major foreign banks had been nationalised by the Allende government.

The political situation in the country hotbed up.

A question of great importance was raised, that of nationalising the copper mines.

There are moments in the history of nations when the enemies of revolution do not dare come out openly against the people's will. They silently accept laws which stick in their throats. One such law for these gentlemen, morosely seated on the Opposition benches, was that on the nationalisation of the copper mines.

All the Popular Unity parties came out in Parliament in support of this law. The speaker seen here is Senator Carlos Altamirano, the leader of the Socialist Party of Chile.

And this is Senator Luis Corvalan, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Chile. The Chilean Communists had long voted for this law their lives, detainment in concentration camps, and in the hail of fascist bullets.

As for these men, they are silent at this moment,

Part Two

The day when the government announced the nationalisation of all copper industry enterprises, previously belonging to the North American monopolies, was called a Day of National Dignity by the Chilean people.

I shall never forget that workers' rally in the mining town of Rancagua. I particularly feel now my great fortune in filming this meeting of the people with their president.

(Translation of Salvador
Allende's speech)

"People of Chile, residents of Rancagua,

"Today is National Dignity Day, because Chile is breaking away from the past. It is rising with faith in the future. It is taking the road of its final economic independence, which will signify full political independence.

Therefore, it is not accidental that Rancagua and this Square of Heroes have been chosen as the place for the President to address the nation: in this place we feel the spirit of the past, the heroism of those who fought and gave their lives for our people to acquire their dignity and emerge on a new road.

Look, look now, when he is no more alive, how he believed in Chile's future, how he wanted to see his native country free and happy.

Chuquicamata. The world knows of no other copper ore deposits richer than those located here.

without them everything would be ruined, that chaos would set in.

The Chilean people coped with the task, and even began mining more copper than under Yankee administration.

I shall not translate for you. I only want to emphasise that on this mine nationalisation committee are representatives of almost all the parties included in the Popular Unity Front -- a Radical, a Socialist, a Communist...

The world talks a great deal about Chilean copper.

The destiny of the people lies in this red metal, and it is also the tragedy of the people, because, immediately after the fascist putsch, the Anaconda company, the owner of Chilean copper for decades, announced its readiness to return to Chile.

The kings of the copper empire, presidents, stockholders, managers -- all of them want to come back.

What can one say as he studies their faces? They, evidently, had enough brains and will. Cruelty...

The famous Latin American Leones (Lions) golf club, a club for millionaires, industrialists, men of Big Business, most of whom, naturally, were greatly opposed to the Popular Unity government.

We succeeded in penetrating inside this club for the elite of the Chilean bourgeoisie.

Here, on the quiet golf links, far away from workers' demonstrations and revolutionary youth rallies, the "Lions" felt more at ease.

Within their own circle, they could, without looking round, discuss the political situation and guess what lay in store for them.

What they feared most of all was a "second Cuba." Everything must be done to prevent this, they said.

Not only did they talk scandal, but also financed, supported and armed all kinds of fascist-type organisations.

Here are the heralds of the Chilean "Leones." These were only the first steps.

The outright fascist organisation, Patria y Libertad -- Fatherland and Freedom -- emerged on the scene later.

The emblem of this organisation closely resembles the nazi swastika. This is not an accidental coincidence.

Francisco Coloane, a well-known writer, told me about the ominous threat of fascism in his own country and throughout Latin America:

"There is already an embryo of fascism in Chile. My generation knows what fascism is. Latin America in our times has a form of fascism, 'gorillas.' The fight against fascism is the fight of all progressive mankind. I think that the world should think over the fact that anti-Marxism, anti-communism, and anti-Sovietism, is what builds up -- fascism!"

General Schneider, the commander-in-chief of Chile's land forces, was murdered. The year was 1970, with Allende already elected as President, but not yet having taken up this office.

The reactionaries wanted already in this period to

General Shneider firmly declared: "The army is loyal to the constitution."

The murder took place two days before the new president was sworn in.

At the funeral of Schneider, Allende said:

"That bullet was meant for me..."

Part Three

Yes, the Chilean bourgeoisie, bank-, factory-, and mineowners, naturally, were frightened by the possibility of the establishment of people's power.

Christian Demoorat Eduardo Frei suited them quite well. This man, who had remained seated in the presidential chair for six years, was the herald of the false slogan of a "class peace," but in reality it was peace with the North American monopolies.

The Christian Demoorats were least of all troubled by the miserable plight of the Chilean people, by famine, unemployment, and slums. Senor Frei's police evicted poor people even from these slums.

Reduced to despair, the people rose in struggle. This hunger march of Lota miners to Santiago went down in the annals of history of the revolutionary movement of the Chilean working class.

