

# **Fighting for Chile:**

*Conflicts and Consensuses in the Norwegian Movement for  
Solidarity with Chile, 1973-1979*



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## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the transnational solidarity movement for Chile as it evolved in the Norwegian context following the 1973 Chilean coup. Centring itself on the two main national umbrella organisations for the solidarity movement in the years between 1973 and 1979, *Solidaritetskomiteen for Chile* and *Chileaksjonen i Norge*, the thesis analyses the political conflicts that made a bipartisan approach to the solidarity cause become unviable. The coup in Chile struck at the core of the 1970s *Zeitgeist*, turning it into one of the paradigmatic events of the Global Cold War resulting in the crystallisation of a unique radical imaginary surrounding Chile. With a particularly forceful Maoist movement attempting to use this imaginary to disseminate their ideology through the solidarity movement and controlling the solidarity committee, the solidarity movement became a political arena in which the political and ideological conflicts of the era played themselves out. This resulted in the bifurcation of the movement and the existence of two rival solidarity committees competing for establishing themselves as the main national organisation for the movement. Moreover, the thesis seeks to further our understanding of the shift from an anti-fascist and anti-imperialist emphasis to one based on human rights occurring within the solidarity movement, regarding it chiefly as a consequence of the lack of clear consensus among the political Left in the 1970s. Subsequently, the thesis sets out to explore what the human rights breakthrough meant in the contemporary political landscape of Norway.

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## **Foreword**

At the time when this thesis was written, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and engulfed societies all over the world, with Norway among them. In light of this, my cohort and I were asked to write something about how the pandemic affected our work this semester.

When the Norwegian government at the 12th of March 2020 introduced the most far-reaching measures the country had seen in peacetime, institutions all over the country were abruptly closed for the foreseeable future. Therefore, the Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek (ARBARK), in which most of my primary source material was found, closed their doors as well, thereby cutting short my archival visits in a decisive period for writing this paper. This made me redirect my attention to newspaper material, which the Norwegian National Library was so kind as to make available online. In a while, the wonderful staff at ARBARK reopened their doors for visitors, and I was allowed to resume my archival research by the beginning of May due to their accomodation.

Be that as it may, when writing a paper of this size and scope, additional questions and ideas tend to appear in the process of writing. Seeing that libraries also closed due to the pandemic, consulting additional secondary material was problematic. Perhaps, there are brilliant works out there that would have strengthened the arguments of this paper or shed light on even more aspects of its topics, but were unfortunately impossible to include in the final text. However, I am certain that the source material and secondary material I was able to access from home give me a sufficiently strong foundation for my main arguments to hold.

Productivity may have declined somewhat in confinement, but staying at home for extended periods also provided much time to reflect. In the end, I would not have delivered this thesis had I not been confident of its quality. I sincerely hope that the reader will find my confidence to not be unwarranted.

## **Acknowledgements**

The following body of text could not have been written without the significant contributions from a number of people who were kind enough to lend me their aid. First of all, I would like to thank my father Steinar Aas who somehow always managed to find time to give me excellent advice and discuss with me my unrefined thoughts. To my mother Wenche Øvergaard, I want to send my thanks for supporting me through this whole endeavour. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my supervisor, Daniel Maul, for his confidence in me, which he managed to successfully project onto me. Without that confidence and his sound mentorship, this thesis would have looked a lot different, and certainly not for the better.

Especially heartwarming to me has been the inclusive and amicable environment I found at the Norwegian Nobel Institute. I want to thank Olav Njølstad for giving me the possibility of spending an internship at this noblest of institutions, for aiding me academically with my writing, and for lending me an office at the Institute when finishing this thesis, although my time there was unfortunately cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To all the rest of the staff at the Nobel Institute, I have appreciated dearly partaking in compelling lunchtime conversations, sharing a great deal of laughs, solving problems together, and, perhaps most importantly, handing out a Nobel Peace Prize together, which was a true honour for me to be a part of.

I also want to thank all of my lecturers and fellow students at the master's programme of Modern International and Transnational History at the University of Oslo. The fascinating discussions and intriguing lessons I found there have been pivotal to my academic formation, whereas the warm and open environment of our group has been a pleasure to be a part of.

Last, but not least, I wish to thank my partner Anna Verånica whose love and support pushed me on when the road seemed long and the obstacles insurmountable.

The support from all of these individuals has been decisive in writing this text and they have my most sincere gratitude and appreciation for it. Having said all this, any inaccuracies or faults which may appear in this thesis were all of my own doing, and there would certainly be many more of them had I not been so fortunate as to receive the help, guidance, and support of these brilliant people.

