

---

Special issue: *Chile's Popular Unity at 50*

Article

## The Chilean counter-revolution: Roots, dynamics and legacies of mass mobilisation against the Unidad Popular

Marcelo Casals, PhD 

Independent Scholar, Santiago, Chile; marcelocasals1@gmail.com

**How to Cite:** Casals, M. 'The Chilean counter-revolution: Roots, dynamics and legacies of mass mobilisation against the Unidad Popular'. *Radical Americas* 6, 1 (2021): 13.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ra.2021.v6.1.013>.

Submission date: 14 September 2020; Acceptance date: 24 March 2021; Publication date: 1 June 2021

---

### Peer review:

This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-blind peer review, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymised during review.

### Copyright:

© 2021, Marcelo Casals. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence (CC BY) 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited • DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ra.2021.v6.1.013>.

### Open access:

*Radical Americas* is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

### Abstract

The election of Salvador Allende and the Unidad Popular (Popular Unity) in 1970 unleashed a radical and original revolutionary process, discernible not only in the depth of its redistributive measures and the expectations it generated, but also in the ferocity with which those who identified with the counter-revolutionary ideal responded to that project. The counter-revolution, initially confined to the conservative and reactionary sectors, in a matter of months became an immense mass mobilisation that would end up paving the way for the military coup. This article analyses that counter-revolutionary process, exploring its historic roots, the main actors involved and the innovations in political practices it developed at the time. The 'counter-revolutionary bloc' was formed by a diverse array of political and social actors – some of whom did not have previous experience in political mobilisations – who based their actions on the adoption and socialisation of a long-standing anti-Communist script, through which they could make sense of the period's changing reality. That script – based on decades of taking in events from other parts of the world, elaborations and accusations against all those who identified as Communists – aimed to reduce the originality of the Unidad Popular's political project to a remake of classic socialist experiences in Chilean territory and processed in a dystopian key. The counter-revolution's power would be projected into the military dictatorship that began in 1973, when it became a sort of official state ideology, and it would become a foundational experience for Chilean conservative sectors with reverberations even in the present.

**Keywords:** counter-revolution; Chile; Unidad Popular; coup d'état; the Right; anti-Communism

## Introduction

Walden Bello, then a young doctoral student in sociology at Princeton University, arrived in Chile in August 1972 to conduct fieldwork for his thesis on political conflict under the Unidad Popular (Popular Unity). While his political sympathies were with Salvador Allende and ‘the Chilean road to socialism’, his own research led him to interact with different people in the political opposition, and on several occasions, he found himself in somewhat challenging, and even risky, situations. In Valdivia, for example, his host – a farmer of Christian Democratic tendencies – would overwhelm the young student with his radical anti-Marxism and accusations that the Left planned to seize total power and install a Communist dictatorship. When he found out his young guest’s political leanings, the relationship ended abruptly. A few weeks later, Bello narrowly escaped being beaten at an opposition march in the capital for inadvertently carrying an issue of the Communist newspaper *El Siglo* as he watched the demonstration.<sup>1</sup> It would not take long for the young sociologist to notice that neither episode was coincidental. He was witnessing a counter-revolutionary mass movement unfold that was growing stronger by the day as the political conflict became ever more polarised.

The reaction of significant sectors of civil society to the Unidad Popular’s distributive and nationalisation policies, along with the radicalisation of much of its popular base, was to mobilise and take to the streets, on the understanding that they faced an urgent threat that attacked freedom and ultimately their very lives. In that sense, the counter-revolutionary movement made an anti-Communist narrative – a ‘script’ with a long tradition in Chilean political culture – its own, and it served as an interpretative framework for making sense of a revolutionary reality. Thus, every action of the government and the Marxist Left was understood as a decisive step towards establishing a freedom-killing totalitarian dictatorship, which would destroy religion, the family, the nation and property, as well as disrupt all social hierarchies in the usual order of things. The signals that coincided with that ‘script’, including shortages and heated rhetoric by ultra-leftist groups and politicians, only strengthened it, further encouraging the all-out struggle against the Left in power. The script was articulated and promoted by the opposition press, centrist and right-wing political parties, ultra-right armed movements, counter-revolutionary intellectuals of different ideological affiliations and leaders of anti-Unidad Popular social organisations. They all united in a relatively coherent and coordinated counter-revolutionary bloc and were joined by students, women of different social strata, miners, small business proprietors, independent workers, officials and professionals, among many others. The common enemy seemed to justify everything, including – or especially – radical innovations in the protest repertoires of many of these groups and individuals, which not only consisted of mobilising in the streets but also different practices of political violence.

In this article, I seek to schematically analyse the mass mobilisation against the Unidad Popular, understanding it as an expression of a counter-revolutionary dynamic based on a long-standing anti-Communist script. That means two things. On the one hand, the Chilean counter-revolution was the product of intense and rapid dynamics in the wake of the September 1970 election of Allende and the Unidad Popular. What began as the desperate reaction of conservative and reactionary groups to the possibility of a Marxist government ended up being an enormous and radical social movement willing to destroy Chilean democracy in order to defeat the enemy. It was through that polarising dynamic – which also involved those identified with the revolutionary camp – that the counter-revolution acquired its strength and size, which ultimately opened the door to the military coup. On the other hand, that massive counter-revolution found a common and mobilising language in the anti-Communist script, which gave that camp coherence and unity of action. Unlike the Unidad Popular, which was beset by all sorts of theoretical and strategic conflicts that – despite a shared socialist horizon – ended up paralysing it, the counter-revolution acted as a ‘bloc’ that only showed cracks after the military coup, when the dictatorship was in power and it had to define the contours of the new counter-revolutionary political, social and economic order.

The Chilean counter-revolution has received scant attention in the literature on the Unidad Popular, which has generally focused on revolutionary organisations and experiences. Moreover, when it has studied their opponents, the scholarship has limited its analysis to the leaders of the centrist and right-wing political parties.<sup>2</sup> The social rootedness, fundamental impact on many Chileans’ subjectivities at the time and

unprecedented radicalism of the political practices in combating the Left in power have remained largely obscured after the military dictatorship's brutal state repression since 11 September 1973. Nevertheless, I contend that exploring the counter-revolutionary experience – even in the necessarily schematic terms in which it is done here – is essential for understanding the dynamics of radical social change and its inherent risks. On the one hand, the Unidad Popular's concrete experience shows the unavoidable need to build solid social majorities in order to resist the onslaught of the dominant minority sectors whose interests will be affected. Sectarianism, ideologisation and extreme radicalisation – all of which political and social actors on the Left have experienced to varying degrees – point in precisely the opposite direction. On the other hand, none of this means that the Left is responsible for the coup d'état and military dictatorship. Quite the opposite. Studying counter-revolutionary experiences, such as the one that occurred in Chile, helps clarify another important point: the counter-revolution, transformed into a mass phenomenon, does not set moral limits when it comes to defeating those it identifies as its mortal enemy. The intensive use of mobilisation and violence against the Unidad Popular and, especially, the military dictatorship's brutal repression, attest to the levels that the spiral of polarisation, organisation and mobilisation can reach against programmes for social change that are understood as direct threats to the normal order of things.