It was only natural that these toiling people, poor, and ordinary people of Chile voted for Salvador Allende in the 1970 presidential elections.

It was the first time in history that Latin America had a Marxist President.

He is seen here entering the Presidential palace, La Moneda.

And this was a festive occasion at the same stadium where Chilean patriots are today being tortured and shot by the fascist junta.

people, and not to spare his life in defending the people.

How sad it is to realise that these people did not protect themselves, that they overlooked a great calamity. It stalked them already at the time when they rejoiced, like children, over their first real victory.

When the Popular Unity government came to power, its first thoughts were about the children. One of the first decrees issued by the people's government was to provide every Chilean child daily and free with a half-litre of milk.

We filmed this improvised school in old autobuses on the outskirts of Santiago.

The children needed a school, even such a one, for the time being.

These are not the worst slums in Latin America. There is some semblance of human lodgings, where everyone tries somehow to make them look cozy...

The people we filmed were not ashamed of their poverty. They said proudly that the government was building a new community close by, and that they were working voluntarily on the construction site in order to hasten the joyous day when they would move into well-appointed flats.

On one of the volunteer workdays, the community residents were visited by Salvador Allende.

Had the people's dream of a new home come true? It was learned that in the days of the September putsch this community became one of the pockets of resistance. It was bombed by the junta's planes.

of coffee a manifestation against the shortage of meat in the shops. These "lionesses," you see, were starved...

Behind this showdown stood highly experienced political stage managers.

These officers' wives were also dissatisfied with something, and demanded something. They were prodded and prompted by the same managers.

After the mothers, the offspring emerged in the streets. Everything was thrown into action: first came the pots and cobblestones, and afterwards, the shots and bombs...

The fascist thugs of the Patria y Libertad organization mustered armed gangs, attacked the police and raided government institutions.

The Che Guevara monument in a working neighbourhood of Santiago. The fascists planted a bomb and decapitated the bronze monument.

The rightists resorted to terror and rowdyism, causing disorder.

Incidentally, the left extremists frequently took part in these outrages. They joined the fascist gangsters in playing a foul game.

Part Four

They stopped at nothing to undermine trust in the government.

Their first blow was closing shops tightly.

Suddenly, for some reason or other, there was no more petrol. Transport services grounded to a halt.

Bread, meat and matches were missing. Where had they vanished to?

The government, it had been believed, had done everything to secure foodstuffs for the country. Freighters with food supplies were unloaded at the big port in Valparaiso, and columns of refrigerator trucks streamed to the cities of Chile.

But where did the meat disappear?

It was a conspiracy, a malicious conspiracy engineered by petty shopowners. Behind them stood the upper bourgeoisie, who operated all the levers of this diabolical sabotage machine.

At times the authorities compelled the saboteurs to open the shops and to sell to the people products which had been hidden away in the cellars.

Just look at the way the people welcomed this measure.

It was not so easy helping a workingman to fill his bag with products...

Naturally, it would have been easier buying all essentials on the "black market." This, of course, could be done only by those who had money to burn. The prices sky-

In these alarming days, the people demanded: "Let the rich share with the poor!" "Raise pay at the expense of the income of the rich!"

"Let the rich share with us!"

The government advanced a bill on increasing pay. It was obstructed by the reactionaries in all instances.

Here is one of these instances.

These Senors uphold the interests of precisely those whom the people hate and demand that pressure be exerted on them.

What can you expect from these Senors, except grimaces, gestures, and cynical chuckles?

They, naturally, will find an article that will torpedo yet another attempt by Allende to make life easier for the Chileans.

The same fate awaited every progressive bill as soon as it found its way to Congress where the enemies of Popular Unity held the majority.

But the reactionaries pinned their greatest hopes on the next parliamentary elections. Their calculation was on winning more than two-thirds of the seats and removing Allende.

They mobilised all their forces for this.

This was one of the election rallies held by the Christian Democratic party.

All means of tomfoolery were set into motion. They began beating drums of victory.

These ladies, naturally, favour the leader of the Nationalists, Garp, a reactionary with a steeled grip.

The representatives of the left parties entered into the election campaign with dignity and confidence.

The Opposition not only failed to gain two-thirds of the votes, but even lost some of its seats in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

The Popular Unity parties scored a resounding victory in the elections.

The working people of Chile had spoken out.

Pablo Rodriguez, the ringleader of the fascist Patria y Libertad organisation, sounded an alarm after the spring elections.

"In the presidential elections in 1976, if they take place," he said, "the Marxists will gain 80 per cent of the votes. We must act before 1976. We must act now!"

Casting all attributes of bourgeois democracy to the side, the reactionaries threw into attack their main forces -- the gangs of saboteurs, agents provocateurs, and terrorists.

