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Article

The permanent rebellion: An interpretation of Mapuche uprisings under Chilean colonialism

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Abstract

This article approaches the rebellions of the Mapuche people from a *longue-durée* perspective, from the Occupation of the Araucanía in 1861 to the recent events of 2020. Among other things, the article explores the Popular Unity (UP) period, and the 'Cautinazo' in particular, considered here as an uprising that synthesised the discourses and aspirations of the Mapuche people dating back to the Occupation, while also repoliticising them by foregrounding demands for land restitution. This experience created the conditions for a new cycle of mobilisation that began in the twenty-first century. In other words, the Agrarian Reform of the UP era set the stage for more recent rebellions that are once again challenging colonial problems related to private property rights, the usurpation of land and agricultural aggression. In seeking responses to these problems, the Mapuche movement of the early twenty-first century is being revitalised.

Keywords: rebellion; long memory; Occupation of the Araucanía; *reducción*

Opening comments

Keep your *tralca* [literally, ‘thunder’ but also a reference to a firearm] behind the door
always well-oiled,
so that it can defend you from the aggression of the enemy:
the landholders, the bourgeoisie and the police in their service,
a day of reckoning will come for those who
starved your parents and grandparents to death.

Heriberto Ailío¹

These opening words are taken from Heriberto Ailío, an important Mapuche leader who was born on the Nicolás Ailío de Tranapuete *reducción* (roughly, Indigenous reservation) in the *comuna* (parish) of Carahue. Ailío is remembered for his great political character and for the leadership that he exercised from a young age. During the Popular Unity (UP) years, he was one of the main promoters of the land seizures and fence breaches that were carried out along the coast of Carahue. In December 1970, he wrote his ‘Letter of Campesino Liberation’, which was found when the police and the *latifundistas* (landholders) took back the Rucalán *fundo* (large agricultural estate) that had been seized briefly by a group of Indigenous activists and their allies. An excerpt of the letter was published in the regional newspaper, the *Diario Austral de Temuco*, at a time when Rucalán landowner Juan Landarretche had requested a legal injunction against the popular action.² The missive demanded the liberation of the *campesinos* [rural peasants], Mapuches and non-Mapuches alike, and called on both groups to consider their common ‘brotherhood of suffering’. In the minds of the Mapuche people, this brotherhood united all the victims of rural deprivation in the Cautín province during the twentieth century. Heriberto Ailío himself highlighted this fact at an event commemorating the 48th anniversary of the founding of the leftist Movimiento Campesino Revolucionario (Campesino Revolutionary Movement, MCR). From the basement of the Methodist church in Temuco, located two blocks away from Plaza Pinto, Ailío pledged that the brothers whose sufferance made it possible to rebuild the Mapuche nation always be remembered. In Ailío’s words, ‘Any comrade who is poor is my *peñi* [brother]’.³

This article provides an account of the political atmosphere that engulfed Chile during Salvador Allende’s government that lasted 1,000 days. It also explores the Mapuche uprisings to take back their ancestral lands during this period and the violent counter-attack that large landowners carried out against certain sectors of the Mapuche community as they sought radical agrarian reform through direct action. The article takes into account the weight of historical memory on Mapuche minds and bodies. The memories of past voices can be seen when Ailío himself gestured towards struggles that were rooted in another era, noting that someday you will get even with all ‘those who starved your parents and grandparents to death’. The reference to the death of forebears was anything but metaphorical. Rather it is a profound encapsulation of ‘post-reductional’ Mapuche history as a whole. This is a story weighed down by the experience of republican colonialism, the structures of territorial dispossession and the long history of subordination and inferiorisation of Mapuche lives.⁴ However, Ailío’s words also invite us to consider the ongoing permanent rebellion that seeks to subvert the conditions that republican colonialism has imposed through new strategies of resistance, adaptation and transformation. All of these strategies, we show, are rooted in what Ailío calls ‘getting even’.

This article focuses on problematising the idea of republican colonialism with regard to the Mapuche people. Doing so, it relies on a broad range of theoretical frameworks. Pablo González Casanova understood the existence of social groups that persist without ‘recognizing that the nation-states that lead, or serve, them maintain and remake the very internal colonial structures that have predominated under colonial or bourgeois rule’.⁵ This domination can be called internal colonialism; that is, nation states continue the colonising process even after formal independence has occurred. Meanwhile, relationships of racial inequality are reconfigured and reproduced within the borders of independent states through political processes so that ‘those colonized within the nation-state belong to a different “race” which the national government has subdued and considers “inferior”’. In effect, the state becomes a ‘symbol of liberation’ for its colonised people that is part of the state’s ‘demagogy’.⁶

Many are the Mapuche stories that commemorate this inequality; it is not difficult to identify the memory of asymmetric social construction that was produced by the expansion of the Chilean state into Mapuche territory during the mid-nineteenth century. Rudecindo Quinchavil, who participated in the uprisings for land recovery during the UP era, remembers how he went to live near the *latifundio* (agricultural estate) that had once belonged to his community and how he came to terms with being fenced into a *reducción*. Quinchavil indicates that ‘as the years went by, he was condemned to gaze upon the place that had once belonged to them, but now there was a fence that would not even allow him to pass through. And with that, of course, it only takes a small spark to ignite a fire’.⁷ In the minds of the Mapuche people, the memory of the *reducción* lives on, mixed with the memories of the war of the Occupation of the Araucanía, for example. But the lasting desire to identify a reality of oppression lives on, too, along with the desire to build strategies that undermine and condemn the normalisation of a ‘reduced’ territory.⁸

From another theoretical perspective, it is necessary to add that one of the fundamental issues when observing the Mapuche experience through the lens of republican colonialism is that of over-victimisation of the Indigenous communities. On the one hand, it is true that we must account for the many profound acts of violence to which the Mapuche people have been subjected. But we must also, on the other hand, add to this perspective the ideas of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, specifically the idea of a people ‘oppressed, but not defeated’.⁹ We maintain that the state-sponsored project of colonisation in Chile has existed, but it has not been totally successful. The Mapuche people have cracked (but not broken) under the pressure as they have consistently battled republican colonialism. They have deployed political strategies of resistance and sought anti-colonial transformation, whether through writing, various forms of denial, education, the staging of uprisings to take back land or struggles for autonomy. In effect, the formation of multiple strategies of resistance is part of an ongoing or permanent rebellion, driven and actualised through the long memory of the Mapuche people. On this point, Rivera Cusicanqui observes that long memory weighs more heavily on its subjects than recent memories. She notes that these temporal designations, at least in the Indigenous case, are riven with the effects of colonialism; long memory is also an Indigenous memory in which the various forms of resistance to the colonial order predominate. Therefore, ‘the perception of colonial continuity reveals long memory’s predominance over short-term memory, and that is a source of autonomous political identity that is impossible to supplant’.¹⁰ Thus, the driving force propelling the Mapuche people’s long memory is that of anti-colonial rebellion – which is to say, the quest to subvert and reject the conditions imposed by the colonial *reducción* system.