### **The anti-Communist script**

Anti-Communism, in its various expressions, has a long history in Chilean politics that can be traced back to at least the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> From that point forward, at the intersection of taking in events from other areas and interpreting local events, a diverse discursive space was created that fed practices of exclusion and persecution of all those who were, fairly or unfairly, identified as Socialists, Communists or revolutionaries. There were, of course, diverse motivations. There were those who warned in terror that a socialist revolution would destroy religion, morality and the family, especially the Catholic Church and its followers. Others were more concerned with the threat to private property and the social hierarchies associated with such distinctions, while some feared institutional destabilisation and the end of the rule of law. Finally, there were those who interpreted the possibility of a socialist regime as an attack on the nation's existence as a political-cultural unit, both because of the sharpening of social conflict and especially because of the explicit internationalism of socialist intellectuals and militants throughout much of their history. Writing about the Brazilian case, Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta has referred to these different interpretations as the 'matrices of anti-Communism' – Catholicism, liberalism, nationalism – that informed a heterogeneous and changing set of political practices, ideas and identities during the twentieth century in Chile and elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> Throughout decades of political conflict, these matrices formed the basis of the images and discourses that made up a true anti-Communist script for interpreting and giving meaning to the political work of leftists, trade unionists and the politicised popular sectors. When the dreaded moment finally happened, that is, when the Marxist Left came to power after winning the 1970 presidential elections, those opposed to the prospect of living in a socialist Chile were armed with a powerful ideological arsenal with which to rise up in protest.

The construction of this script required a careful reading of global reality and an effort to apply those lessons when making sense of local conflicts. In that way, on the one hand, anti-Communism was a window into the world, conditioning readings of events in other places around the globe and the formation of transnational networks with like-minded actors. Thus, for example, the 1871 Paris Commune, the 1917 Russian Revolution, the 1936–9 Spanish Civil War and the 1959 Cuban Revolution – to mention only the most relevant events – drove those who feared revolutionary outbursts to develop informed interpretations that created or reinforced dystopian images of an eventual socialist future.

On the other hand, the international circulation of anti-Communist images and discourses was articulated with the particular conditions of Chilean political development. Unlike other cases in Latin America, in Chile there was a strong Marxist Left with considerable social roots that identified explicitly with the revolutionary horizons that cut across the twentieth century. From the 1930s onwards, Communists and Socialists managed to decisively influence the political system, achieving a high level of integration into decision-making spaces, such as Congress and the Executive Branch (with the notable exception of the 10 years between 1948 and 1958 when Chilean Communism was proscribed). This not only gave

them a unique visibility and social influence in the Latin American context, but also laid the foundations for the revolutionary and institutional project of Allende and the Unidad Popular, the 'Chilean road to socialism'.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the political Right had to contend with a Left that was revolutionary in its rhetoric and institutionalised in practice, an issue that would require the former to focus its attention on the electoral and parliamentary political struggle in order to confront what they understood to be a constant threat of subversion from within state institutions. In contrast with countries like Brazil and Argentina, that meant the conservative Chilean Right did not leave room for nationalist or proto-fascist organisations to grow, and they remained relatively marginal in the party system until the end of the 1960s.<sup>6</sup> As a result, the transnational phenomenon of anti-Communism acquired its own character in the Chilean case, generally accentuating the liberal matrix – both economic and political – over the religious and national ones, even though practices, organisations and discourses with distinct combinations of all these matrices can be identified.

While the first public exhortations about the dangers of socialism date back to the mid-nineteenth century, it was not until the 1890s that groups of artisans and intellectuals began to claim socialism as a positive ideal. Conservative politicians, the press and ideologues would react strongly, translating Chilean oligarchs' traditional criticisms of the lower classes' supposedly destructive and uncontrolled passions into ideological terms. Thus, the state's response to workers' mobilisations – such as the one at the port of Iquique in 1907 – had been large-scale military violence.<sup>7</sup> In the years that followed, at the height of public debates around the 'social question' and the politicisation of significant swathes of those popular sectors subjected to modern forms of exploitation, the 'red menace' was increasingly used to justify everything from reformist proposals for social change to the most obtuse reactionary positions.

The economic and social crisis unleashed by the final years of the First World War and the local impact of the Russian Revolution set off alarm bells. At the time, foreign 'agitators' were accused of social unrest; among other things, this led to the so-called Law of Residence (*Ley de Residencia*) in 1918, which empowered the authorities to carry out summary deportations, a theme that would continue in the anti-Communist script, then still in formation. However, the demonisation of, and violence against, socialist ideas and organisations did not come exclusively from the state. At the same time, and in collusion with the authorities, so-called Patriotic Leagues (*Ligas Patrióticas*) – anti-foreigner, anti-socialist groups – emerged with a certain firepower in different Chilean cities.<sup>8</sup> During the oligarchic regime's long crisis, the idea that a powerful transnational revolutionary force existed in the Chilean working class and was willing to destroy society's foundations was well established in political discussion, and even more so after the 1929 'crash' when brief and intense revolutionary experiences, such as the 1932 Socialist Republic, occurred. During those difficult years, socialism and revolution became categories as desired as they were feared.

The anti-Communist script would change and be nourished by new elements in the 1930s. The public presence of revolutionary emblems, including the pro-Soviet Communist Party's red flag with a hammer and sickle, terrified Conservatives and Liberals, now allies on the Right. Similarly, the advent of the Popular Front alliance among Communists, Socialists and the centrist Radical Party, along with the Spanish Civil War's strong impact, added new themes to anti-Communist rhetoric – the presence of a 'fifth column' hidden within Chilean society that was always ready for betrayal, the enormous violence that Marxism allegedly deployed in power (an issue that the conservative press kept denouncing in republican Spain) at the hands of a fierce revolutionary dictatorship like the Soviet one and Marxist political work's anti-patriotic character. For all these reasons, the Popular Front's victory in 1938 caused a panic within conservative ranks, which led them to accuse Radical President Pedro Aguirre Cerda of allying himself with society's sworn enemies. The fact that his government did not cause the proclaimed evils and that the Popular Front alliance itself broke down after a short time did not prevent Conservatives, Liberals, Catholics and nationalists from continuing to decry the imminent danger of the Marxist (and particularly Communist) presence in the country. Moreover, as Kirsten Weld has pointed out, it would not stop conservative politicians and intellectuals from developing a 'reactionary historical consciousness', starting with their indirect experience of the Spanish Civil War, which, as we will see, would be strongly projected into the 1970s.<sup>9</sup>

When a significant segment of Chilean political actors submitted to the Cold War's bipolar rhetoric of anti-Communism in the second half of the 1940s, then, there was already a long tradition of discourses, images and practices in that vein. However, from that moment on, the issue would take on a different tone. Like many Latin American countries, Chile experienced the Cold War as a domestic political matter. While its dominant sectors recognised the United States as the champion of the 'free world', they prepared to exclude the social movements that had flourished during the 'democratic spring' of the Second World War years from the political arena and repress them.<sup>10</sup> In Chile, that phenomenon took shape with the 1948 enactment of the Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy (*Ley de Defensa Permanente de la Democracia*), at the behest of Gabriel González Videla's Radical government, which decreed the proscription of the Communist Party that had been its faithful ally just a couple of years earlier.<sup>11</sup> That effort was accompanied by 'civil' initiatives (albeit with multiple connections to the political world), such as the Chilean Anti-Communist Action (*Acción Chilena Anticomunista, ACHA*), which was dedicated to harassing and threatening Communists in particular and leftists in general. This Cold War anti-Communism antithetically contrasted two irreconcilable worlds and reproduced that division within Chilean society. Given the danger's proximity and dimensions, any tool available could be used to defend 'democracy' and 'freedom'. More than ever, anti-Communism became a language with global dimensions that served to make sense of local political conflict.