## 1. Introduction

*It is said that we have strong democratic traditions. But the same was said about Chile when Allende came to power. Norwegian democracy has never really been put to such a test.*

Rune Slagstad, 1981.<sup>1</sup>

Almost forty years have passed since Chilean President Salvador Allende decided to end his own life inside a besieged La Moneda presidential palace, signalling the violent start of a violent military regime which would last for more than sixteen devastating years. The trauma caused by this ominous event and the atrocious military junta still plagues Chile to this day. Grandmothers are still searching the Atacama Desert for the bone fragments of long lost loved ones whose fate might never be known, while tanks and protesters could again be seen clashing in the streets of Santiago in the late months of 2019, as the demands for social change that propulsed Allende to power in 1970 are still to a large extent left unsatisfied. Although one should be careful not to draw too many parallels, it is safe to say that the ramifications of those crucial days of September 1973 are still informing Chileans' understanding of their own past, present, and future.

The tidal wave that was the Chilean coup d'état did not merely crash into the Andes and dissipate, nor were they swept into the vast Pacific Ocean never to be seen again. In the globalised world of the 1970s, the reverberations of the coup had lasting effects on distant, far removed societies whose relation to Chile was anything but apparent. On the far side of the earth from Chile, outraged citizens immediately gathered in the streets of Oslo in order to denounce the military coup. This activism swiftly developed into a movement with thousands of supporters spanning all of Norway, and which would continue to exist until Chile regained its democracy in 1990. So it suddenly appears that Chile was about more than just Chile, as the country's political turmoil became subject to a transnational solidarity movement rooting itself in countries all over the world, taking on distinct characteristics as it entered new political and historical contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> Hansson & Slagstad, *Sosialisme på norsk*, 26; All translations of non-English material and literature has been done by the author personally.

In this thesis I investigate how the movement for solidarity with Chile developed in Norway and explore the lasting imprints the solidarity movement made upon the country. More specifically, I seek to demonstrate how the events in Chile opened up new arenas for political contestations, contributed to further polarising an already divided Norwegian civil society, and laid down the bricks for a new kind of envisioning the world by adopting the ready-made concepts and discourses accompanying the universal human rights that experienced such a burst of attention at this exact moment in time.

In order to do so, the thesis centres itself on the Norwegian civil society response to the coup as it was organised first through the committee named *Solidaritetskomiteen for Chile* (*Solidaritetskomiteen*), and later through its rival committee, *Chileaksjonen i Norge* (*Chileaskjonen*), both intent on being the main national organ for the solidarity movement in Norway.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the periodisation roughly departs from the time of the establishment of *Solidaritetskomiteen* immediately after the coup in 1973, then follows it through the bifurcation of the solidarity movement in the summer of 1975, when *Chileaksjonen* was established as a response to the insurmountable divisions within the solidarity movement, mainly between the most radical leftists and everyone else. Finally, the thesis follows the two committees until *Solidaritetskomiteen* ceased its activities in 1979, with the members instead joining a group dedicated to the entirety of Latin America, *Latin-Amerikagruppene i Norge* (LAG), thereby signalling the end of tensions between the radical leftist faction of the solidarity movement and their opponents in *Chileaksjonen*.

Taking place in a time when the Norwegian political Left was experiencing an internal polarisation unlike anything seen after the end of the Second World War, the solidarity movement came to encapsulate many of the political and ideological tensions typical to the times. Geopolitical events, such as the coup in Chile, tended to crystallise these tensions and give way to heated political debates. In the Chilean solidarity movement, one may observe the transforming Norwegian Left in a period of rapid reconfiguration, as the crisis emanating from the Left's inability to cooperate yielded entirely unpredictable results. When consensus seemed impossible to agree on and collaboration seemed unachievable within the Left, actors began experimenting with alternative solutions and nurturing new alliances.

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<sup>2</sup> Seeing that both *Solidaritetskomiteen* and *Chileaksjonen* are determined forms of the nouns, thus signifying “the solidarity committee” and “the Chile action”, I will not be using the article “the” to determine them. The double determination the use of “the” would have resulted in is especially unpleasant to the eye of the Norwegian-speaking reader.

Thus, a new consensus emerged around the universal human rights, which experienced something of a rediscovery in the 1970s, receiving attention unlike anything seen in the decades that had passed since their formulation in 1948. Indeed, human rights offered an achievable departure from the problem of polarisation; a new consensus framed as universal, non-political, and humane. In the midst of this transformation stood the solidarity movement, like a prism through which the contours of change become discernible.

### **1.1. Methods and Theory**

This thesis is primarily based on archival material produced by the two major Norwegian solidarity committees for Chile between 1973 and 1979 — *Solidaritetskomiteen for Chile* and *Chileaksjonen i Norge*. Both of these organisations' archives were found at the Arbeiderbevegelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv in Oslo. *Solidaritetskomiteen*'s did not keep comprehensive archives in its existence, and it is therefore comprised of the documents preserved by its previous secretary and chairman, Olaf Svorstøl, and were deposited at ARBARK by the historian James Godbolt with Svorstøl's consent. Seeing this, there is a certain possibility that important documents might not have made it to the archives. However, with the archival material that was available, paired with newspaper material accessed at Nasjonalbiblioteket, I am certain that I have been able to assess the most important events and developments related to this thesis' central topics.