This article seeks to approach the rebellions of the Mapuche people from the perspective of long memory – specifically, between the Occupation of the Araucanía and the present days. Amid this history, a decisive moment was the ‘Cautinazo’ during the UP’s acceleration of agrarian reform. As we will show, this event synthesised the discussions and aspirations of the Mapuche people, while also repoliticising the memory of the Occupation through the demand for land restitution. This experience created the conditions for a new cycle of mobilisation that began in the twenty-first century. In other words, the Agrarian Reform (1958–73), especially during the UP period, set the stage for a rebellion that revived colonial problems related to private property rights, the usurpation of land and agricultural aggression. In seeking responses to these problems, the Mapuche movement of the early twenty-first century has been renewed.

The Mapuche uprising as a response to the Occupation of the Araucanía: Adaptation in resistance, 1861–1970

The Spanish grabbed the land through fire and bloodshed; and later, Chileans did the same, imposing a regime of *comunidades* [communities] . . . thousands and thousands died; their women were raped, their *rucas* [traditional thatched huts] burned, expelled from their dominions to the cordillera or to the infertile soils in order to openly and ruthlessly privilege foreigners and Chilean colonists.

Antonio Mulato Ñunque¹¹

The colonisation of Mapuche lands was by no means spontaneous. Rather, it subscribed to the dynamics of national capitalism and its various international connections. In Chile, one of the principal studies of *pueblos originarios* (roughly, First Nations or Indigenous peoples) emerged during the

1980s from within the school of Estudios Fronterizos (Borderland Studies). In their first generation of publications, this group proposed that the Occupation of the Araucanía had been the result of a 'spontaneous colonisation' that dragged the *frontera* (literally, frontier; typically refers to the territory controlled by the Mapuche before the Occupation of the Araucanía) into conflict and violence.¹² Such colonisation supposedly put an end to the old colonial pacts that had promoted commerce, exchange and diplomacy. From our point of view, this scholarly approach deliberately concealed the role that the Chilean people, including the popular sectors of Chile, played in the conquest of the region that the Mapuche referred to as *Füüalmapu* (the greater Mapuche territory). A racialised vision of the original inhabitants of the region played a key part in these early studies. The recurrent idea that 'good lands were in bad hands', to use the political and intellectual discourse of the time, was a specific reference to the Mapuche people.¹³

The Occupation of the Araucanía began in 1861, but in many ways it was rooted in the crisis of the Spanish American Revolutions that put an end to the signed accords between the Mapuche and the crown.¹⁴ The Mapuche, on many occasions, had resorted to dialogue, organising and participating in *parlamentos* (summit conferences) as part of the regular protocol for perpetuating a lasting peace. However, the old colonial pact disintegrated when the independent Chilean Republic responded violently to the *Fütamalon*, or Great Uprising (1858–60), an event that was intended to stop *criollo* expansion southward. It is important to note that Chilean military forces mobilised the colonisers and the *criollo* peasantry with the purpose of expropriating the Mapuche-controlled land and silver. This supposedly spontaneous colonisation process was, in fact, promoted by important urban groups in order to annex the *Füüalmapu*, a land rich in a variety of resources.

Mapuche resistance complicated the colonial horizons of the *criollos*. The need to recover lost pacts with some leaders has been analysed by Silvia Ratto as part of Chile's incipient 'Indigenous policy' with the Mapuche and an attempt to incorporate them into the Republic.¹⁵ As time passed, the political structures created were used to persuade and coerce, establishing the dialectic that would characterise the relationship between republican elites and Indigenous peoples thereafter. Even so, some Indigenous factions, the so-called 'Mapuchería', resisted incorporation into republican structures.¹⁶ These were the people who refused to accept the colonial limits that the Chilean republic offered to them so long as it did not also include recognitions that the Mapuche were a separate and distinct people with a right to a different way of life. The republic even refused to recognise the legitimacy of communal property, leading an important segment of the Mapuche population to resist the expansion and reject all republican policies. In turn, said resistance compelled republican elites in Argentina and Chile to design a military plan. The international situation, and the development of the capitalist model of development in particular, fuelled a project of modernising colonisation in which the Indigenous groups would be excluded.¹⁷

The Occupation of the Araucanía was a capitalist project of conquest occurring between 1861 and 1883. The acquisition of new land, the surveying of said land and the completion of infrastructure projects in and around *reducciones* sought to transform the Mapuche into 'capitalists' and reconfigure their identities through insertion in the local, national and global economies. As historian Jorge Pinto has observed, capitalist dynamics drew the Mapuche people into processes of economic development.¹⁸ At the same time, the liberal governments (1861–91) extended the 'Indigenous policy' of conservative governments while also trying to make it more compatible with capitalist forms of production. That policy would be the basis of the *reducción* system. As such, the lands left in Mapuche hands were seen as a mechanism for linking them to the market, under the supposition that over time globalisation would generate the acculturation of the broader Mapuche community.

The *reducción territorial* (territorial reservation or reduction) drew upon the experience of the United States as an example. This laboratory of colonialism, which expected the market to act as an instrument that would transform the Mapuche into productive subjects, allowed the continuity of Mapuche traditions and customs within the borders of reduced or 'reserved' spaces. Such a configuration gave the Mapuche enough territory to recover some sense of community, even though the recuperation of their ancestral lands was constantly pushed to some undetermined future date. The Mapuche referred to that lost territory as historic lands.¹⁹

In the early twentieth century, the Mapuche people began to see the liberal project of *reducción* as the principal cause of Indigenous poverty. Professor Manuel Manquilef denounced it as such in his book, *Tierras de Arauco*.²⁰ In the 1930s, Manuel Aburto Panguilef built upon this earlier work by suggesting the importance of founding a ‘República Araucana’ (Araucanian Republic). Decades later, during the emergence of the new Mapuche movement (1990–2020), Panguilef was seen as one of the pioneers of ethnic nationalism in Chile.²¹ Running parallel to this, another Mapuche leader, Venancio Coñuepan, maintained that insertion into the market economy was the way to improve the productive capacity of the Mapuche people. On that capitalist horizon, the Mapuche nationalism that had been growing stronger since 1910 continued to emphasise differentiation from non-Indigenous Chileans. The Mapuche leadership appropriated the idea of ‘*raza*’ (race) to emphasise the differences between themselves and non-Indigenous groups. This notion became politicised through the use of the concept *la raza Araucana*. Once again, this was a term that symbolised an anti-colonial mystique rooted in the idea that Mapuche people were distinct from their Chilean counterparts.

In the 1930s, coinciding with the discourses of *la raza* and capitalist enterprise, the idea of ethnic nationalism started to gain traction, especially among the poorest members of the Mapuche population. The term *la raza*, associated with land tenure and the recovery of traditional lands, became hegemonic in Mapuche public discourse. As agriculture became a fundamental issue throughout the continent in the decades that followed, the Mapuche people began to debate their overall situation with growing urgency. Increasingly, they focused on issues of widespread poverty and the need to re-engage with Indigenous traditions of agricultural production.