The 1959 Cuban Revolution opened a new phase in the history of Chilean anti-Communism by upgrading the disturbing presence of the 'red menace', now on Latin American soil; an issue that was felt with particular intensity during Chile's 1964 presidential elections. In the regional context, a Marxist electoral victory would have struck a severe blow against the regional containment strategy of the United States, which for that reason supported the expansion of Christian Democracy with tremendous resources and, when the moment required it, an enormous anti-Marxist propaganda campaign, aimed at persuading Chilean voters that an Allende victory would mean the immediate end of democracy and freedom. Moreover, in connection with the experiences of anti-leftist mobilisation in Cuba and Brazil – a country where that same year the military had overthrown João Goulart's reformist government – the propaganda added another element to the anti-Communist script: 'Marxism' in power meant not only political danger but above all a threat to the survival of society's moral foundations. The traditional distribution of gender and generational roles would be totally disrupted, as had supposedly happened in Cuba. Women would be forced to work, daughters would be sent to the countryside for compulsory literacy campaigns and men would be prevented from performing their role as providers by the arbitrariness and persecution of the 'Reds' in power.<sup>12</sup> Despite the fact that the election was finally decided by the political Right's unconditional support for Eduardo Frei and the Christian Democrats, those moral themes would persist in public debates in the second half of the 1960s.

The radicalisation of a part of the Marxist Left in the face of electoral defeat – represented by the Socialist Party's rhetorical adherence to revolutionary violence and especially the founding of the ultra-leftist *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Left Movement, MIR) – further alarmed right-wing political actors. The electoral decline of the Conservative and Liberal parties led them to dissolve their organisations and create, in alliance with right-wing nationalist movements, the National Party (*Partido Nacional*). At the same time, ultra-conservative youth groups were making progress in the universities.<sup>13</sup> The opposition to the Left was tinged with fear of a 'second Cuba' and the eventual use of violence to build socialism, even though most of the Left followed Allende's guidelines for a peaceful and institutional transition.

By 1970, in line with the political, social and generational radicalisation of the second half of the 1960s in Chile and around the world, the sense of subversion of the established order was widespread in the conservative wing of local politics. From that perspective, both as a strategy and out of conviction, Allende and the Left were understood as a direct threat to all that was valuable in Chilean society: the traditional family order, private property, the rule of law and social peace. When the Left, now reorganised in the *Unidad Popular*, arrived at La Moneda Palace, those who opposed its ideals as a matter of principle had a complete ideological arsenal with which to interpret its actions. Moreover, that arsenal – the script – would prove especially important for convincing the undecided that, under the *Unidad Popular*, there was

a need for urgent social mobilisation until the revolutionary threat was eliminated. In that historical and contingent anti-Communism, there were diverse political and social actors. That was the foundation of the counter-revolution.

### **Revolution and counter-revolution**

Counter-revolution cannot be reduced to simply opposing a revolution. When a society undergoes a revolutionary process, the traditional forms of political action become obsolete, opening space for forging original and creative dynamics to seek and exercise political power. Counter-revolution, then, is also an innovative effort to agitate and mobilise in defence of that which the revolutionary enemy – fairly or unfairly – is adjudged to want to destroy. In the urgency of the situation – both real urgency in the face of a revolutionary movement as well as amplification by counter-revolutionary rhetoric itself – the counter-revolutionary bloc incorporates strategies that were mostly created and practised by the revolutionary tradition: marches, rallies, grandiloquent speeches, dramatic calls to action. However, unlike its rivals, the counter-revolution does not require highly sophisticated theorisation to justify its actions. There is no need for cerebral ideological or philosophical discussions because the point is to defend a world in crisis through direct action that purifies the social order. Counter-revolutionary leaders' explicit disdain for prescriptive definitions and repeated appeals to emotion, courage and sacrifice certainly help expand the alliance; that way, it is possible to capture the attention of those who feel they have something important to lose without requiring sophisticated political elaboration. For the same reason, the counter-revolutionary appeal does not affect everyone in the same way: small business proprietors, merchants, medium-scale farmers, officials and professionals, among others, are especially sensitive to these calls because of their fears of losing social status and their particular receptivity to urgent pleas to defend freedom and threatened morality. They are joined, of course, by all sorts of conservatives and reactionaries and large-scale property owners from both the countryside and the city. This particular alliance is forged in the heat of mobilisation and social polarisation, generating a rapid dynamic of radicalisation that does not take long to reach open and covert violence.<sup>14</sup>

If in Chile there was a massive counter-revolutionary movement with many of these characteristics, it was because Allende's government was experienced as a real revolution by supporters and detractors alike. Of course, it was an atypical revolution in many respects. As the result of a conscious effort to separate itself from twentieth-century revolutionary experiences, the 'Chilean road to socialism' aimed to build solid political majorities to effect radical changes through, and not against, the state, thereby seeking to avoid revolutionary violence and civil war. Without renouncing socialism as a utopian horizon, its strategic determinations were decisively influenced by the idea that Chile had an exceptional republican and democratic tradition, the result of which was a 'bourgeois' state flexible enough to withstand a process of social transformation.<sup>15</sup> Those specific political conditions would distinguish Chile from the Soviet and Cuban insurrectionary experiences, becoming an alternative revolutionary model with universal aspirations. All this, moreover, was tied to a strong Third Worldist imaginary that linked the Chilean people's struggles with all those who resisted colonialism and sought true independence and self-determination from the great global powers over the Cold War's East-West divisions. Allende's victory in 1970 legitimated that particular revolutionary conception, and it also produced another difference from classic revolutionary experiences: the new socialist government initiated a 'revolutionary process' of social struggle for power at the same time that it constituted a 'revolutionary regime' with the capacity to act through the state. That is, given the moment's particularities, two dimensions that normally followed one another in chronological order instead overlapped. The political Right, conservative press and big business applied the anti-Communist script to the Chilean Left's original and diverse revolutionary project, reducing the Unidad Popular to a mere repetition of revolutionary dystopia. In that light, civilised society's existence was in grave danger.

The first counter-revolutionary expressions began, some years before the Unidad Popular's victory, with certain minority groups in the countryside and the city who saw danger not only in the Marxist Left, but in every experience of social change in general, which also included Christian Democracy. Responding to the start of Agrarian Reform in 1967, medium-sized landowners in the Cautín region, in

the south of Chile, organised as white guards to reject these measures. They were not only encouraged by the anti-Communist script but also a racialised narrative about their 'civilising' presence in a 'barbarous' environment marked by the region's strong Mapuche presence.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, small reactionary, traditionalist and anti-modern organisations emerged in the city, including the Chilean chapter of the Brazilian organisation Tradition, Family and Property (Tradición, Familia y Propiedad). Its main reference text, written by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, was precisely entitled *Revolución y contra-revolución* (Revolution and Counter-Revolution),<sup>17</sup> and it called for restoring the medieval Catholic order in response to the serious distortions created by modernity, including, among other things, the very idea of revolution. That organisation and line of thought produced young reactionary intellectuals such as Jaime Guzmán, the leader of the *gremialista* movement at the Universidad Católica (Catholic University), who would later become one of Chile's most famous counter-revolutionary leaders.<sup>18</sup>

Allende's victory by a plurality in September 1970 raised alarms for the political Right and the business community, among others. The anti-Communist script, on which an important part of their political identity was based, showed them what the inevitable path of 'Marxism' in power was: violence, arbitrariness, dispossession, totalitarianism. The particularities of the Chilean experience were nothing but superficial differences – or open deceptions – in the face of what they understood was important progress for international communism in Chilean territory. Upper-class youths who had been radicalised towards the Right, along with ex-military reactionaries, assumed that any type of action was justified in order to prevent Allende from taking power. Besides a series of bombings falsely attributed to ultra-leftist groups (which the police soon discovered), they organised an effort to kidnap the Army's Commander-in-Chief, René Schneider, which led to a shoot-out that caused his death. At the same time, the Movimiento Cívico Patria y Libertad (Fatherland and Liberty Civic Movement) was being organised out of the ashes of 'independent' organisations from right-wing candidate Jorge Alessandri's campaign. Imbued with the anti-Communist script and warning of the vital danger that threatened the nation, they sought different formulas to avoid the ratification of Allende's victory in the National Congress. When they did not succeed because of the Christian Democrats' refusal, its leaders decided to transform the 'movement' into a 'front' to fight the Left in power through all possible means.<sup>19</sup> The counter-revolution, still limited to oligarchic and conservative groups, had already gone into action, and faced with the start of the Unidad Popular government, it was getting ready to intensify the fight.