*Chileaksjonen*'s archives, on the other hand, seems to have maintained a greater degree of organisation when it comes to documentation. *Chileaksjonen*'s documents were kept in the archives of *Arbeiderpartiet*'s youth association, *Arbeidernes Ungdomsfylking* (AUF), and runs all the way from its inauguration in 1975 until the late 1980s.

Moreover, I have relied on the documents produced by the Norwegian Parliamentary Group for Chile, established in 1977, whose archives were also found at ARBARK. Common to all of these three archives is that they contained meeting minutes, reports from local committees, annual reports, correspondence with external parties and a wide range of pamphlets, internal magazines and announcements. In addition, I have also accessed the folders of the Norwegian Embassy in Santiago on the period, mostly for context, although references to these archives may appear sporadically.



Seeing that the party called *Arbeidernes Kommunistparti (marxist-leninistene)* (AKP(ml)) was an important actor in the solidarity movement, I have also used some of the documents made available through the *Fritt Ord* funded project *ml-historie* available online.<sup>3</sup> This project is an attempt at gathering, systemising and categorising documents pertaining to the party's history, since no official archives for the party were ever maintained.

Another important source of material for this paper has come in the form of newspapers accessed through the Nasjonalbiblioteket newspaper database, which contains a vast amount of digitised newspapers running throughout the period in question. Since this period corresponds roughly to the time that the Norwegian media historian Hans Fredrik Dahl has dubbed “the peak of the party press” in Norway, I have included references to the political affiliations of the various newspapers cited in this thesis wherever I have deemed it to be relevant.<sup>4</sup> Actually, newspaper material has been especially apposite to this thesis, because the conflicts which occurred within the Norwegian solidarity movement not only took place within, but were also an object of fascination for the Norwegian press.

Indeed, political parties were important actors within the solidarity movement, and I have thus found it necessary to account for their political and ideological tendencies throughout the text — sometimes only briefly and in passing, and sometimes more thoroughly. In order for there to not be any confusion, I want to swiftly account for the terms I have associated to the parties on the political Left most prominent in this text. The *Arbeiderpartiet* (AP) is referred to as “social democratic”, the *Sosialistisk Folkeparti* (SF) as “democratic socialist”, while the AKP(ml) is classified as “maoist”.<sup>5</sup> In addition to those categories, the former can be seen as pertaining to the “Old Left”, as opposed to the latter two, which figure as part of the “New Left”. Hopefully, the fault lines and subtleties separating these parties will become more apparent in section 2.1.

When it comes to the theoretical side of this thesis, there are some important insights to be drawn from previous research on solidarity movements in other countries. Kim Christiaens,

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<sup>3</sup> An English translation of the party's name would be “The Workers' Communist Party (the Marxist-Leninists)”.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Fredrik Dahl, *A History of the Norwegian Press, 1660-2015*, 160.

<sup>5</sup> In the period I am assessing, *Sosialistisk Folkeparti* undergoes some changes of its own, resulting in 1975 in the creation of *Sosialistisk Venstreparti*. However, since the membership and political programme stays mostly the same, and in order to not create any confusion, I have decided to stick with the name *Sosialistisk Folkeparti* throughout the period.

Idesbald Goddeeris, and Magaly Rodríguez's anthology on the European movement for solidarity with Chile provides some well-tested theories which may help to guide this thesis. First off, they offer a conceptualisation of solidarity that I have found to be useful, which ventures that "the meaning and idea of 'solidarity', whatever its object or subject, usually travel between two dimensions. The first is a recognition of closeness and commonalities; the second is a recognition of distance and difference with the 'other'."<sup>6</sup> This dynamic of recognition and alienation is valuable in accounting for the various motives activists had for mobilising to the cause of Chile.

A second theory that I have drawn from Christiaens, Goddeeris, and Rodríguez's work is their theory of the "evolutionary pattern of solidarity action".<sup>7</sup> This is essentially an assessment of the key stages in the construction of solidarity with and political mobilisation for the Chilean people. The theory identifies four stages in the process of constructing solidarity and transforming such a solidarity into political action.

Contingent on the events in Chile, the theory sets off in 1970 at the coming to power of the *Unidad Popular* (UP). This is a period in which the interest for the democratic road to socialism of the UP, *la via chilena*, rises, and in which various government representatives and private individuals flock to Chile in the spirit of helping or showing support for the project. Although this period saw a considerable migration to and interest in Chile, with solidarity committees in many places being established already then, the amount of interest was still rather low in relation to what was to come. This leads us to the next stage. The second stage has its focus placed on the immediate aftermath of the coup d'état of 11th of September 1973. This was a time when a global awareness of the crisis and the ensuing violent repression emerged. Crucially, this stage of the pattern is guided by the information at disposal of the activists outside of Chile. Accordingly, the third stage describes the process in which people began configuring mental representations of the situation, constructing imagined solidarities, and identifying with the victims, as a popular imaginary of the recent events in Chile beginning to crystallise. At this stage, the information individuals possessed of the situation in Chile was interpreted through a filter of pre-existing politico-ideological

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<sup>6</sup> Christiaens et al. "A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)" in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 20; To be fair, the authors built this conceptualisation on works in German by Berthold Unfried and by Jens Beckett.