Part Five

The fascist storm-troopers -- I cannot call them any other way -- made continuous sallies in these streets and squares of Santiago, where every corner is familiar to me.

They actually pursued the sole aim of holding the people in constant tension, of trying, in this way, to impress on the people that disorder would prevail so long as the left parties hold power.

It is clear to everyone that behind the backs of these rowdies stood very strong forces and most serious interests.

Blows were struck at most sensitive places.

Halting public transport meant evoking, the irritation and discontent of the people, making even those who were loyal to the regime wonder out loud: "When will an end be put to this? What kind of a government is it that it cannot organise autobus service?"

Thousands of machines remained idle. This was called a "strike." Each of the "strikers" received from a bottomless moneybag ten times more than what he usually earned while working.

We know what moneybag this is. It stopped not only autobuses, but also whole governments in Latin America; it overthrew unsuitable presidents, financed coups, gave its blessings to military courts, and paid for these spikes.

A spike on the highway -- a simple thing, it would

The patriots of Chile -- the workers, youth and students, -- responded to the government's appeal to resist the saboteurs.

Instead of buses, men began driving trucks, risking to be shot down by fascist bullets from behind a corner.

"Let them shoot me; I'll deliver this cargo to its destination just the same!"

"I'm not a Chilean if I don't bring these workers to their places!"

"So help me God!"

The workers built trucks staying days and nights in a row at the shops...

The students unloaded food supplies; they also worked night and day.

These were the lads who were mowed down by machine-gun fire on the Technical University grounds on that day in September when the body of the slain President of the Republic was carried out of La Moneda.

The saboteurs blow up oil pipelines, open fire from behind the corner, and then cynically accuse the government for all the trouble in the country.

The fascists of Patria y Libertad proclaim:

"... The people of Chile must realise that the government is incapable of maintaining law and order at home, of ensuring food and safety for the people."

The reactionaries moved on steadily to a military coup. The reactionary military emerged on the scene when the first attempt was made at the end of June, but at that time

Many military men, such as General Prats, who were later removed, remained loyal to the constitution and the President.

The people surged towards the presidential palace. The streets and squares of Chilean cities were thronged with people.

The putsch was thwarted, but not the conspiracy.

It seemed as though the entire people were as one in its thoughts, that they were united in the desire to support the government.

What happened, after all, in that country which has become so close and dear to millions of people?

Many people, hiding their pain, are today inclined to reproach Salvador Allende for being too soft-hearted, for observing the constitution so scrupulously while the bourgeoisie did everything to trample this constitution underfoot.

How could he, Chile's first-ever people's President, forget the times when the dictatorship of "gorillas" raged in the country, and when the pride of the nation, Pablo Neruda, was in exile, while he, a young revolutionary, was handed over to be tried by a military tribunal?

All this happened earlier, I repeat, earlier!

What had happened now?

In a period of only three years, the people of Chile felt themselves as masters of their own destinies. And then, all of a sudden, they found themselves under the rule of fascist assassins...

Is this something that will never be changed?

I cannot believe that these schoolchildren, whom we filmed in Terra del Fuego, that these youngsters who had only learned to sing their anthem, the anthem of a free country, that these children will live under fascist jack-boots!

It is impossible to believe that this child, too, this tiny citizen of Chile, is already sentenced to be a subordinate of the generals' junta!

It was the morning of September 11, 1973.

Tanks were brought up to La Moneda, the presidential palace.

This day became a tragic landmark in the history of the Chilean people.

Early in the morning, several boys stole up to the palace, evidently, wishing to warn the President: the tanks were already a few yards away.

Allende came out to meet the boys. Nobody would ever see him alive after this, nobody except those who fought at his side till his last breath.

In those minutes when rebel aircraft dropped bombs and missiles, and tank shells ripped into the walls of La Moneda, the President and a handful of his staunch loyal supporters fought and beat off the mutineers' attacks.

To the generals' ultimatum to surrender -- they promised to spare his life -- Allende replied:

"Traitors cannot understand what a man's honour is."

The mutineers bombed the president's residence, too.

"Horsensia, I'll leave La Moneda only as a dead man.
I shall die fighting!"

The killers wrapped the body of the Chilean President in a woollen poncho, which had been presented to him by an old cattle-farmer as a gift.

Part Six

It was in this old Spanish palace, in its marble courtyard that we interviewed President Allende.

He spoke about the government's desire to do away with social cruelty still persisting in the state system, to put an end to poverty, child mortality, slums and hunger. His final words were:

"The future belongs to socialism."

I remember him telling me:

"I derived great pleasure from contacts with the people, when workers outstretched their hands to me, and said: 'Take care of yourself; we need you very much...'"