The Allende government's political and economic strategy bore fruit for a few months. The redistributive measures boosted production, employment and consumption, particularly among the popular sectors. At the same time, it progressed rapidly with its policy to expropriate large copper mines, industrial monopolies, banks and large estates in the countryside.<sup>20</sup> In the April 1971 municipal elections, the Unidad Popular won nearly 50 per cent of the vote, a marked increase in the electoral votes it had received seven months earlier in the presidential elections, thus demonstrating that the fears the anti-Communist script stirred up had not yet penetrated into significant sectors of the population. Indeed, many of the middle-class social organisations that would later join the counter-revolutionary bloc did not show major apprehensions about the Left in power. Associations of merchants, officials, truckers and professionals, among others, even celebrated some of the government's measures, including the nationalisation of copper and some pension laws that favoured these sectors. Allende was aware of the importance of the middle sectors in his political strategy, and thanks to his influence with some of those groups – such as the Medical Association (Colegio Médico), of which he was a founding member – he managed to appease the first complaints. On other occasions, the government agreed to salary raises far above projections, as in the case of bank employees, who benefited from increases around 70 per cent.<sup>21</sup> As a result, during these months, the political opposition was divided and on the defensive. The National Party took refuge in the anti-Communist script without being able to pose significant obstacles to the government from Congress, while Christian Democrats attempted to negotiate the speed of the measures that the Unidad Popular adopted.<sup>22</sup> However, this situation would change rapidly in the second half of 1971.

In June of that year, the Vanguardia Organizada del Pueblo (Organised Vanguard of the People, VOP), a small and radicalised leftist organisation without ties to the Unidad Popular, murdered the high-ranking Christian Democratic leader Edmundo Pérez Zujovic, in what would be one of the few bloody incidents

attributable to the revolutionary camp.<sup>23</sup> Despite the fact that the police investigation progressed quickly and the perpetrators of the crime were discovered, the opposition press and parties held the government responsible for creating an environment of violence and chaos. Meanwhile, the murder helped to bring the positions of the Christian Democrats and the National Party closer together. However, it was among the party bases that a de facto counter-revolutionary alliance began to take shape: the Christian Democratic, National and Patria y Libertad student youths began to carry out street violence, raising the banner of anti-Communism. Demonstrators not only clashed with the police but also with left-wing militants who did not tolerate the loss of public space. The traditional protest repertoires of the centrist and right-wing parties were modified quickly, in a matter of months: besides parliamentary pressure and debates in the press, the organisation was now joined by shock troops to agitate the environment and thereby demonstrate that under a Marxist government, there could only be violence and disorder in the streets, an element that had been part of the anti-Communist script for decades.<sup>24</sup>

As 1971 progressed and the government's expropriation policies in the countryside and the city intensified, the counter-revolution added new followers and strategies. Coinciding with a long Fidel Castro visit to Chile and the first signs of some product shortages, the National Party came up with the idea of holding a women's march in which they banged on pots and pans as a sign of protest. The objective was to reproach the government and show that its economic policies were incompatible with performing accepted gender roles, thereby situating the social conflict above partisan divisions. Of course, that strategy was not new or original. The 1964 'campaign of terror' had already insisted on the point. In the meantime, some conservative women's organisations had been in contact with their Brazilian counterparts to learn from their example. What did turn out to be novel was the gathering's success: on 1 December, tens of thousands of women led by the National Party's upper-class leaders marched through the streets of downtown Santiago escorted by Patria y Libertad armed youths in the 'March of the Empty Pots and Pans' (*marcha de las cacerolas vacías*). It did not take long for violence to erupt between demonstrators and the police as well as with leftist militants. The opposition press could now use the image of the government and its base attacking defenceless women, thus questioning their 'masculinity'.<sup>25</sup>

The day after the women's march, those the Left referred to – with a certain disdain – as the 'petty bourgeoisie' had their turn: they held a Meeting of the Private Sector (Encuentro del Área Privada) in the capital's Caupolicán Theatre. The gathering was organised by the Confederation of Small Merchants (Confederación del Comercio Detallista) and the big business organisations united in the Confederation of Production and Commerce (Confederación de Producción y Comercio), among others. These sectors had joined together in previous months in the face of common causes, such as the campaign in defence of Papelera – a company with strong ties to the political Right that symbolises Chilean capitalism and had successfully resisted nationalisation – and the first signs of supply shortages, a particularly sensitive issue for merchants. In the speeches and debates, one could note the thematic diversity of fears they harboured about the Left in power, referring above all to the breakdown of labour hierarchies, street violence and the Social Property Sector (Área de Propiedad Social) limits that the government had created with its nationalisation policy. Despite the fact that the meeting was classified as strictly associative (*gremial*) by Rafael Cumsille – the president of the small merchants and one of the main speakers at the conference – they clearly hurled strong epithets against leftist 'activists and agitators' who were damaging the small business owners' honour and threatening that entire sector's 'freedom'.<sup>26</sup> In the following weeks, and as a consequence of this meeting, the Private Sector National Front (Frente Nacional del Área Privada) would be organised and begin an intense propaganda campaign in the nationally circulating press, warning that the Unidad Popular threatened the nation, the family and the 'working man'. The anti-Communist script had already begun to decisively shape perceptions of the 'Chilean road to socialism' among diverse political and social actors. In the view of those who, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, started to participate in the counter-revolutionary bloc, the Unidad Popular seemed to be heading inexorably towards a freedom-killing, violent dictatorship that attacked what they understood to be civilised social life's foundations.

Allende's government not only had to contend with the growing counter-revolutionary opposition, but it also had difficulties on two other fronts, one of which was more predictable than the other. First,



the United States government had opposed the possibility of a 'second Cuba' in Latin America from the beginning, so it surreptitiously supported efforts to prevent Allende from taking office, and once that plan failed, it exerted pressure on Chile's economic capacity.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, Allende had to confront what Peter Winn has called a 'revolution from below', that is, the independent action of peasants, workers and *pobladores* (poor residents/residents of shantytowns) who accelerated and expanded the expropriation drive with *tomas* (takeovers) of fields, industries and land.<sup>28</sup> From 1972 onwards, its tensions with the 'revolution from above', the one directed by the state, would grow increasingly evident, even when there were multiple links between the two dimensions. Thus, for example, left-wing groups both within and outside the Unidad Popular – such as the MIR and the radicalised wing of the Socialist Party – fomented, supported and organised actions 'from below' and, from an orthodox Leninist reading, backed the creation of organs of power outside and against the state, which, in spite of everything, they categorised as 'bourgeois'. Such contradictions on the Left contributed decisively to polarising the political environment even further, and at the same time they provided the counter-revolutionary bloc's anti-Communist script with 'evidence' about the 'real' intentions of the Left in power. Even so, there were moments of coordination, especially when the common goal was to defend the material gains of the popular sectors. As the shortages worsened, the government responded by organising the Supply and Price Boards (Juntas de Abastecimientos y Precios, JAP), neighbourhood price-control units, which also received support from state agencies, such as the Directorate of Industry and Commerce (Dirección de Industria y Comercio, DIRINCO) and the Carabineros (police), to ensure respect for the distribution of goods, and to forcibly open commercial premises when the Confederation of Small Merchants (Confederación de Comercio Detallista) decided to organise strikes in protest of what it considered a systematic policy of aggression toward its *gremio*.<sup>29</sup>