<sup>7</sup> Christiaens et al. "A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)" in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 13-14.

convictions and impelled by the moral indignation aimed at the putschists. This often resulted in an imagined proximity and similarity with the victims and a staunch resentment towards the military junta. In turn, this spurred the fourth stage, which treats the harnessing of the solidarity and moral indignation into political action. Thus, concrete support materialised through the organisation of local, national, and supranational campaigns. I find this theoretical framework to be very useful in its capaciousness, and this pattern will be somewhat recognisable throughout this thesis.

In order to account for the political foundations of *Solidaritetskomiteen* and the imaginaries that accompanied the activists' understanding of Chile, I have applied some concepts developed by Ernesto Laclau originally hailing from the field of semiotics. There, I will attempt to explain the hollowness of the concepts used by the solidarity movement as organisational foundations by drawing upon Laclau's understanding of "empty signifiers" and "floating signifiers", as developed in his work *On Populist Reason*. According to Laclau, when a range of social actors with different identities and varying unsatisfied demands organise, they need to establish an equivalency between all the varying identities and demands in order for their cause to be carried out; that is, an "equivalential chain of demands".<sup>8</sup> This is done by assimilating all the different demands under "empty signifiers" representing the vacuous totality of all the differential demands, which in the case of *Solidaritetskomiteen* were "anti-fascism" and "anti-imperialism". Furthermore, the group needs to constitute and present itself as a collective subject, i.e. "the solidarity movement". These signifiers' meanings are empty in that they can be interpreted in myriad ways and be applied to almost any particularistic demand, thus uniting them in their ambiguity. What is more, the content of the signifier is prescriptive rather than descriptive due to its contingent core. Seeing this, the organisation around these particular terms may seem sensible for *Solidaritetskomiteen*, as it was supposed to reduce the antagonisms that could arise from the political heterogeneity, yet this was not the outcome. This may be explained through the concept of "floating signifiers", which, in a simplistic manner, can be defined as those empty signifiers whose meanings and contents are contested in society, and can thus change significantly over time.<sup>9</sup> Such contests over defining the meanings of floating signifiers are, in a sense, contests over political hegemony. As we will see, the terms "anti-imperialist" and

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<sup>8</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 69-74.

<sup>9</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 131-133.

“anti-fascist” held heavily contested contents and meanings, with different groups attempting to link themselves up to the symbolism and rhetoric of these signifiers, thus tearing away at their equalising effect and instead sowing differences.

While the Second World War entered its final phases in Europe, the famous British author George Orwell published a staunch critique of chauvinism and irrational ideology in an essay entitled *Notes on Nationalism*. Orwell quite openly admitted that he used the word “nationalism” for lack of a better word, describing it as “the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognizing no other duty than that of advancing its interests”.<sup>10</sup> However, the tendency which Orwell identified, and which I have found applicable to the matter at hand, is that the so-called nationalist “sees history... as the endless rise and decline of great power units, and every event that happens seems to him a demonstration that his own side is on the up-grade and some hated rival on the down-grade”.<sup>11</sup> In the same fashion, among the outward-looking Norwegian Maoists, geopolitical events were frequently interpreted as a demonstration of their ideological superiority and that they stood at the vanguard of history, whereas their revisionist opponents in the SF were short on answers. As we shall see in section 3.2., the Chilean coup was subject to exactly this kind of appropriation for domestic political motives.

## 1.2. State of Research

There is a variety of historiographical fields that have been drawn to the events relating to Chile in the 1970s and to some extent the 1980s. Several historians of the Cold War have engaged themselves in writing about how Chile, geographically the most isolated and remote country in the Americas, became such a hotly contested area in the East-West ideological contest.<sup>12</sup> These scholars tend to be essentially interested in determining the level of influence the United States had in the ousting of Allende and the level of Soviet-influence during Allende’s government. Meanwhile, historians of Latin America have often turned their eyes

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<sup>10</sup> George Orwell, *Notes on Nationalism*, 2; Orwell emphasises that other kinds of entities could also be the object of this “nationalism”, such as for instance the Catholic Church, the proletariat or the “white race”.

<sup>11</sup> George Orwell, *Notes on Nationalism*, 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> See for instance Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 149, 201 & 283; John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War*, 173-174 & 177-178; Gerard DeGroot, *The Seventies Unplugged*, 157-170; and for a look at Chile’s importance in the contest between the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union see Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War*, 191-192 & 209.

towards Chile, as the history of Allende's socialist project and the ensuing military coup became a symbolic event — a *cause célèbre* — of the Cold War on the American Continent, as well as forming part of the authoritarian swing in Latin American politics in the late-1960s and 1970s.<sup>13</sup> Their research is mainly focused on studying the events in Chile themselves, not the reaction they provoked in foreign countries. Therefore, these studies will only have a secondary nature in this thesis.