Mapuche efforts to recover their ancestral lands foregrounded other social and political tasks with similar urgency. According to Florencio Antilef, preventing land sales, even when these occurred out of economic necessity, became a central topic of community education among Mapuche leaders. On this point, Huenuhueque also points out an anonymous Mapuche editorial from 1955 that argued for a complete prohibition of land sales by posing the question, ‘should we defend our land?’ That same year, in the daily *El Araucano*, Ñamcupang proposed a theory with regard to agriculture:

Young people growing into civilized and educated life today lament bitterly seeing and hearing their elders, the way they had their lands taken from them, and they bitterly lament seeing the Araucanos who claim to defend their race, but who have done nothing to recover the land, nothing to form educated soldiers who, with intelligence and courage, could formalize the reasons of justice, either before local public authorities or before the tribunal of the National Congress.²²

For A. Ñamcupang, the central problem of the Mapuche in the mid-1950s was that of agriculture. ‘There is no doubt that the problem of the *indio* [Indigenous person] is the problem of Mapuche tribal lands. All his difficulties start there’, he claimed.²³ As such, we see that the sort of Mapuche nationalism that seemed to emerge during the first half of the twentieth century actually dates back to the resistance of the colonial period and the republican Occupation of the Araucanía. The goal of recovering historic lands never disappeared. This is why, as the Agrarian Reform began after 1958, the Mapuche developed a political discourse that transcended issues of agricultural productivity to also include demands for land sovereignty.

With all this in mind, we see that Mapuche mobilisation for land is but one moment in a much longer memory and history of resistance to occupation and *reducción*. The Mapuche people organised politically to strike and take back traditional lands which had been divided up by geographic happenstance as well as by fences. The national and international context of agrarian and Indigenous mobilisation in the 1970s, when governments promoted new forms of agricultural production, provided a opportune moment for the Mapuche people to mobilise in pursuit of this long-standing objective. And yet, they very soon confronted the violent reaction of latifundistas who hoped to thwart the fulfilment of Mapuche demands.

The new rebellion: A reading of the 1971 Mapuche uprising for the land

We want liberty and peace. But more than anything, we, the Mapuche, are the owners of the land. All our ancestors, our grandparents, fought to leave us this inheritance. We must defend our inheritance.

Andrés Llancapan Porma²⁴

The government of Salvador Allende promised to address the situation of the Mapuche people upon being elected in 1970. To that end, Chile's new head of state and his team at Chile's Ministry of Agriculture travelled to the province of Cautín during the UP coalition's first months in office. An invitation to the second Congreso Nacional Mapuche (Mapuche National Congress) that Allende received in December of 1970 set this process in motion. Several Mapuche associations, organised in the Confederación Nacional Mapuche (National Mapuche Confederation), proposed that one of the reasons for meeting with Allende was to discuss 'the miserable amount of land that is recognized as belonging to the Mapuche people, such that they have no alternative but to maintain their families on the haciendas and latifundios, offering themselves up as day laborers for very low wages, and in many instances, for no pay at all'.²⁵

Salvador Allende did not ignore Mapuche concerns. But the acceleration of the Agrarian Reform on the Chilean road to socialism re-exposed the colonial status of Fütalmapu. Rafael Railaf, a Mapuche member of the MCR, a rural front organisation for the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Leftist Movement, MIR), remembers the reasons for the land rebellion during the UP era, saying:

My grandfather always said that colonisers took our land from us at gunpoint. And it was more than just the land. When we took our sick [to the hospital] they did not let them in because they were Mapuche, because they smelled bad and then our sons and daughters died. . . . When the time came to run the fences, we were not only thinking about the land. We were thinking of everything; of education, of the hospital. . . . We were looking for a way to get organised, to take back our land. Because the land was stolen, without payment, without anything.²⁶

Accounts like Railaf's abound in Mapuche history. The product of Mapuche elders, many of them living just 100 years removed from the systematic expropriation of Mapuche lands in the nineteenth century, such accounts were transmitted through memory, history and song (*ülkaltun*) and highlight how Mapuche poverty originated with land usurpation. In this long memory of violence and resistance that came down through the generations, we see the detonators that ignited a series of Mapuche mobilisations as the process of agrarian reform accelerated after 1970. As we see in the paragraphs that follow, the struggle for Mapuche land during the 1,000 days of Salvador Allende's government reinvigorated debates about the colonial nature of the *reducción*. This period would also revive the memories of an enduring rebellion and the demand that what had been taken away be returned.

On 4 January 1971, the *Diario Austral de Temuco* proclaimed in its headline that the Ministry of Agriculture would quickly moved its operations to the city of Temuco, in the province of Cautín.²⁷ This event would initiate a period that history refers to as the 'Cautinazo'. At that point, the authorities had indicated that government officials – among them Jacques Chonchol, who presided over the Ministry of Agriculture – would remain in the region for 45 days. Their objective was to facilitate a deepening of the agrarian reform process and carry out technical assistance throughout the province of Cautín in concert with the Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agropecuario (National Institute of Agricultural Development, INDAP) and the Corporación de Fomento (State Corporation for Development, CORFO).

One of the government's immediate policy acts was to conduct a field study of lands that met the conditions for expropriation and redistribution. Officials expressed concern about an increase in uprisings in the province by publicly detailing their own political efforts to expedite the process of expropriation. As such, Jacques Chonchol, together with his agricultural advisers, went directly to the latifundios upon arriving in Temuco. Chonchol very clearly stated that 'programs shall not be carried out from above for those below, but rather with the participation of campesino communities to enrich and complement the plan'.²⁸ But with respect to that process, he clarified that:

We do not believe that there is a basic conflict between the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous. ... This is not a racial problem; it is a problem of poor, oppressed and exploited campesinos, many of whom have been robbed of their lands for generations using legal and illegal means. ... This will not be an easy problem to solve. The Mapuche population of Cautín numbers around 200,000. It is a problem that has been postponed indefinitely and we do not expect to resolve it, but merely to begin to deal with it.²⁹

It is worth noting that the term 'campesino' was used here to refer to the totality of the rural population in the province. It was a category of economic identification, and in countless congresses and speeches in which governmental authorities spoke to the Mapuche people, they used similar language that homogenised cultural and territorial differences. Furthermore, it is important to understand this term as an effort to focus attention on the 'descendants' of *la raza*, as Salvador Allende liked to call the Mapuche people.³⁰ For Allende, this was a way to include them in the government's economic agenda and in programmes of social development since it situated the Mapuche within the broader category of marginalised Chileans. But in emphasising Indigenous poverty and economic marginalisation, the UP tended to overlook this community's political exclusion. As such, the UP's language constituted a clear historical continuity with the founding of the Chilean nation state.

Indeed, the Mapuches themselves also identified as members of the *campesinado* (peasantry) on numerous occasions. The self-affirmation of a class identity was not a problem for the Mapuche elders. In fact, it constituted part of a tradition of 'adaptive resistance' inherited through generational memories for the recovery of their ancestral lands. The contemporary controversy regarding the use of the term 'campesino' to describe the Mapuche tends to be related to the emergence of the Mapuche movement's demands for self-determination. But in the years of the Agrarian Reform, many Mapuche laboured in the agro-industrial complex, and there was a real interculturality 'from below' in which poor non-Indigenous campesinos and Mapuche peoples recognised each other and respected their differences. Perhaps some Mapuche leaders and thinkers were ahead of their time in understanding the coexistence of multiple worlds with diverse historical origins. Or maybe they were less concerned with distinguishing pure essences and identities than we are now. In this regard, we return to the words of Heriberto Ailío because it seems essential to identify how, early on, some factions among the Mapuche people had begun to build bridges with other groups: 'my brother was the companion who suffered, those who were landless; he, too, was my *peñi*'.³¹ Within the Mapuche community, this sense of social solidarity has a name: *kelluwün*. The emergence of fraternity derived from the necessities of others allows for connections among diverse communities to be woven together as a show of mutual support. It is embedded in ancient memory and passed down through generations.