By then, in the counter-revolutionary camp, the urgency of the common enemy gave way to progressive coordination among the diverse political and social actors, beyond some strategic differences among its members. In other words, if the government had difficulty reconciling its agenda 'from above' and the revolutionary impulse 'from below', the 'counter-revolution from above' responded quickly and flexibly to the dynamics of the 'counter-revolution from below'. Members of the National Party and Christian Democrats left behind their recent conflictive past and, in July of that year, consolidated their alliance in the so-called Democratic Confederation (Confederación Democrática).<sup>30</sup> For its part, Patria y Libertad continued its rapid expansion and, despite certain tactical disagreements with Jaime Guzmán's *gremialistas* and the Christian Democrats, began an active policy of training and organising armed units in preparation for what they assumed would be an all-out clash with Marxist forces.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, a set of social organisations without a defined political profile began to join the counter-revolutionary camp. Merchants and small business owners, along with large business owners, had already done so. Then, professionals, who resented the loss of social status and the government's policy of promoting workers to managerial positions in the state and new nationalised corporations, took their turn. Each professional association (*colegio profesional*) expressed its rejection of the Left in power in relation to its immediate interests: while lawyers criticised the breakdown of the rule of law, doctors feared a complete 'bureaucratisation' of the profession and engineers complained of the new authorities' lack of technical capacity. In a matter of months, their complaints assumed a doctrinaire language similar to the anti-Communist script, based above all on the shared idea that the Left in power sought to destroy the middle class they claimed to represent.<sup>32</sup> The opposition press was key in that regard, particularly because of its efforts to pass each statement and action of the government and the Left through a strict anti-Communist ideological filter. Partisan and doctrinaire publications like *Sepa*, *Tribuna*, *Portada* and *PEC*; nationally circulating conservative newspapers such as the traditional *El Mercurio*; radio stations associated with the business community and the political opposition, such as *Radio Agricultura*; and Universidad Católica's television channel 13, now controlled by the most resolutely anti-Communist sectors, and others participated in this effort.<sup>33</sup> Thus, by mid-1972 there was already a counter-revolutionary bloc in the making that could simultaneously obstruct parliamentary initiatives, resist price-control policies, accuse government authorities in the press of promoting the nation's destruction and violently challenge the public order in the streets.

## A mass counter-revolution

In a tense environment, owing to street violence, accusations and counteraccusations in the press, and political conflict within the state, there would be no shortage of opportunities to intensify the mass mobilisation against the Unidad Popular. In early October 1972, a new phase of the conflict began. The National Confederation of Truck Owners (Confederación Nacional de Dueños de Camiones), who had already taken a decidedly anti-government stance, called a strike in response to the government's attempt to create a state transportation company in the far south of the country. La Moneda reacted harshly by prosecuting their leaders under the Law of Internal State Security (*Ley de Seguridad Interior del Estado*), turning a regional conflict into a national one. Opposition politicians and *gremio* leaders visited and expressed solidarity with the prisoners, while the opposition press covered every detail of the arrest. León Vilarín, national president of the truckers, quickly became a public celebrity. From then on, the conflict only grew. Merchants, professionals and business owners joined the strike, while the political opposition celebrated the events as a genuine expression of Chilean society against the Left in power. Indeed, political parties occupied a second line in the conflict, precisely to emphasise the movement's associative (*gremial*) – and, as such, supposedly apolitical – character. The reaction of the Unidad Popular and its base was not long in coming. To counteract the strike, the takeovers of factories and requisitions of trucks increased, creating the first expressions of what the radical Left called popular power (*poder popular*), often understood as revolutionary structures independent from even the Unidad Popular government.<sup>34</sup> In contrast, the most prominent counter-revolutionary ideologues called for strengthening what they referred to as associative power (*poder gremial*).<sup>35</sup> In the heat of the great October 1972 mass mobilisation, the counter-revolution was starting to create its own political project.

The counter-revolutionary strike lasted until the beginning of November. In the most combative weeks, the participating *gremios* turned to protest repertoires with which they were unaccustomed. The truckers set up camps next to their stopped vehicles, while professionals used the legal force of the associations to compel their more reluctant colleagues to go on strike. New entities were also created, including the National Association Defence Command (Comando Nacional de Defensa Gremial) – representing between 600,000 and 700,000 strikers – that drafted Chile's Demands (Pliego de Chile), a set of demands for the government that reflected the spread of the anti-Communist script to significant sectors of civil society. The list interspersed contingent demands, such as the end of nationalisations and the suppression of the JAPs, with *gremio* anxieties about respect for civil liberties and maintaining the rule of law. Given the tremendous damage the strike had caused the Chilean economy, and noting a certain exhaustion among the strikers, Allende compromised on some minor points and offered a major cabinet change, including the Armed Forces' Commanders-in-Chief in it to guarantee compliance with the agreements and above all the Executive's impartiality in the crucial March 1973 parliamentary elections. On 5 November, the *gremio* leaders agreed to return to work.

The end of the strike did not cause the counter-revolutionary bloc to retreat. The *gremios* resented what they understood to be government 'reprisals' against strikers through layoffs and other sanctions in state jobs, while the opposition parties stepped up their agitation efforts in the run-up to the March election, when they would have the chance to win enough votes in Congress to legally remove Allende. By then, the anti-Communist script was the hegemonic language of all those who did not identify with the Unidad Popular, and it proved to be powerful enough to mobilise thousands of citizens far beyond the militancy of conservative organisations and the business world. Indeed, the script had facilitated the strengthening of transnational counter-revolutionary networks that contributed resources, advice and new referents for action. At this point, relations between the Chilean and United States governments were ruptured, and Washington was in a more comfortable position, which allowed it to increase political and economic pressure without major costs at the international level. At the same time, the United States intelligence apparatus operated smoothly in Chilean territory, maintaining daily contact with the leaders of the counter-revolutionary bloc's different organisations. Indirectly, the US government had also managed to channel massive funds to maintain and deepen the October strike.<sup>36</sup> It was not alone in that effort. The Brazilian military dictatorship was especially concerned about the rise of leftist forces in the region, and

after successfully intervening in the coup d'état in Bolivia and the Uruguayan elections in 1971, it focused its attention on Chile.<sup>37</sup>

In that setting, more distant references were also invoked but the universalist logic of the script made them plausible. In 1972, graffiti appeared on the streets of Santiago with the word 'Jakarta' or 'Jakarta is coming'. Top leftist leaders also received papers with that same message along with a black spider, *Patria y Libertad*'s symbol, at their homes. The reference was not obvious to everyone, but soon the press made it clear: it was a direct allusion to the killing of hundreds of thousands of Communists in Indonesia since the 1965 coup d'état that put General Suharto in power. The opposition press then gave the story a twist that further aligned it with the anti-Communist script: Jakarta actually referred to the real danger that left-wing forces would wipe out military officials and opposition leaders, as the Indonesian dictatorship's propaganda claimed in justification of its coup and military regime. In the anti-Communist imaginary the counter-revolutionary bloc shared, it was only a matter of time before the Chilean Marxists in power planned to kill dissidents en masse, making the call to action by all possible means all the more urgent and vital.<sup>38</sup>