There is, on the other hand, a flourishing scholarship on the solidarity and human rights movements that materialised in Western societies as a consequence of the violent ousting of the *Unidad Popular*. Although research on the developments in North America has not been lacking, the research dedicated to the European solidarity movements has stood out in both quality and quantity, while additionally being more relevant to this thesis' central topic. Among these works is the aforementioned anthology composed by Christiaens, Goddeeris, and Rodríguez dedicated to the European movements for solidarity with Chile. It is a prime collection of texts on the expressions and dynamics of solidarity movements in European countries, both East and West.<sup>14</sup> What they etch out is a far-flung political movement comprised of activists, committees, non-governmental organisations, statesmen, and governments operating on multiple levels — from kitchen table conversations to national parliament deliberations, and from the local solidarity committee all the way to the halls and assemblies of intergovernmental organisations. Meanwhile, the book details the various political and ideological traditions and backgrounds of the activists involved in the solidarity movements. They emphasise that although so-called “New Left”-movements were often an important part of the solidarity movement, the Old Left was comparatively “far more prominent and influential” in the mobilisation of activism to Chile's cause.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, they note that radical New Left groups such as Maoists or Trotskyists often looked with apprehension towards the UP's political platform, unconvinced by what they saw as a revisionist and bourgeois path towards socialism, undeserving of the name “revolution”.<sup>16</sup> What is more, not only leftists were captivated by the events in the Andean country, with for

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<sup>13</sup> See Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile & the Inter-American Cold War*; Kristian Gustafsson, *Hostile Intent*; Paul E. Sigmund, *The United States and Democracy in Chile*.

<sup>14</sup> Christiaens et al. “A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*.

<sup>15</sup> Christiaens et al. “A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Christiaens et al. “A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 15.

instance some countries' Christian Democrats harbouring strong sympathies towards their repressed Chilean sister parties.<sup>17</sup> I find, as we shall see, that many of the same developments take place in Norway as well.

The authors of the anthology argue that “the power of solidarity with Chile was that it could mean different things to different groups” and that the crisis in Chile could be appropriated, domesticated, and “welded to topical issues identifiable to the activist”.<sup>18</sup> This made Chile a cause which had the potential of attracting a multitude of individuals with differing political convictions and personal worldviews. What is especially interesting is that the coup d'état in Chile was frequently studied as a lesson on politics in countries outside of Chile, particularly by the political Left. One such instance comes from Alessandro Santoni who, when he studied the Italian mobilisation to Chile's cause, discovered that leftists in Italy to a great extent “attempted to extract valid lessons for the national political reality” by studying Chile.<sup>19</sup> Another such instance of appropriation is British Prime Minister Harold Wilson's aggressive stance against the junta, which was aimed at appeasing the more radical leftist elements of his party.<sup>20</sup> The coup in Chile was in this way about more than Chile, as the lessons from the events in Chile were transposed to a rather heterogeneous array of domestic political contexts the world over. This dynamic of appropriation and domestication is highly visible in the Norwegian context as well, with its own idiosyncrasies, and will form an important part of this story. The ways in which different individuals or groups of people interpreted the coup is an interesting entry point into studying the various causes spurring solidarity action between different activists. Meanwhile, the ways in which these interpretations were weaponised in domestic political debates is essential to understanding the ideological transformation taking place within the movement, as the ensuing necessity of reconfiguring the movement propelled the adoption of human rights discourse.

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<sup>17</sup> Christiaens et al. “A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 17.

<sup>18</sup> Christiaens et al. “A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 20.

<sup>19</sup> Alessandro Santoni, “Il Cile e il travaglio identitario del comunismo italiano” in Nocera & Rolle Cruz, *Settantatré. Cile e Italia, destini incrociati*, 167.

<sup>20</sup> By “domestication”, I am of course not referring to the taming of wild animals. I have adopted the term from Georg Dufner and Kim Christiaens, who use it to speak about the tendency of activists to “weld” the Chilean crisis to topical issues which were identifiable to them. Often, this involved the formulation of domestically aimed political arguments, as we shall see in chapter 3; Jan Eckel, “Allende's Shadow, Leftist Furor, and Human Rights” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 74-75.

In contrast to most of its European neighbours, the solidarity movement in Norway has remained surprisingly understudied. Up to this point, there seems to have been only one scholar who has dedicated ink to studying the coup's effects on Norway, aside from Torstein Buggeland's MA-thesis on how it changed the Norwegian framework for accepting political refugees and diplomatic asylum.<sup>21</sup> James Godbolt's article on the movement in Norway is comprehensive and gives an overview of the different periods of the movement's evolution as well as accounting for some of the interaction between the grassroots movement and the political leadership in Norway. Godbolt demonstrates how the movement was initially founded upon a leftist, anti-imperialist critique of the 1968-kind, with the umbrella organisation for all the local chapters being *Solidaritetskomiteen*.<sup>22</sup> He goes on to explain how the Norwegian left in the 1970s was reigned by a sharpened atmosphere between the various leftist parties, and that the most radical of these groups, the Maoist AKP(ml) sought to dominate the discourse within *Solidaritetskomiteen* — with a strong anti-imperialist rhetoric including harsh criticism of NATO. Their effort to ensure this, in turn, led to the alienation of those of other political views that had joined the committee. *Solidaritetskomiteen*'s intent had from the offset been to gather people from all political parties wanting to help the juntas opposition in Chile. When *Solidaritetskomiteen* then turned too radical, the movement split, with a separate organisation called *Chileaksjonen i Norge* being established by those who left. Godbolt sees this split as typical of Norwegian solidarity movements of the time, stating that similar divisions had reigned within the anti-Vietnam War movement, the Palestinian solidarity movement, and the anti-apartheid movement.