Aside from establishing clear boundaries for self-identification, factions within the Mapuche community dedicated their efforts to accelerating the Agrarian Reform. They saw it as an opportunity to recover their lands that had been usurped since the nineteenth century. This was especially true in the summer of 1971, the most critical moment of the Mapuche uprising during the UP era. As we have seen, the recovery of Indigenous lands had, up until that point, dragged on for decades, even as it became the central focus of Mapuche organisations over the course of the twentieth century. Following the ideas of Frantz Fanon, people possess a transformative capacity. They can confront projects of inferiorisation and colonisation of their minds and bodies, which are intended to make them into the wretched of the earth. Reducción condemned the Mapuche people to colonisation, but they never gave in, because 'though inferiorized, they were never convinced of their inferiority'.³²

We refer back to the words of Rafael Railaf, who establishes a contradiction that is both vital and radical. While remembering the motivations that drove the process of restitution, he points out that the struggle is not just about the land. He remembers that when the Mapuche got sick, they sought treatment at emergency care centres only to be turned away. 'We would take our sick, and they would not let them in because they were Mapuche, because they smelled bad and then our children died.' He goes on to note how 'in that moment, running fences was no longer just about the land. I thought about everything, about education and access to medical care.'³³

That said, it is essential to emphasise that not being convinced of their inferiority drove the Mapuche people to create alternative visions of how society should be organised. The persistent quest to overcome the ‘civilising’ condemnation of the *reducción* fuelled the various strategies of resistance and transformation. The project to undervalue Mapuche lives was also not totalising, as Lucy Traipe affirms when she talks about the experience of ‘having animals as beautiful as the ones on the latifundio next door, drinking milk just like other children, having access to a vehicle to get around more easily, [and] cooking up eggs, which became possible for everyone to do’.³⁴ As the Mapuche would point out in time, everything was for everyone.

In the Cautín countryside, beginning in December 1970, land seizures and fence running at various latifundios proliferated and became more acute as a result of internal community organisation and militancy in political organisations like the MCR and Netuaiñ Mapu (another Mapuche political organisation founded during the agrarian reform). Land recovery was tied to the long memory of Mapuche anti-colonial resistance that echoed in the minds and bodies of those who took part in these operations, the first of which had begun before the UP, at Lumaco and Ercilla in 1967.³⁵ These were experiences that gave meaning to the notion of ongoing transgression; they represented a series of projects intended to subvert the *reducción* and to instruct future projects of direct action. The events of 1967 set the stage for the uprising of 1971, starting with the historic running of fences at the community of Chinchavil in the Mañío Manzanal region of Nueva Imperial, in which the communities of Lautaro and Carahue also participated.

It was in this context that in March 1971 the plane carrying Salvador Allende from Santiago landed at the Maquehue airport in Temuco. The objective of his visit became apparent the next day. The *Diario Austral de Temuco* called it ‘a call to increase production’.³⁶ It was an eventful morning for the President. He had to walk the dirt paths of the back country, made slippery by the morning dew. The head of state was accompanied by the Intendente (governor) of Cautín, Gastón Lobos, a militant of the Radical Party who years later would figure on the lists of truth and justice commissions as one of Chile’s detained and disappeared persons. Together, they visited the headquarters of INDAP in Cautín, and from there, according to Mapuche collective memory, they attended one of the massive rallies that defined the UP era.

A huge crowd – or, as the elders would say, a *trawün* – gathered to listen to the President’s speech, delivered with all the characteristic depth and conviction in his voice, about what his ‘call to the descendants of *la raza*’ would mean.³⁷ Diverse factions stood poised to hear what commitments the head of state would make to the Mapuche people. ‘He should keep his promise’, said one Mapuche woman as she awaited Allende in Temuco, under the hopeful sunshine of March. The Mapuche people valued the fulfilment of a pact. Keeping one’s word was the local protocol, regardless of signed documents or political negotiations. As such, this woman expressed the hope that such commitments would be fulfilled. ‘Then, we will thank him’, she said. ‘We have done our part; we have received him with all our generosity, but he [Allende’s government] must do his part for us, too.’³⁸

Diverse Mapuche communities from Arauco, Malleco and Cautín gathered at this rally. Despite their different territorial identities, they were drawn together by what the President called a ‘campaign for production’ – an increase in food output intended to produce the economic growth necessary to open up the Chilean road to socialism.³⁹ As such, a principal focus of Allende’s visit was laying the foundations of a new technical and economic project called the Centro de Capacitación Mapuche (Mapuche Training Centre). From the podium and accompanied by the Minister of Agriculture, Jacques Chonchol, and the Director of the Department of Indigenous Affairs, Daniel Colompil Quilaqueo, who by that time belonged to the Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria (Movement of Popular Unitary Action, MAPU), Allende took credit for the creation of this important new institution. He also laid the cornerstone of the Comisión de Restituciones de Tierras Usurpadas (Commission for the Restitution of Usurped Lands).

The creation of the Centro de Capacitación Mapuche had three principal objectives: to provide Mapuche workers with assistance in organising labour unions and cooperatives, as well as knowledge about the agrarian reform process; to offer new technical and professional training for a new class of skilled workers; and to provide instruction in artisanry that would eventually lead to the commercialisation of Mapuche handcrafted products.⁴⁰ Salvador Allende was committed to the project, firmly believing that it exemplified the technical and economic proposals that he considered fundamental to the larger goals of

the UP. His speech did not end without first expressing his profound confidence in the Mapuche people, based on the historical tradition of the province. He pointed out that in spite of Mapuche impoverishment and the public usurpation of their land, many communities had donated their own land for the construction of schools. 'I give my thanks and congratulations', he said, 'to the good will of men and women of this forgotten and exploited race, so persecuted and marginalized. You have given me some of the precious plots of land you have left because you want culture and education for your children and this demonstrates that the spirit of *la raza* is continuing and strong, in spite of oppression.'⁴¹