It was in this environment that the March 1973 parliamentary elections took place. The electoral campaign involved a new mass mobilisation of the counter-revolutionary bloc, now in favour of the National Party and Christian Democratic candidates for Congress. However, despite the street violence and economic disaster, the opposition did not win two-thirds of the seats, ruling out the 'legal strategy' to end the Unidad Popular government. The alternative, deepening the counter-revolutionary social mobilisation, grew stronger as a result of new social actors joining the movement. Radicalised students affiliated with the National and Christian Democratic parties gained control over a significant faction of the Federation of Secondary Students (*Federación de Estudiantes Secundarios*), and they took to the streets to combat the Unidad Popular government through all available means.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, because of the increased influence that Christian Democrats had gained in the labour movement in previous years, the counter-revolutionary bloc could count on the support of several of the most powerful copper miners' unions, which began a long strike at the El Teniente mine in April 1973. At the same time, new battlelines were emerging. The educational reform project – the so-called National Unified School (*Escuela Nacional Unificada*, ENU) – provoked a hostile reaction from *gremios*, politicians and even the Catholic Church, despite the fact that its central guidelines addressed the changes made under Eduardo Frei's government. Responding to and strengthening the script, the National Unified School was read as a government attempt to raise consciousness (*concientizar*) among children about the new Marxist creed with an explicit anti-religious objective. As a stand-off blocked the political institutions, the counter-revolution radicalised and expanded, presenting a violent head-on clash with the government.

Yet there was still one key actor left to decide the fate of the political conflict: the military. Although a significant number of retired military officers had participated in many of the first counter-revolutionary organisations, the fact is that until then the armed forces had maintained the so-called Schneider doctrine, that is, political neutrality and respect for the Constitution. By 1973, however, it was clear that the internal balances were moving towards counter-revolution. On 29 June, the No. 2 armoured regiment rose up against the government, hoping to rouse the support of their comrades in arms. General Carlos Prats – the Commander-in-Chief of the Army with a fully constitutionalist stance – personally stopped the coup attempt, then called the *tancazo* (tank uprising). Despite the government's apparent victory, in reality this military movement revealed the fragility of Prats's internal authority and the shift of most high-ranking officials towards an insurrectionary posture. With the conspiracy already underway, the military could use the Arms Control Law (*Ley de Control de Armas*) passed by Congress to intimidate and harass workers' and peasants' organisations, especially in the 'taken-over' industries and fields.<sup>40</sup>

In this situation, the 'civil' counter-revolution continued to increase and diversify its mobilisation strategies on an ever more openly insurrectional path. *Patria y Libertad* turned to an intensive terrorist strategy. Between 17 and 24 June alone, they organised 77 bombings that affected leftist leaders and basic infrastructure installations, including oil pipelines, bridges and electricity pylons.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, the truckers and the rest of the middle-class *gremios* began a new national strike in July 1973, demanding Allende's departure to put an end to the movement. The trucks were once again parked in camps, now

even more massive, where there were tough clashes with the police. In that context, moreover, the so-called *multigremios* – novel local- and provincial-level spaces of counter-revolutionary organisation where *gremios*, social organisations and radicalised individuals came together – appeared in different parts of the country.<sup>42</sup> Between August and the beginning of September, the plans for a coup d'état progressed decisively. After weeks of harassment and pressure, Prats resigned from his position as the Army's Commander-in-Chief. Simultaneously, the opposition majority in the Chamber of Deputies approved a statement in which it classified Allende's government as unconstitutional and illegal, giving the perfect excuse for military intervention. On 11 September, largely as a consequence of the counter-revolutionary mass mobilisation against the Unidad Popular, the military conspiracy was carried out in perfect coordination, overthrowing the government and gaining control of the country in a matter of hours.

### Final thoughts

The installation of the military dictatorship did not necessarily mean the end of the counter-revolution but rather its institutionalisation. From that moment on, civil organisations no longer had to commit violence in the streets, nor did they have to undermine the public order to destabilise the government. Now, the state could direct the repression, using all its military force against 'Marxists' and, more generally, all those who had dared to disrupt social hierarchies and the established order. In that effort, in order to justify the coup and the dictatorship, as well as the immense repression since the coup, the new military authorities resorted to the anti-Communist script developed in previous decades and strengthened by the recent Unidad Popular experience. It was crucial, in that sense, to establish in the public sphere what Steve Stern has called 'memory as salvation', that is, an exclusive and exclusionary interpretative framework to connect to individual experiences – especially those touched in different ways by the counter-revolutionary mobilisation – intended to demonstrate that the coup d'état had come to save the nation from definitive collapse at the hands of bloodthirsty, power-hungry Communists.<sup>43</sup> Propaganda initiatives like the so-called Plan Z, which combined the already classic themes of a heavily armed guerrilla army lurking in the shadows and a Communist conspiracy to assassinate dissident leaders, sought to present the military coup as a last-minute salvation from the devious intentions of Allende and the Left.

Precisely this type of propagandistic assemblage aimed to circumvent the obvious paradox that the military dictatorship was doing everything that the Left had been accused of seeking: authoritarianism, arbitrariness, persecution and violence against all dissidents. More importantly, that interpretation of events also justified building a new counter-revolutionary order, which was delineated in broad strokes in the March 1974 Declaration of Principles (Declaración de Principios) and embodied by the 1980 Constitution years later. That order, as its civil ideologues never tired of asserting, must avoid any new revolutionary process of radical democracy in Chile at all costs, which was why the state-civil society relationship built over much of the twentieth century had to be reformulated. Despite a significant segment of the counter-revolutionary bloc's desire to be integrated into a new corporatist political and economic scheme, in 1975 the dictatorship decided on a set of neoliberal reforms, which it would deepen towards the end of the decade with the so-called modernisations. The market's primacy as a space for individual participation and the high military leadership's desire to demobilise and depoliticise Chilean society prevented the counter-revolutionary bloc from remaining united. At the start of the 1980s, Christian Democrats, corporatists and small and medium *gremios*, among others, would have strong reasons to distance themselves from the regime and in many cases join the democratic opposition.

All told, the counter-revolutionary mobilisation was a foundational experience for the Chilean political system's right wing, especially for those who did not renounce the military dictatorship's re-foundational and repressive 'work'. Jaime Guzmán, for example, would go from being a leader of *gremialismo* to one of the dictatorship's main ideologues. After the adoption of the 1980 Constitution, which Guzmán played a leading role in drafting, he devoted himself to organising new right-wing parties – particularly the Independent Democratic Union (Unión Demócrata Independiente) – that would be projected as unavoidable conservative referents during the long years of transition to democracy and through the present. For the Chilean Right forged during the military dictatorship, the counter-revolution – both as an epic memory of the mass anti-Communist struggle, and as the project and construction of a

counter-revolutionary order, reflected in the new constitution and neoliberal economic model – represented one of its main symbols of identity.

In October 2019, nearly 30 years after the formal transition to democracy began, the political and economic order designed by Augusto Pinochet's counter-revolutionary dictatorship was irrevocably broken. Millions of Chilean citizens took to the streets in protest of the market's abuses, extreme inequality and the political system's disrepute. As a result, the events began a constitutional process that only the COVID-19 pandemic stopped momentarily. However, Sebastián Piñera's right-wing government first responded to the social protest with brutal police repression, which various international reports have categorised as flagrant human rights violations. Moreover, conservative intellectuals, much of the conservative press and the president himself alleged the meddling of foreign 'agitators' as the ultimate explanation for the protests. Although a revolution is not on the horizon for the mobilised citizenry, government authorities responded according to their own counter-revolutionary memory in defence of the foundations of the authoritarian model, which had become a 'semi-sovereign democracy' during the transition years.<sup>44</sup> Thus, it is unsurprising that some of the themes from the traditional anti-Communist script, raised both in the fight against the Unidad Popular and during the military dictatorship, have resurfaced. Half a century after Salvador Allende's election, those who mobilised against him, paved the way for the destruction of Chilean democracy and profited from military authoritarianism continue to defend the counter-revolutionary legacy with the weapons that worked so well at that time, but today seem much less effective. As always, the future remains open.

