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From the archive

The rising class consciousness of the proletariat and the problem of power

- Features -

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In our 'From the Archive' series we republish this editorial prepared for the September 1973 issue of the Chilean publication *Revolución Permanente*.

The revolutionary upsurge of the workers' movement has seen a significant increase in political class consciousness since the victory obtained over the attempted coup d'état of 29 June this year. This increase has been expressed not only in the occupation of more than 500 factories in Santiago and an equivalent number in the rest of the country, but fundamentally in the arming of the proletariat which has already become general in the vanguard sectors of the working class.

The embryos of workers' and popular power, generated above all in the cordones industriales, have been strengthened to such an extent that in numerous enterprises there exists a duality of power between the bourgeoisie and the working class. Moreover, there has arisen a duality of power in the public-sector enterprises, between the working class and the bourgeois state apparatus as represented by the interventores. The workers who occupied the factories in July and August not only seized real power from the bosses of the private enterprises, but also in various public-sector industries overthrew the bureaucrats put in charge by the government (interventores). It is necessary to struggle for this dual power to express itself at the political level, in order to launch a struggle for the definitive conquest of power.

Workers' power in the present situation passes via the cordones industriales. As the 9 August proclamation of the Cordon Vicuña Mackenna said: The Cordon is Popular Power.

The most effective way to crush the bourgeoisie and go beyond reformism is for the proletariat to go oner openly to the offensive, reinforcing working-class and popular power. We call for a struggle For All Local Power to the Cordones and the Comandos Comunales, which will have to requisition lorries, wipe out the fascists by means of People's Tribunals, organise food supplies through the JAP and solve health problems in collaboration with the FENATS workers and the left-wing doctors. It is urgent to co-ordinate the embryos of local power, to convene as soon as possible a Popular Assembly, which does not merely discuss but prepares for the seizure of political power.

For the important thing in the end is to let it be clearly established that (as with Kornilov in 1917 Russia), the struggle is not simply one to crush the fascists, but basically one of preparation to become an alternative power to the capitulating government. It is necessary to fix a clear strategy for power, without allowing oneself to be drawn off by minor conjunctural questions -which have tended to convert certain organisations of the revolutionary left into mere left-wing pressure groups on the traditional left.

The workers cannot go further along the blind alley into which the capitulations of reformism have led them. They cannot simply remain on the defensive, waiting until either the bourgeoisie obliges Allende to resign or the military decides to launch a coup d'état. The question now posed is not one solely of preparing to counter the imminent coup, but of organising to initiate a struggle to seize power. The proletariat and the organisations of the revolutionary left, of the revolutionary sections of MAPU (Garretón-Aquevedo) and of the Socialist Party, must take the political initiative, overcoming by means of a 'Revolutionary Unity' front the failure of revolutionary leadership, with the aim of establishing a strategy for power and preparing seriously and responsibly to initiate the armed struggle for the conquest of proletarian political power.

The armed struggle must be initiated not when the proletariat enters a period of retreat, as can happen in the face of massive repression by the Armed Forces, but precisely in a period of revolutionary upsurge of the masses like the

present. The dangers of foguista or militarist deviations will be overcome, not simply through the organisations of the revolutionary left understanding the errors committed by the guerilla groups of Latin America, but as a result of the massive character which the armed struggle will acquire in Chile, with the incorporation of thousands of proletarian men and women in the Revolutionary People's Army. The determined attitude of the proletariat will be a catalysing factor in accelerating the present crisis within the Armed Forces, impelling the soldiers and sailors to pass over to the cause of socialism. 'Proletarians. Forward! To the Attack!'

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