After the electoral triumph of Salvador Allende, according to Peter Winn, Chile found itself in the middle 'of a revolution'. That revolution would find particular resonance in Chile's rural territories, where 'the foundations for a rural socialism that could increase agricultural production as well as the standard of living for campesinos' were created.⁴² In one year, the government presented signs of auspicious economic growth. It also enacted political reforms that pointed to the democratisation of the decision-making processes and decreasing levels of poverty across the country. The only thing left to reform was the countryside, which had been modified in part during the previous governments of Jorge Alessandri and Eduardo Frei Montalva. The first was made based on a capitalist conception of land through the Ley de Reforma Agraria N° 15.020 of 1962. That law imagined a peaceful transition that would end the latifundio and turn it over to the *inquilinos* as individual owners, while also allowing their former owners to sell off related businesses to dairy and forestry interests. Next, under Frei Montalva, there was the Ley de Reforma Agraria N° 16.640 of 1967, which established one of the fundamental characteristics for land expropriation: a maximum limit for private property, established at 80 hectares of irrigated land. But turning land over to former *inquilinos* (tenant farmers) did not mean that people envisioned a decolonisation of the Mapuche world. In fact, on many occasions, prejudice and racialised worldviews continued to condition the state's policies towards Indigenous groups. Some former *inquilinos* would continue to be 'loyal' to large landholders, their old bosses, with the two groups sharing a prejudice against the Mapuche; in the not so distant past, many *inquilinos* had also participated in the occupation of Mapuche lands. It is worth remembering that historians have called this process a 'spontaneous colonisation', even though we have concluded from the evidence presented in this article that there is no such thing as a spontaneous colonisation.⁴³

How, then, should we go about identifying the long memory of anti-colonial struggle in the case of the Mapuche people? This question necessarily takes us to the notion of 'internal colonialism' and the republican expansionist project that proceeded from the construction of the nation state itself. This was a form of colonialism created to steal lands, lives and knowledge. It was also a 'civilising' project that cast Indigenous lives as inferior to non-Indigenous lives. If long memory is one of anti-colonial revindication, we understand that the long memory of the Mapuche people is related to an ongoing uprising that seeks to subvert the colonial condition. What happened in the Chilean summer of 1971 constituted but one of many uprisings in the anti-colonial struggle to recover stolen lands and undo the colonial condition. For this reason, every conflict that seeks to transform this condition fits into what we understand as a permanent rebellion⁴⁴.

The uprising in the countryside that aimed at taking down the fences was accompanied by Mapuche communities exercising the written word. Countless posters appeared, alluding to the promise of land restitution. This manifestation of the ongoing or permanent rebellion was met with an armed counter-attack from the agriculturalists who occupied Mapuche land. The agriculturalists likewise mobilised the written word, deploying their gremial organisations to write multiple documents demanding that a state of emergency be declared in the province of Cautín.⁴⁵ At the end of December 1971, while attending the funeral of Moisés Huentelaf Alañanco, a Mapuche man murdered by agriculturalists during a land recovery action at Fundo el Chesque in Loncoche, the leaders of the leftist political organisation Netuain Mapu declared that '*los momios* [rich individuals from the political right] have taken our land with firearms and bloodshed. Now, they resist giving it back. We will recover our lands with our courage.'⁴⁶

The survival of the memory of the Mapuche elders propelled the ongoing or permanent rebellion. This is evident, even among Mapuches living away from their communities in Chile's principal urban centres. The drive to recover usurped land would be manifest there through writing as well. Around the

same time that Moisés Huentelaf was murdered, a group of students gathered at the Mapuche Centre of the Hogar Universitario de Santiago (Santiago Residence for University Students) in October 1971 to declare: 'We demand, and we will fight for, the elimination of all the latifundios in la Frontera. No compensation shall be paid because that would be like rewarding a thief for having stolen centuries of life and health from the Mapuche people.' The students concluded by stating that 'If necessary, we will restart the war of Arauco.'⁴⁷

In 1971, anti-UP elites pushed back quickly against the creative potential of the rebellion, particularly when faced with Mapuche mobilisations to take back the land. We understand that the violence of the agriculturalists in Mapuche territory had been a constant theme of the twentieth century. Countless legal proceedings were filed in the courts and documented in Mapuche family memory when it came to the unequal relationship between the latifundistas and their workers. It has always been Mapuche labour, and the bodies of Mapuche men, women and children, that have been given to such enterprises.

Heriberto Ailío, the author of the aforementioned 'Letter of Campesino Liberation', which was written in response to Mapuche land seizures and fence running, was one of many who made concrete the memories of latifundista violence through his work. He wrote this famous letter to his brothers in suffering, to the poor campesinos of Chile, encouraging them to keep their well-oiled *tralca* behind the door, 'so that it can defend you from the aggression of the enemy'. He would add that his Mapuche and campesino brethren should be prepared for the 'day of reckoning that will come for those who starved your parents and grandparents to death'.⁴⁸ These words represent the written form that long memory often took. As described earlier, the letter was found by the police and the latifundistas when they seized back the Rucalán estate, although it was eventually recovered and preserved by the residents of the Nicolás Ailío de Carahue reducción.

In the Mapuche language 'tralca' means 'thunder', but in this context it is best understood as a shotgun or rifle – the weapon that, when fired, resembles a thunderbolt. Why does Heriberto Ailío encourage his readers to be prepared to use the tralca? What is the long history of those who starved older generations of Mapuche to death? Put succinctly, it is the memory of reducción after the Occupation of the Araucanía. This event alone held a hundred years of memory.

Latifundista violence became more evident during the second half of 1971, and especially after the death of Rolando Matus.⁴⁹ A 28-year-old latifundista and member of the Partido Nacional (Nationalist Party, PN), Matus died at the Hospital Clínico Regional in Temuco after being shot by Juan Segundo Curipe Catrigan. According to the local newspaper, Matus died of a wound that had 'perforated his intestines in six places'.⁵⁰ The shooting occurred during a confrontation between large landowners and a group of Mapuche demonstrators in which the latter clamoured for the total return of lands stolen by the owners of Fundo Carén. At that time, only a small portion of the land had been returned.

On 22 April 1971, the local paper of the area, the *Diario Austral de Temuco*, announced the massive funeral for the young agriculturalist that was to be held at the Club de Huasos de Pucón (Rural Gentlemen's Club of Pucón). There were many campesinos in attendance as well as Mapuche people from the region, family members and national and local delegations of latifundistas who had been organised by their respective confederations and gremial associations. More than just a funeral, the historical record shows that a political reorganisation occurred at the club that day. Among those present were conservative elected officials, including congressmen Hardy Momberg and Victor Carmine, the president of the Partido Nacional Sergio Onofre Jarpa, the president of the Confederación de Sindicatos de Empleadores Agrícolas (Confederation of Agricultural Employers' Unions) Manuel Valdés and the president of the Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura (National Society of Agriculture) Benjamín Matte.⁵¹

In short, the funeral of Rolando Matus became not only a religious rite to bury a known agriculturalist from Pucón, but also a meeting of leading latifundistas. As the Agrarian Reform moved forwards, this group of agricultural elites was responsible for filing many lawsuits and complaints against the UP. Three months before the death of Matus, for example, Manuel Valdés and the Minister of Agriculture Jacques Chonchol had faced off in an intense epistolary debate. The latifundista demanded that a state of emergency be declared for the province of Cautín, calling the government incompetent when faced with a growing number of agrarian problems. In response, Chonchol affirmed that 'the declarations formulated

by Manuel Valdés are part of a campaign intended to create chaos and incite violence in the province of Cautín'.⁵²