### Funding

This article received support from Chile's National Agency of Research and Development (ANID) through the FONDECYT Project number 11180155.

### Declarations and conflict of interests

The author declares no conflicts of interest with this work.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The dissertation that resulted from his stay was entitled 'The roots and dynamics of revolution and counterrevolution in Chile'. The two episodes are related in Bello, *Counterrevolution*, 39–41.

<sup>2</sup>See Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, *Nacionales y gremialistas*; Amorós, *Entre la araña y la flecha*; and Díaz Nieva, *Patria y Libertad*.

<sup>3</sup>A significant part of this section is based on my previous work on anti-Communism in Chile. For a synthetic view of this phenomenon, see Casals, 'Anticommunism in 20th-century Chile'.

<sup>4</sup>Patto Sá Motta, *Em guarda contra o perigo vermelho*, 15–46.

<sup>5</sup>There is a voluminous literature that gives an account of the Chilean Left's political integration from the 1930s onwards and its role as an intermediary between the state and popular demands. See, among many others, Pavilack, *Mining for the Nation*; Drake, *Socialism and Populism in Chile, 1932–1952*; Klubock, *Contested Communities*; Roseblatt, *Gendered Compromises*; and Arrate and Rojas, *Memoria de la izquierda chilena*.

<sup>6</sup>To contrast the Chilean case with the Argentine and Brazilian cases, see Finchelstein, *The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War*; Cowan, *Securing Sex*; Correa, *Con las riendas del poder*; and, in comparative perspective, Deutsch, *Las Derechas*. Chilean nationalist groups have been studied in detail by Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate in *El nacionalismo chileno*, among other works.

<sup>7</sup>The literature on these aspects is extensive. See, among others, Cid and Fernández, 'De "ridículo sainete filosófico" a "doctrina santa y elevada"', 45–72; and Grez Toso, *De la 'regeneración del pueblo' a la huelga general*.

<sup>8</sup>On this subject, see González Miranda, *El dios cautivo*; and Deutsch, *Las Derechas*.

<sup>9</sup>Weld, 'The Spanish Civil War', 77–115.

<sup>10</sup>Bethell and Roxborough, 'Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War', 167–89.

<sup>11</sup>The episode is described in Huneus, *La guerra fría chilena*.

<sup>12</sup>I have studied the point in Casals, 'Chilean! Is this how you want to see your daughter?' See also Power, 'The engendering of anticommunism and fear'.

<sup>13</sup>On those processes, see Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, *Nacionales y gremialistas*.

<sup>14</sup>This approach to counter-revolution is based on the works of Mayer, *Furies*; Mayer, *Dynamics of Counterrevolution*; Bello, *Counterrevolution*; Grandin, 'Living in revolutionary times'; and Robin, *The Reactionary Mind*, among others.

<sup>15</sup>Pinto Vallejos, 'Hacer la revolución en Chile'. For a critical view of these particular characteristics of the Chilean Left's political project, see Fernandois, *La revolución inconclusa*, 239 and following pages.

<sup>16</sup>Carter, 'Violence, ideology and counterrevolution', 109–35. For a long-term perspective on the social, political and racial conflicts in Araucanía, see Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood*.

<sup>17</sup>Corrêa De Oliveira, *Revolución y contra-revolución*.

<sup>18</sup>On Guzmán and the gremialistas, see Cristi, *El pensamiento político de Jaime Guzmán*, chapter 3.

<sup>19</sup>At the founding ceremony of the Frente Nacionalista Patria y Libertad on 1 April 1971, its leader Pablo Rodríguez made clear the organisation's level of attachment to a radical and reductionist version of the anti-Communist script: 'We are anti-Marxists because it is an indisputable fact that at this moment the Unidad Popular is entirely dominated by the Communist Party, which is gradually leading us to tyranny, to the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is a matter of destroying social classes, the men who have been able to create wealth, progressive industry, commerce; in the end, it is a matter of imposing that phenomenon that is foreign to us, which is the dictatorship of the proletariat without the proletariat.' Cited in Díaz Nieva, *Patria y Libertad*, 77.

<sup>20</sup>On the economic assumptions of the Unidad Popular programme, see Bitar, *Transición, socialismo y democracia*.

<sup>21</sup>Bello, 'The roots and dynamics of revolution and counterrevolution in Chile', 412.

<sup>22</sup>Varas, *La dinámica política de la oposición*, 57 and following pages; and Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, *Nacionales y gremialistas*, 287–98.

<sup>23</sup>At the time, the leftist press floated the idea that the VOP was really an organisation created by the political Right and United States intelligence agencies. Even today there are researchers who do not rule out that possibility. See Winn, 'The furies of the Andes', 254.

<sup>24</sup>Palieraki, 'Las manifestaciones callejeras', 10–12.

<sup>25</sup>The march and conservative women's anti-Allende participation have been studied in detail by Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*.

<sup>26</sup>Campero, *Los gremios*, 59.

<sup>27</sup>However, as Tanya Harmer has shown, Washington was aware of the popularity of Allende's Third Worldist demands, so its policy was much more hesitant than commonly believed, at least while it could not convincingly justify its onslaught against the Chilean experiment. Harmer, *Allende's Chile*, chapter 4.

<sup>28</sup>Winn formulated these categories in his classic study of the Yarur textile-industry workers, *Weavers of Revolution*; and years later, he would refine them in *La revolución chilena*, recognising the multiple interactions between the two dimensions.

<sup>29</sup>Consumption was a key battle ground in the political conflict under the Unidad Popular, however, a detailed treatment of it is beyond the scope of this article. On this point, see recent research such as Frens-String, 'Communists, commissars, and consumers; and Espinosa Muñoz, 'La batalla de la merluza', 31–54.

<sup>30</sup>Amorós, *Entre la araña y la flecha*, 183.

<sup>31</sup>Díaz Nieva, *Patria y Libertad*, chapter 3.

<sup>32</sup>Alan Angell, 'Social class and popular mobilisation', 22 and following pages.

<sup>33</sup>On the press (including the left-wing press) as a polarising factor in political conflict, see Dooner, *Periodismo y política*.

<sup>34</sup>The nature and scope of 'popular power' was one of the great debates on the Left. A general approach to this topic can be found in Gaudichaud, *Chile, 1970–1973*. On the radical changes in the use of public space during the October strike: Trumper, *Ephemeral Histories*, chapter 3.

<sup>35</sup>Jaime Guzmán, the leader of Universidad Católica's *gremialista* movement, was the one who elaborated this line of interpretation most systematically. In line with his anti-Marxist and anti-liberal corporatism, he saw the mobilisation of *gremios* as the emergence of a new mode of state organisation, now based on 'intermediate bodies' where true social participation would be located, displacing politics with issues of state administration. Thus, it avoided what he understood to be political parties' disruptive activity, which had opened the doors of state power to 'Marxism', among other things. On this point, see Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, *Nacionales y gremialistas*, 348–52.

<sup>36</sup>Harmer, *Allende's Chile*, 182–3.

<sup>37</sup>According to Tanya Harmer's research, there is evidence that the Brazilian regime supported Allende's most radical opposition – among them, Patria y Libertad – with money and weapons, while keeping in permanent contact with Chilean military officers in preparation for a coup d'état. For counter-revolutionary Chileans, the 'Brazilian solution' grew increasingly attractive, and at the end of 1972 and even more forcefully in 1973 calls for military intervention started to be made directly, based on the understanding that Chile was in imminent danger of becoming a Communist dictatorship. Harmer, 'Brazil's Cold War in the Southern Cone'.