The ruins of the presidential palace were still smouldering when the fascists launched their ferocious man-hunt in Chile and throughout the country. Progressive leaders, leaders of the Popular Unity parties, Ministers, workers, students, thousands of people, children and aged people fell victims of the fascist beasts' campaign of bloody terror.

The generals started a horrible bloodbath in Chile. In these dreadful days, Pablo Neruda, the greatest poet of modern times, was dying. Shortly before his death, he wrote the following last verses:

"Frei and Pinochet are in the same harness;
The chastisers of Chilean history
Rejoice over and glorify a September of ashes;
The fire rages again, blood flows again;
The thugs of nether regions have revived,

And the dealers, who are incited
By the New York wolf-pack."

Pinochet, the military junta ringleader, stated that he was ready to declare a civil war against the entire people. That was exactly what he said: "... war against the entire people!"

The new Interior Minister, General Bonilla, threatened:

"... We shall raze everything to the ground until resistance stops!"

A week earlier, General Pinochet, the head of the junta, swore allegiance to the people and the President. This butcher received his training in a US commando school in the Panama Canal Zone, and during Frei's administration served as a military attache in Washington. This makes things clear, doesn't it?

This is El Mercurio, the only newspaper allowed by the junta to be published in the first days after the coup.

These are portraits of political leaders of Popular Unity. Altamirano, Luis Corvalan, they are being hunted down, they are doomed to death...

The front page says: "The United States recognises the military junta."

This dispatch from Washington speaks of a loan.

A church service, with the priests offering prayers for the prosperity of the junta. These are prayers with a submachine-gun. In the front row are Christian Democrat Senor Frei, Senor Alexandri, Senor Videla; all of them are

atrocities being committed at Santiago's main stadium.

The junta's first foreign policy move is breaking off relations with Cuba.

The Chilean reactionaries cannot forgive their people's sentiments of brotherly love for revolutionary Cuba.

What a strutting welcome the Chileans gave to Fidel Castro!

He is seen here laying flowers at the monument of Ernesto Che Guevara in the San Miguel workers' commune in Santiago, a monument put up with money donated by the inhabitants. By orders of traitor Pinochet, this movement has been taken away to be melted into something else...

Today, on orders by the junta, the Popular Unity slogans on housewalls are being washed and scraped off. Where are you now, you fellows, YCLers of the Ramon Parro team, devoted soldiers of the revolution, whose weapons were a brush and a pail of paint?

They did their job tirelessly, lived like under army barrack rules, snatched a bit of sleep whenever and wherever possible...

Those same walls, where the slogans are being furiously erased by the fascists, are now witnessing the execution of lads who shouldered the revolution and gave it their pure hearts. Those who are alive are fighting today; they are fighting to the death.

A people's poet of Chile, a Communist, a tribune,
and a singer

Victor Tara.

We filmed his performance in a workers' community square. At the height of the campaign of terror, he came to the stadium with his guitar and began singing revolutionary songs to the people detained inside.

The butchers first chopped off his wrists,
then bashed in his head and strung up his body.

They hanged him with his guitar.

Luis Corvalan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, an outstanding leader of the international working class movement.

Corvalan has been seized and thrown into prison. His life is in danger. The peoples of the world demand:

"Freedom for Luis Corvalan!"

We filmed him inside the printshop of El Siglo, the militant newspaper of the Chilean Communists. I remember his warm smile and his quiet voice infecting everyone with joviality. At one time, in difficult years, he was the El Siglo editor.

Grim times have returned. This is the last legal issue of El Siglo: it came out on the day of the coup: September 11.

For millions of Latin Americans, for all working people of the world this man personifies unbending staunchness and crystalpure uprightness. He went through decades of struggle, prisons, and concentration camps, since the age of 16 when he joined the Communist Party.

The world has exploded with anger and protest and

Communists, Socialists, Parliaments, Heads of Governments, and trade unions are coming out in defence of the Chilean patriots.

In its statement, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union strongly condemns the actions of the reactionary forces in Chile.

Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev said:

"These days the Soviet Communists and the entire Soviet people especially emphasise the feelings of class solidarity with the working people of Chile and profound indignation over the bloody crimes committed by the Chilean reactionaries."

Spring is presently nearing in the southern hemisphere. It is a bloody spring for the Chilean people. But in all times spring has been and remains spring. That shots are ringing out on Chilean soil, and that some elderly workers and peasants, and some boys hold sub-machine-guns and homemade bombs in their hands, and sometimes advance empty-handed towards oncoming tanks and machine-guns, this, evidently, is the main thing marking this tragic spring of 1973.

The Popular Unity lives on! It goes on fighting, and rallying the patriots. The first issue of the illegal publication, El Siglo, the Chilean Communist newspaper, has already come out.

El Siglo calls on the people to fight.

The struggle is only beginning!