The president of the Confederación de Sindicatos de Empleadores Agrícolas was not the only organisation accused of promoting chaos. The MCR, along with Mapuche campesino communities, accused congressman and latifundista Carmine of inciting the owners of latifundios in the regions of Imperial, Carahue and Lautaro. A loyal opponent of the UP, Carmine was noticeably moved at Matus's funeral. In the images, he appears as the visible face of the newly reorganised *patrones* (bosses and landowners) of Chile. Searching through the *Diario Austral de Temuco*, we have found that, on many occasions, he attacked Jacques Chonchol, demanding security for latifundistas. He also threatened to exercise 'self-defence' so that landowners would retain their privileges. Carmine, along with Landarretche, the owner of Fundos Rucalán, Butalon and Rucadiuca, was one of the principal promoters of the organisational meetings for latifundistas that would occur in Santiago. In December 1970, when the first agricultural estate was recovered by the community of Nicolás Ailío, on the coast of Carahue, Victor Carmine shot and wounded Ricardo Mora Carrillo and Heriberto Ailío. These were not the only people who experienced the counter-attack of their erstwhile bosses in a physical manner. The persecution of the Mapuche people also represents a form of historical continuity. Proof of that can be seen in the agrarian counter-reform imposed by the military dictatorship and the series of Mapuche uprisings that constituted a renewal of old struggles. As the historian Martín Correa has proposed, the land recovery amid the political crisis of the 1980s would reawaken memories of dispossession at the start of the 1990s.⁵³

Colonial counter-uprising: The return of the 'Araucano' and the Mapuche response

Once again, the Mapuche have been declared a problem; now, for this government, the objective is to definitively include them into Chilean society with rights and responsibilities just like the rest of the population.

Comité de Coordinación Mapuche en el Exterior – Brussels
(Mapuche Foreign Coordinating Committee – Brussels)⁵⁴

During the neoliberal revolution of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the word 'Araucano' was resurrected as a term to refer to the Mapuche people. Dictator Augusto Pinochet would also help revive in the national imagination the view that the Mapuche/Araucanos were the first to forge a true national identity (*chilenidad*) in Chile. This project included re-editing books about the epics of Leftrarü and Pelantarü. Meanwhile, the dictatorship also initiated an agrarian counter-reform that sought to end litigation over agrarian lands by returning some properties to their former owners and putting others up for sale on the market. Many of these lands would become central to the forestry industry after being acquired by big business interests. This new capitalist beachhead would inspire the creation of new types of resistance. However, despite all this, Pinochet, speaking in Villarica in 1979, declared that there were no more Mapuches in Chile because 'we are all Chileans now'.⁵⁵ In response, a new Mapuche movement began to coalesce, promoting a second cycle of struggle for autonomy, this time in a rapidly changing international context. The loss of lands through dictatorial decrees added to local tensions with large landowners and the new business entrepreneurs who had invested in Mapuche land. All of this gave rise to the violence and racism that only grew more acute during the 1980s.

The first new variable in these discussions was the incorporation of Mapuche struggles into a broader international dialogue. As some Mapuche militants went into exile, they had created their own political networks, and through these networks, an Indigenous movement would reorganise itself around two key issues: the demand for autonomy and the creation of a special legal framework for Indigenous peoples. The issue of autonomy had its origin in the events occurring during this era in the Arab world as well as within the old Soviet Union, while the second derived from the Mexican experience. Ana Llao remembers the influence that the Agrarian Reform had on her, but it is equally notable how she also recalls that her international travels and conversations with people like Rigoberta Menchú and Evo Morales also politicised her.⁵⁶

The concept of autonomy provided a means for articulating self-determination. In 1982, the Mapuche organisation Ad Mapu began to use this concept in its documents as a way to move forwards, and in

1984, the group decided to proclaim the goal of autonomy as a project with historical transcendence. This declaration launched a series of mobilisations for the recovery of lands, but said efforts were met with repression by the Pinochet dictatorship. Two years later, a new process of land mobilisation would foreground the goal of autonomy once again, and in so doing, Mapuche activists joined the campaign to remove the Pinochet regime from power.

For its part, the Chilean Communist Party declared the year 1986 to be decisive when it came to ending the military dictatorship. They initiated a wide-ranging campaign that included the sabotage of infrastructure that was vital to the dictatorship, and some party members ended the year by attempting to assassinate dictator Augusto Pinochet. That same year, the Mapuche initiated their first wave of mobilisations aimed at recovering the lands assigned to them under the Agrarian Reform, along with those who held ancient *Títulos de Merced* (land grants conceded by the Spanish crown before independence). Ad Mapu reiterated again that their goal was autonomy.⁵⁷

It is interesting to pause and consider the dialectic that emerged between the dictatorship's refoundation of capitalism and the qualitative leap that this process generated within the Mapuche community. In some sense, if the neoliberal project propelled new forms of modernisation on the Frontera, then it also led to a renovation of ideas and insurgencies. Nevertheless, it is important to differentiate such processes territorially: for those living along the Bío-Bío River, the neoliberal revolution took shape around forestry companies, which constituted the prime example of neoliberalism in that sub-region. In the Araucanía, however, neoliberalism took the form of intensive agriculture.

Autonomy was understood as an anti-capitalist project and was focused on reviving community production. The long memory of Mapuche organisation pushed it in that direction. International debates over collective rights added to the development of this new project, but what was lacking was a single event that offered a new understanding of Mapuche subjectivity. That event came in the 1990s with new Indigenous uprisings, specifically those linked with Katarismo in Bolivia and Zapatismo in Mexico. Both of these movements emphasised the notion of 'national liberation', and this political concept was soon embraced by a new cohort of Mapuche militants as well. Critically, this new generation of Indigenous activists distanced itself from Chile's transition back to formal democracy because the debate over autonomy was absent from that process. Also contributing to this atmosphere of renewed Mapuche activism was the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) proclamation in 1989 of Convention 169, which the Chilean government refused to recognise on the grounds that it might impede government-backed economic development projects. Instead, the new democratic government promoted the view that the creation of the Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena (National Corporation of Indigenous Development, CONADI), with its centre in the southern Chilean town of Imperial, was sufficient to deal with the political concerns of the Mapuche people.

Between 1993 and 1997, amid intense debates, the Mapuche movement split in two. On one side were those who became agents of the state through CONADI, while on the other were those who promoted land recovery and autonomy. The communities that supported autonomy and land recovery had the support of former Agrarian Reform participants, many of whom had gone into exile. Within these two factions, the same debates that had animated the UP period re-emerged. On the one hand, there were those who advocated for the creation of an institution that could protect Chile's Indigenous peoples. On the other hand, there were others who focused on the recovery of traditional lands. The international context enabled this new cohort of militants to break with their elders and set out on their own path. Mapuche identity would be strengthened within local communities in order to develop a movement committed to self-determination. The emergence of the Ejército Guerrillero Tupak Katari (Tupak Katari Guerrilla Army) in Bolivia and the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista Army of National Liberation, EZLN) in Mexico were again important models, and in the case of Chile, similar debates flourished with the establishment in 1998 of the Coordinadora Arauco-Malleco (Arauco-Malleco Coordinating Committee, CAM). In the early twenty-first century, these discussions continue through groups like Aukiñ Wichan Mapu (a Mapuche movement for self-determination).