<sup>38</sup>Bevins, *The Jakarta Method*, chapter 9.

<sup>39</sup>Rojas Flores, 'Los estudiantes secundarios'.

<sup>40</sup>Winn, *La revolución chilena*, 117–18.

<sup>41</sup>Roxborough, Roddick and O'Brien, *Chile: The State and Revolution*, 210.

<sup>42</sup>Campero, *Los gremios*, 77.

<sup>43</sup>Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, chapters 1 and 4.

<sup>44</sup>For a critical perspective on the transition, see Huneus, *La democracia semisoberana*.

## References

- Amorós, Mario. *Entre la araña y la flecha. La trama civil contra la Unidad Popular*. Santiago: Ediciones B, 2020.
- Angell, Alan. 'Social class and popular mobilisation in Chile: 1970–1973'. *A Contracorriente: Revista de Historia Social y Literatura en América Latina* 7, no. 2 (2010): 1–51.
- Bello, Walden. *Counterrevolution: The Global Rise of the Far Right*. Rugby: Practical Action Publishing, 2019.
- Bello, Walden F. 'The roots and dynamics of revolution and counterrevolution in Chile'. PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1975.
- Bethell, Leslie, and Ian Roxborough. 'Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War: Some reflections on the 1945–8 conjuncture'. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 20, no. 1 (1988): 167–89. [CrossRef]
- Bevins, Vincent. *The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anticommunist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program That Shaped Our World*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2020.
- Bitar, Sergio. *Transición, socialismo y democracia: La experiencia chilena*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1979.
- Campero, Guillermo. *Los gremios empresariales en el período 1970–1983: Comportamiento sociopolítico y orientaciones ideológicas*, 1st edn. Santiago: ILET, 1984.
- Carter, Daniel. 'Violence, ideology and counterrevolution: Landowners and agrarian reform in Cautín province, Chile, 1967–1973'. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 51, no. 1 (February 2019): 109–35. [CrossRef]
- Casals, Marcelo. 'Anticommunism in 20th-century Chile: From the "social question" to the military dictatorship'. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History* (March 2019). [CrossRef]
- Casals, Marcelo. "'Chilean! Is this how you want to see your daughter?': The Cuban revolution and representations of gender and family during Chile's 1964 anticommunist "Campaign of Terror"". *Radical History Review* 136 (2020): 111–27. [CrossRef]
- Cid, Gabriel, and Camilo Fernández. 'De "ridículo sainete filosófico" a "doctrina santa y elevada": Los conceptos de socialismo y comunismo en el debate público chileno del siglo XIX'. *Historia* 53, no. 1 (2020 June): 45–72. [CrossRef]

- Cristi, Renato. *El pensamiento político de Jaime Guzmán: Una biografía intelectual*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2011.
- De Oliveira, Plinio Corrêa. *Revolución y contra-revolución*. Santiago: Paulinas, 1964.
- Deutsch, Sandra McGee. *Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890–1939*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Díaz Nieva, José. *Patria y Libertad. El nacionalismo frente a la Unidad Popular*. Santiago: Centro de Estudios Bicentenario, 2019.
- Dooner, Patricio. *Periodismo y política: La prensa política en Chile, 1970–1973*. Santiago: Andante, 1989.
- Espinosa Muñoz, Francisca. “‘La batalla de la merluza’: Política y consumo alimenticio en el Chile de la Unidad Popular (1970–1973)”. *Historia* 51, no. 1 (July 2018): 31–54. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Fernandois, Joaquín. *La revolución inconclusa: La izquierda chilena y el gobierno de la Unidad Popular*. Santiago: Centro de Estudios Públicos, 2013.
- Frens-String, Joshua. ‘Communists, commissars, and consumers: The politics of food on the Chilean road to socialism’. *Hispanic American Historical Review* 98, no. 3 (August 2018): 471–501. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Gaudichaud, Franck. *Chile, 1970–1973. Mil días que estremecieron al mundo. Poder popular, cordones industriales y socialismo durante el gobierno de Salvador Allende*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2016.
- Grandin, Greg. ‘Living in revolutionary times: Coming to terms with the violence of Latin America’s long Cold War’. In *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America’s Long Cold War*, edited by Greg Grandin and Gilbert M. Joseph, 1–42. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Grez Toso, Sergio. *De la ‘regeneración del pueblo’ a la huelga general: Génesis y evolución histórica del movimiento popular en Chile (1810–1890)*. Santiago: Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos, 1997.
- Harmer, Tanya. *Allende’s Chile and the Inter-American Cold War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
- Harmer, Tanya. ‘Brazil’s Cold War in the Southern Cone, 1970–1975’. *Cold War History* 12, no. 4 (November 2012): 659–81. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Huneus, Carlos. *La democracia semisoberana: Chile después de Pinochet*. Santiago: Taurus, 2014.
- Huneus, Carlos. *La guerra fría chilena: Gabriel González Videla y la Ley Maldita*. Santiago: Random House Mondadori S.A., 2009.
- Mallon, Florencia E. *Courage Tastes of Blood: The Mapuche Community of Nicolás Ailío and the Chilean State, 1906–2001*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Mayer, Arno J. *Dynamics of Counterrevolution in Europe, 1870–1956: An Analytic Framework*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- Mayer, Arno J. *Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Palieraki, Eugenia. ‘Las manifestaciones callejeras y la experiencia de la Unidad Popular (1970–1973)’. *Pensamiento Crítico. Revista electrónica de Historia* 3 (2003): 1–28.
- Pinto Vallejos, Julio. ‘Hacer la revolución en Chile’. In *Cuando hicimos historia: Las experiencias de la Unidad Popular*, edited by Julio Pinto Vallejos, 9–14. Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2005.
- Power, Margaret. ‘The engendering of anticommunism and fear in Chile’s 1964 presidential election’. *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 5 (2008): 931–53. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Power, Margaret. *Right-Wing Women in Chile: Feminine Power and the Struggle against Allende, 1964–1973*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002.
- Robin, Corey. *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Rojas Flores, Jorge. ‘Los estudiantes secundarios durante la Unidad Popular, 1970–1973’. *Historia* 42, no. 2 (2009): 471–503. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Roxborough, Ian, Jacqueline Roddick, and Philip J. O’Brien. *Chile: The State and Revolution*. London: Macmillan Press, 1977.



- Sá Motta, Rodrigo Patto. *Em guarda contra o perigo vermelho: O anticomunismo no Brasil, 1917–1964*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva/FAPESP, 2002.
- Stern, Steve J. *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London, 1998*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Trumper, Camilo D. *Ephemeral Histories: Public Art, Politics, and the Struggle for the Streets in Chile*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.
- Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, Verónica. *Nacionales y gremialistas: El 'parto' de la nueva derecha política chilena, 1964–1973*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2008.
- Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, Verónica. *El Nacionalismo chileno en los años del Frente Popular, 1938–1952*. Santiago: Universidad Católica Blas Cañas, 1995.
- Varas, Augusto. *La dinámica política de la oposición durante el gobierno de la Unidad Popular* (Working paper). Santiago: FLACSO, 1977.
- Weld, Kirsten. 'The Spanish Civil War and the construction of a reactionary historical consciousness in Augusto Pinochet's Chile'. *Hispanic American Historical Review* 98, no. 1 (February 2018): 77–115. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Winn, Peter. *La revolución chilena*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2014.
- Winn, Peter. 'The furies of the Andes. Violence and terror in the Chilean revolution and counterrevolution'. In *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America's Long Cold War*, edited by Greg Grandin and Gilbert M. Joseph, 239–75. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Winn, Peter. *Weavers of Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile's Road to Socialism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.