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Dictatorship On Shaky Ground

Grupo Pedro Nolasco Arratia

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As an entirely new experimental model, Chile is now suffering the consequences of economic policies which have led to the destruction of the country's productive potential. In its aim of putting all production in the hands of private capital, the dictatorship has forgotten that industrialization in Chile has always been promoted by the State, which has historically provided technical and economic support to the most productive enterprises.

Having destroyed the social movement by outlawing the CUT and imprisoning or disappearing its leaders, the dictatorship imposed by decree a new work code that dissolved the unions. Moreover, the dictatorship has drawn up a new "constitution" with the intention of developing an entire socio-political system that destroys social security for Chilean workers.

Throughout the Chilean dictatorship, there exist certain elements permitting us to understand that the ideologues behind Pinochet possess a fragmented intelligence, thereby contributing to the atomization of Chilean society.

The regime has skillfully imposed a reform of the educational structure. The Ministry of Education's functions have been relegated to the municipalities. Control of 5,156 scholastic establishments has passed to the municipal administrations.

In the municipalities, an infrastructure for providing medical aid to the poor was created. In keeping with the U.S. model, all social services were transferred to the private sector. The system of free medical aid is run by young doctors who are leading mouthpieces for Pinochet.

Employment agencies also exist in the municipalities. In each community, an infrastructure has been constructed that permits the regime and its apparatus to develop and control an entire complex of activities. These are: the Bureau of Women, the Bureau of Youth, the Bureau of Corporations, etc., all of which function at the community level. This typical proselytism of military regimes has functioned perfectly in Chile.

A new union organization has denounced this state of affairs in its documents: "The regime needs this community work to consolidate its power at the base; considering that after this 'transitional period,' a Parliament will be formed, along with political parties serving the regime. The young lackeys and official political activists who control the community work will be the future candidates of Pinochet's party. Consequently, the advance of the regime's power and of the capitalist system becomes more and more dangerous every day...

"Confronted with this new reality from which our people suffer, neither political parties nor traditional union structures have responded coherently or shown a capability of unifying Chileans to change their oppressive situation of domination."

The traditional opposition to the right includes the Christian Democrats, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and the remaining armed-struggle advocates of the MIR [Left Revolutionary Movement].

But it is certain that the Pinochet regime does not fear the opposition of political parties as much as it fears rank-and-file movements, as was evident after the demonstration of May 11th.

In effect, repression is always exerted on the poorest sectors, the marginals, and the representatives of independent unions. Political parties are not serious rivals to Pinochet's dictatorship.