As some authors and participants have affirmed, autonomy was understood as a revolutionary proposition after the end of the Pinochet dictatorship. For the leader of CAM, Héctor Llaitul, autonomy

implied the liberation of territories for Indigenous agricultural use, the repopulation of said lands with Mapuche families, and a renewed struggle against land evictions. The ultimate objective of these political efforts was territorial control. But as expected, the Chilean state carried out coercive measures in the face of such actions. After the deaths of Mapuche militants in 2008, CAM's proposal that the movement embrace armed self-defence pushed the struggle for national liberation into a new phase. An internal debate about armed defence intensified in the early 2010s when a new organisation, known as Aucan Weichan Mapu (*Lucha del Territorio Rebelde/Struggle of the Rebellious Territory*) placed spears and shotguns above the *kultrün* (a Mapuche musical instrument and symbol of the culture) on their coat of arms.⁵⁸

In our view, the emergence of Aucan Weichan Mapu was the result of political reflection carried out between the Malleco and Cautín Rivers. The acceleration of agrarian reform under the UP, which was a consequence of uprisings like the 'Cautinazo', first turned the struggle for the recovery of territory into a public security issue. Now, decades later, latifundistas and business groups draw upon this conflation when they demand that the state apply anti-terrorist laws against Mapuche activists. Landowners do not hesitate to call agrarian mobilisations acts of rural terrorism, as the Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura first did in 2001 when it accused the government of leaving the region in the hands of 'rural terrorists'.⁵⁹

Since the events of 11 September 2001 in the United States, the concept of terrorism has grown to include a long list of economic, political and social transgressions in Chile. That perspective was turned against the Mapuche and, specifically, against those who had promoted the recovery of land in Cautín. In short, the language of 'terrorism' has revitalised old forms of racism, just as it also revived the agriculturalists' trauma from the period of the Agrarian Reform.

The racist views and practices re-emerged in a particularly acute way in the early 2000s when members of the CAM carried out acts of sabotage, including the burning of trucks and some agriculturalists' homes, in Cautín. But importantly, such acts were a response to a call for self-defence. They were preceded by agriculturalists activating their own networks with the goal of getting the state to officially define Mapuche political pressure as 'rural terrorism'. The governments of the *Concertación* (the coalition that removed Pinochet in 1989 and governed until 2010) gave in to that pressure. Under the right-wing government of Sebastián Piñera (2010–14 and 2018–present), the repression has grown harsher. This all set the stage for the emergence of the new organisation called Aucan Weichan Mapu in 2012. As noted above, the organisation's imagery – a shotgun, or *tralca*, lance, and *kultrün* – symbolises recovering the *machi* (Mapuche shaman/healer) as conductors of the political process. *Machi* is one of the most relevant figures of Mapuche history. Learned in medicinal herbs, they would also predict the future based on dreams. The *machi* intertwines material existence with the immaterial, and communicates with the Mapuche who live in *Wenu Mapu*. The Mapuche live on three lands: *wenu mapu* (the land above), *mapu* (the land where we walk) and *minche mapu* (the land below).

The process of political renovation took shape by also activating three levels of remembrance: the memory of the Occupation, the memory of *reducción* and the memory of the uprisings that occurred during the agrarian reform. In many cases these were the same memories that had already been activated during the movements of the 1990s as part of the push for political autonomy and Mapuche national liberation.

These new forms of Indigenous organisation were the result of ideological seeds developed by a diverse set of autonomist organisations as well. The Indigenous organisation *Aukiñ Wallmapu Ngulam*, for example, has reinstalled a system of traditional Mapuche authorities, strengthened local community roots and even revived the use of *Mapudungun* as the native language spoken in Mapuche communities. As traditional authorities take charge, the deployment of historical references to the Occupation of the Araucanía in the nineteenth century has led new militants to begin to interpret their conflict as one with Chileans and the terms under which the Chilean Republic itself was created.

It is possible to see the development of another type of democratic transition in *Wallmapu* and in the internal organisation of the Mapuche movement. The creation of *Wenufoye*, the flag of the Mapuche nation that was created in the early 1990s, as well as the land recoveries that have been carried out under the utopian banners of national liberation and autonomy (both of which are understood as territorial control) have been central to construction of a new national identity between the *Bíobío* and *Toltén*

Rivers.⁶⁰ Political memories, which were repoliticised under the Concertación governments of the 1990s and early 2000s, have reignited old disputes with large landowners, who, in turn, have also defended their own version of historical memory. Agriculturalists have insisted, for example, that they owe no debt to the Mapuche people and that they were invited by the Chilean state to colonise Indigenous lands. They demand legal protection from the state and insist on their right to make the land inherited from *their* grandparents productive.

To summarise, well into the twenty-first century, tensions over identity have re-emerged in Chile. Historical memories have become subjects of debate in this new phase of conflict over nationalism and ethnicity. In this context of growing tension, we can understand events such as the 2013 deaths of large landowners Werner Luchsinger and Vivianne Mackay, as well as the 2008 murders of the Mapuche activists Alex Lemún, Matías Catrileo and Jaime Mendoza Collío at the hands of the Chilean police. Notably, Mapuche leaders were sent to prison over the Luchsinger–Mackay case. No one has been held accountable for the deaths of Lemún, Catrileo and Mendoza Collío.

Conclusions

In this article we have attempted to offer a broad, panoramic, *longue-durée* history of Mapuche struggles. Moreover, we have maintained that the Mapuche community's 'long memory' has been sustained through oral traditions and the written word. Such memories have contributed to the formation of an ideology of emancipation that, in turn, has grown through ongoing conflicts with the Chilean state and large rural landowners. The development of the contemporary Mapuche movement is one rooted in the historic accumulation of political agency and rebellion. Over time, this process has fostered not only a political discourse but also insurgent action.

The Occupation of the Araucanía was a pivotal moment because it attempted to construct Chilean capitalism on the back of the Mapuche people. Of course, in and of itself, this process explains not only the territorial expansion of the Chilean state but also the reluctance of the Chilean state to establish any sort of territorial agreement with the *ñidolongko* (Mapuche tribal leadership) in order to put an end to the insurrection. (The *longkos*, or chieftains, have authority over lands, cattle and warriors, allowing them to acquire hegemony over the Wallmapu. In 1910, Manuel Mañquilef, along with Tomas Guevara, described these leaders as 'the great families' of the Mapuche nation.) The Occupation of the Araucanía and its aftermath do not represent a period of territorial expansion in which Mapuche groups lacked agency. In fact, Mapuche agency was what drove the Republic to agree to an eventual truce with the Mapuche people. This process also contributed to the regeneration of the Mapuche community's social and cultural fabric. Between 1883 and 1964, the regeneration of this community fabric allowed for demographic growth, even as community members experienced high levels of poverty. That poverty, in turn, drove the dual dynamic of a growing diaspora, on the one hand, and intensifying struggles for survival on the limited lands that comprised the *reducción* system, on the other.