The anti-imperialist discourse, further than simply splitting the movement, also seemed to have been less able to draw new members and gather support by the end of the 1970s and onwards, according to Godbolt. Meanwhile, the dictatorship in Chile appears to have been able to successfully suppress opposition to the regime, as the situation in Chile stabilised. This brought on what he dubs the “humanitarian turn” in the Chilean solidarity movement in Norway. By that time the focus on the human rights violations by the regime and the suffering of Chileans became central to the movement, as it started to operate more like modern NGOs such as Amnesty International.

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<sup>21</sup> Torstein Gilje Buggeland, *Et ukonvensjonelt flyktningearbeid. Norge og statskuppet i Chile 1973*.

<sup>22</sup> James Godbolt, “Solidaritet med Chile”, 280-292.

Godbolt's text is a very concise and enlightening piece on the movement, and he correctly identifies the different stages that the solidarity movement went through from the 1973 coup d'état to its ending somewhere in the 1990s after the return of democracy in Chile. Nonetheless, the article takes on a bird's-eye perspective of the movement, dashing through twenty years in twenty-one pages. Due to the spatial confines of the article, Godbolt has not touched upon the great amount of local chapters of the solidarity movement that sprung forth all across Norway, from Tromsø to Kristiansand and from Oppegård to Stord. It also becomes apparent that the movement merits a more exhaustive and detailed investigation which enters more thoroughly into the significance of the particular circumstances and formative events of the movement's historical development. Moreover, Godbolt's argument that the movement took on a transnational character towards the end of its existence, fails to recognise the far-flung transnational connections integral to movement from the very beginning. Allende's socialist "experiment", as historian Jan Eckel has argued, was from the outset a transnational event.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the "humanitarian turn" described in the text was happening concomitantly on a global scale in the late 1970s — from radical leftists in Switzerland that joined human rights NGOs to exiled Uruguayans adopting a human rights language and philosophy in order to denounce the military regime in their own country.<sup>24</sup> Surely, this substantiates the notion that it is exactly in the transnational that we may unearth the currents that brought on this metamorphosis in Norway. This leads me to the another shortfall with Godbolt's article; the text almost seems to portray the Norwegian movement as existing inside a vacuum, unhinged from the contemporaneously occurring movements of Europe and North America. Investigating the Norwegian movement without seeing it in the light of the transnational solidarity movement, which it is undoubtedly an outlet of, can only illuminate so much about what was typical to or exceptional about the Norwegian expression of solidarity with Chile. In short, Godbolt's article, informative and brilliant as it is, leaves ample room for further discussion on the Norwegian movement for solidarity with Chile, which was probably what Godbolt initially intended to stimulate with his article. By contextualising the movement with its European sister movements, by applying a different set of theories and confronting the growing human rights historiography, and by investigating the

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<sup>23</sup> Jan Eckel, "Allende's Shadow, Leftist Furor, and Human Rights" in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*.

<sup>24</sup> Nuno Pereira, "Switzerland: A Second Wave or the Decline of the '68 Movement" in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*; Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 142-143.



internal proceedings of the movement, there may still be a lot to learn from the Norwegian movement for solidarity with Chile.

This leads me to one final, but no less important, historiographical field that has occupied itself with the activism which the Chilean junta generated in Western countries. Scholars of human rights history have increasingly turned their eyes to the role of human rights strategies and rhetoric within the solidarity with Chile campaign as part of the human rights “breakthrough” of the 1970s. Of these, Jan Eckel is among the most influential. In his research he has written extensively about the solidarity campaign as it unfolded inside intergovernmental organisations, notably the United Nations.<sup>25</sup>

Eckel along with Samuel Moyn have written that Chile was one of the venues in which human rights gradually gained prominence in Western societies, with both emphasising the role of NGOs such as Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists.<sup>26</sup> In fact, in their joint anthology, Eckel argue that the coup in Chile marked the “decisive caesura” for the advent of a clearly distinguishable human rights language.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, it has been argued that one should see human rights partly as a consequence of the sectarianism that grew out of the New Left movements in the 1960s.<sup>28</sup> Moyn contends that human rights appealed to a “nonpartisan morality” which existed “outside and above” the “soiled utopias in politics”.<sup>29</sup> This thesis will attempt to align itself with Moyn and Eckel’s argument, as the Norwegian solidarity movement was from the onset significantly afflicted by the difficulties of constructing alliances in the atmosphere imposed by the post-1968 Norwegian Left. What we shall see in the case of Norway as well, and which Moyn and Eckel have also argued for, is that the solidarity committees started to employ brand new tactics and rhetoric, as Chilean “prisoners of conscience” were adopted and “human rights” entered the public consciousness in a way it had never done before.<sup>30</sup> Jessica Stites Mor has argued that the coup at the 11th of September 1973 was a “watershed in terms of the articulation of an international human rights platform” and that it was precisely at this moment that non-governmental organisations

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<sup>25</sup> Jan Eckel, “‘Under a Magnifying Glass’. The International Human Rights Campaign against Chile in the Seventies” in Hoffmann, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, 330.

<sup>26</sup> Jan Eckel, “The International League for the Rights of Man...”; Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*.

<sup>27</sup> Jan Eckel, “Explaining the Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s” in Eckel & Moyn, *The Breakthrough*, 233.

<sup>28</sup> Jan Eckel, “The International League for the Rights of Man...”, 204; Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 132.

<sup>30</sup> Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 85.

rose as key actors of the Cold War.<sup>31</sup> Others still have argued that the only single cause that affected human rights activism more than Chile was the Holocaust.<sup>32</sup> Thus one important argument that this thesis will make is that the Norwegian solidarity movement for Chile was one of the many localities where the polycentric development of human rights in the 1970s took place.<sup>33</sup>

### **1.3. *Via Chilena* Socialism, the Coup and its International Repercussions**

It may seem self-evident, but it is important to keep in mind that the evolution of the Norwegian movement for solidarity with Chile was in its essence intertwined with and often contingent on the various phases and turns of events that unfolded in Chile. However, one ought also to keep in mind that information emanating from Chile was crucial in this dynamic, and what was actually happening inside Chile and what Norwegian activists perceived to be happening would often diverge substantially. In this section I will briefly account for the period between the *Unidad Popular* coalition and Salvador Allende's coming to power in 1970 and their untimely downfall in 1973, leading to the establishment of a military junta under the command of General Augusto Pinochet. It is, of course, impossible for me to paint the entire picture of this three-year period which is so densely packed with political developments. Therefore the following section is simply meant to illustrate some of the key developments necessary to understand the Chilean road to socialism, which in the end led to a violent coup and one of the most enduring dictatorships in modern South American history. In passing, I will be mentioning the rather limited connections tying Norway and Chile together before 1973.

Norwegian interest in Chile, be that politically, scholarly or otherwise, can with a certain safety be dated to the early autumn of 1970 when Salvador Allende and the *Unidad Popular* seemed on track to be winning the presidential elections. Before that, interest in Chile was a matter of institutions involved in bilateral relations and of a relatively small group of enthusiasts. Norway had established an embassy in Santiago de Chile, also overseeing Peru, in 1958, and while there were Norwegian commercial interests in the region, knowledge

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<sup>31</sup> Jessica Stites Mor, *Human Rights and Transnational Solidarity in Cold War Latin America*.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas C. Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, 227.

<sup>33</sup> Jan Eckel, *The Ambivalence of Good*, 10.

about Chile in Norway remained rather limited — especially in relation to what was to come. As the 1970 Chilean elections unfolded, however, Norwegian newspapers became increasingly fixed on the developments in the remote South American nation. There, Salvador Allende and his allies were pursuing a goal which many leftists in the West were themselves aiming for; an alternative to both the unjust and exploitative capitalism championed by the United States as well as the oppressive and totalitarian communism that had grown forth in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The humanist socialism that Alexander Dubček had sought to implement in Czechoslovakia just two years earlier, and which was put to an end by the Red Army, had received a second chance in South America it seemed. Allende was attempting to carve out a *via chilena* — a Chilean road — to socialism that would go through the sturdy democratic institutions already in place. In a period where large parts of the Western Left were searching a “third way” between the ideological rigidity of the two superpowers, Chile offered a glimpse of what such an endeavour could look like. Contrastingly, to the more conservative parts of the Norwegian press, Chile immediately threatened to become “another Cuba”, which was associated with the close call that had been the Cuban Missile Crisis. In other words, Chile could become another threat to the Cold War stability in the Western Hemisphere.

During Allende’s time at the helm, some sectors of the trade union movement and *Arbeiderpartiet*, the Norwegian labour party, engaged in contact with the *Unidad Popular*. In february 1973, the vice-chairman of the AP, Reiulf Steen, spearheaded a delegation to Santiago which met with Salvador Allende. Steen himself would later on marry Inés Vargas, who was Vice-Minister of Justice under the *Unidad Popular*. Then at Labour Day in 1973, Thorvald Stoltenberg, a prominent figure within the AP and, at the time, the international secretary of the *Landsorganisasjonen* (LO), the Norwegian confederation of trade unions, held a speech in Santiago.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the relationship between the Chilean and Norwegian Left was only in its incipient phases when Allende’s project started to collapse.