The Mapuche of the 1970s recovered the memory of rebellion and affirmed that the land was, in fact, theirs. New forms of written documentation reinforced claims and traditions that had been passed down orally from one generation to the next. During the Agrarian Reform demands for land were briefly recognised, but they were coupled with the re-emergence of colonial violence that transported land reform participants back to an era of occupation and *reducción*. The events that transpired after the end of the Pinochet dictatorship re-activated the politics of rebellion that had begun under the UP and should again be understood as a product of an accumulation of experience within the Mapuche community towards anti-colonial objectives. Perhaps this was the reason why, when historian Peter Winn arrived in Chile in 1972, he found a country in 'the midst of a revolution'.⁶¹ That was what Salvador Allende also perceived in his speech to the Mapuche on the Frontera. Chile's Mapuche communities listened with respect to what Allende had to say, but they did not demonstrate any great show of jubilation. Did Allende even comprehend what the Mapuche had told him? We will never know because the military coup of September 1973 violently interrupted Allende's 1,000-day revolution.

In the face of this creative tension, the socialist revolution drew in intellectuals like Alejandro Lipchütz, a member of Chile's Communist Party, who, based on his experience with Soviet socialism,

proposed that the Indigenous question was, in fact, a debate that was ultimately about the concept of 'nations'. Allende was a pragmatic leader and given his political inclinations, he understood the difficult position of agriculturalists vis-à-vis the Mapuche. He called for regulations to protect the Indigenous peoples, but doing so while also taking into account the agricultural conditions at the time meant going beyond the framework for agrarian reform that had been dictated in 1967. Such a move was simply impossible, even though the desire was communicated to the Chilean legislature of the era. In those arduous debates, some progress was made when it came to reconciling two diametrically opposed points of view, but such advances were also suspended by the military coup.

After the UP, Mapuche communities continued to become politicised, and increasingly they imagined themselves as subjects who were distinct from non-Indigenous Chileans in key ways. This changed their political outlook. Unexpectedly, the ideologues of the dictatorship contributed to the development of Mapuche nationalism as it emerged to challenge the legacies of Chile's colonial past. To achieve autonomy, Mapuche communities implemented their own traditions and customs. They resurrected the use of the Mapudungun language, traditional dress and a discourse that emphasized the recovery of lands. These all became elements of unity and action. Over time, such actions, politicised through the praxis of tradition, gave way to a discourse centred more precisely on autonomy itself.

The political significance of autonomy grew stronger among Mapuche militants during the 1980s. In the mid-1980s, for example, the first mobilisations for land since the military coup occurred. But as the transition to democracy loomed on the political horizon after 1987, some community members agreed to accept a system of protective regulation for Indigenous peoples.

Around 1990, the two political horizons that were born out of the Agrarian Reform grew antagonistic. As one segment of the broader Mapuche community supported the public policies of the Concertación – policies that led to the Ley Indígena (Indigenous Law) in 1993 – another group of Mapuche militants grew increasingly distrustful of the country's new leadership. Instead, they doubled down on their demands for autonomy. The horizons that had been opened up during the Agrarian Reform experience re-emerged, and they only became more powerful through the international dialogues that Mapuches conducted with Arab countries, the Soviet bloc and other parts Latin America while in exile.

After the transition to democracy, the question of whether Indigenous peoples were best served working within state institutions or remaining outside them has opened up an intense debate within the Mapuche movement. If Mapuche communities take advantage of state protection, will that mean relinquishing their right to fight for autonomy? With state protection, territorial control may be possible. This is something that reflects the experience of the Agrarian Reform, but this time new structures might be administered by the Mapuche themselves and organised around the ideal of self-determination.⁶² But others, in reflecting on this same history, have proposed institutional reforms that would allow for the construction of a plurinational state. That would be a place to begin the debate – a way to 'run the fences' towards new political possibilities.⁶³ These tensions persist into the present. Will it be autonomy from below, or autonomy from above? That is the question many within the Mapuche movement continue to debate.

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Notes

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- ²⁵II Congreso Nacional Mapuche, Archivo Regional de La Araucanía, 1970.
- ²⁶Carvajal, *A desalambrar*, 53.
- ²⁷*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 4 January 1971.
- ²⁸*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 9 January 1971.
- ²⁹*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 9 January 1971.
- ³⁰*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 29 March 1971.
- ³¹Encuentro, 'Nadie nos trancará el paso (MCR, 48 años)', Temuco, 15 September 2018 (personal notes).
- ³²Fanon, *Los condenados de la tierra*.
- ³³Carvajal, *A desalambrar*, 54.
- ³⁴Carvajal, *A desalambrar*, 44.
- ³⁵Correa et al., *La reforma agraria y las tierras mapuches: Chile 1962–1975*.
- ³⁶*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 29 March 1971.
- ³⁷*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 29 March 1971.
- ³⁸Ruiz, 'Ahora te llamaremos hermano'.
- ³⁹Llanos, *Cuando el pueblo unido fue vencido*.
- ⁴⁰*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 29 March 1971.
- ⁴¹*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 29 March 1971.
- ⁴²Winn, *La revolución chilena*, 55.
- ⁴³Villalobos, *Relaciones fronterizas en la Araucanía*; Pairican, *Malon*. Few historical experiences sustain that the occupation of another inhabited territorial space could be considered a free event. Colonisation is driven and incentivised by colonial centres. In the case of the Mapuche, the movement of the 1990s and

2000s is no different, having created a moment of reflection with regard to the expansion of neoliberal capitalism that responded to a third cycle for the militants of the Coordinadora Arauco Malleco. In their view, the first capitalism was imposed by the Spanish, and a second cycle of capitalism came with Chileans in the nineteenth century. Neoliberalism was a continuation of the second.

⁴⁴Cf. Comunidad de Historia Mapuche, *Ta ñ Fijke xipa rakizuameluwün*.

⁴⁵Canales and Macaya, *Un episodio de luchas mapuche por la tierra, año 1971*.

⁴⁶*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 26 November 1971.

⁴⁷*Punto Final*, October 1971 (magazine published in the 1970s by a revolutionary left movement).

⁴⁸*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 31 December 1970.

⁴⁹Suazo, *¡Nadie nos trancará el paso!*, 114.

⁵⁰*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 20 April 1971.

⁵¹Urrutia, 'El desalambre de los kuyfikeche'.

⁵²*Diario Austral de Temuco*, 30 January 1971.

⁵³Correa, *Las Razones del Ilkun/enojo*.

⁵⁴Bonfil, *Utopía y revolución*, 210.

⁵⁵Canales, 'La división de las tierras mapuche'.

⁵⁶Llao, 'Nosotros vemos la concepción de la vida como un bien común para todos'.

⁵⁷Pairican, *Malon*.

⁵⁸Arrate and Llaitul, *Weichan conversaciones*.

⁵⁹Pairican, 'La fortaleza amurallada'.

⁶⁰Correa, *Las Razones del Ilkun/enojo*; Pairican, *Toqui. Guerra y tradición en el siglo XIX*.

⁶¹Winn, *Revolución chilena*, 9.

⁶²Pairican, *Malon*; Arrate and Llaitul, *Weichan conversaciones*.

⁶³Millabur, 'La plurinacionalidad'.

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