Indeed, from the very start of Allende’s presidency, Norwegian newspapers of all colours were busy discussing the prospects of the UP’s ambitious project for social betterment. Experience dictated sobriety when it came to pronounced Marxist governments in the United States’ so-called “backyard”. Some remembered the CIA-backed coup that had ousted Jacobo Árbenz from presidency in Guatemala some twenty years before, while many more

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<sup>34</sup> James Godbolt, “Solidaritet med Chile”, 279.

recollected the myriad attempted assassinations and planned invasions directed at Fidel Castro and his Cuban revolutionary state. In that light, the conservative paper *Morgenbladet* ventured that;

The peculiar thing that could happen is that the army takes action. However, the Chilean Army has pretty unamerican traditions in this respect. It has always been loyally apolitical. But then again, a popular front at the helm has never been a question before. And that may change a lot.<sup>35</sup>

And indeed it did. The Allende-administration sought to nationalise the vast Chilean holdings of the American multinational enterprises International Telephone & Telegraph, Kennecott, and Anaconda which owned vast proportions of the country's natural resources and infrastructure. This meant that mighty American businessmen saw their interests exposed, with Nelson Rockefeller unable to understand why the Inter-American Bureau at the State Department had failed to "arrange the elections".<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, Allende firmly positioned Chile within the Third World movement, yet still stretching out a hand to both East and West. This all spurred an alienation of the United States, externally, and the Chilean middle and upper classes, internally. US Ambassador to Chile Edward Korry recounted that upon meeting President Richard Nixon at the Oval Office in the wake of the 1970 elections, the president was striking his fists and swearing "that son of a bitch Allende. We are going to smash him."<sup>37</sup> In order to do so, Nixon allocated \$10 million to the Central Intelligence Agency earmarked for making the Chilean "economy scream".<sup>38</sup> Any presidency in Latin America that did not count on the benevolence of the United States was bound to run into trouble. Since the Allende administration could not count on that, the World Bank, led by former US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, and the Inter-American Development Bank both slashed their credit to the country, with the former stopping all aid programmes to Chile.<sup>39</sup> This meant that the 300 million USD that the previous administration had counted on in short-term loans had overnight been reduced to a tenth, at 30 million.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, all the debt from previous administration remained. Adding to the woes, there was also economic mismanagement on various levels, and the drastic economic reforms that Allende

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<sup>35</sup> *Morgenbladet*, 8th of September 1970.

<sup>36</sup> Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile & the Inter-American Cold War*, 57-58.

<sup>37</sup> Stephen G. Rabe, *The Killing Zone*, 127.

<sup>38</sup> Stephen G. Rabe, *The Killing Zone*, 128.

<sup>39</sup> Arturo Valenzuela, *El quiebre de la democracia en Chile*, 158.

<sup>40</sup> Arturo Valenzuela, *El quiebre de la democracia en Chile*, 158-159.

sought, among with a sharp drop in the price of copper, all contributed to the economic problems Chile suffered in the Allende years.

Ultimately, at the 11th of September 1973, the newly appointed commander-in-chief, General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, decided that the military had been sitting on the fences for too long while the situation continued to deteriorate. With decisive information and a clearance from the CIA, Pinochet gathered sympathetic officers within the different army branches and launched his coup. Pinochet and his allies subsequently declared a “state of siege”, prohibited all political parties, and unleashed an atrocious wave of state repression in which thousands of Chileans were imprisoned, tortured or murdered — while some simply “disappeared”, never to be found again. It is all but impossible to ascertain a final figure on the coup and military regime’s death toll. Today, soon fifty years after the coup, bodies are still being dug up from mass graves and bone fragments are washed ashore, while relatives are still searching for their “disappeared” loved ones. The Chilean Truth and Reconciliation Commission established in the 1990s could verify 3300 violent deaths, but this number is certainly much too low, as thousands of *desaparecidos* will likely never be accounted for.<sup>41</sup>

Adding to the many deaths, a vast amount of people were detained, tortured, and abused physically, mentally, and sexually by the junta, while some 200 000 Chileans went into exile.

<sup>42</sup> All the while, the horror of the repression, the disappointment with the untimely end of Allende’s government, and the obviousness of US interference sent shockwaves throughout the world. If the eyes of the world were not fixed on Chile already, they were by then. Allende had become a martyr of anti-imperialism and socialism slaughtered at the hands of treasonous generals in order to protect Chile’s outdated and stagnant social system, powerful multinational enterprises, and Washington’s imperialist interests.

This spurred a remarkably cohesive and long-lived international campaign directed at isolating the junta diplomatically and economically, singular in its lifespan and intensity, as the junta’s ambiguous information policy made news of the atrocities easily accessible in Western countries.<sup>43</sup> In the meantime, a particular international political constellation

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<sup>41</sup> Jan Eckel, “‘Under a Magnifying Glass’. The International Human Rights Campaign against Chile in the Seventies” in Hoffmann, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, 324.

<sup>42</sup> Jan Eckel, “‘Under a Magnifying Glass’. The International Human Rights Campaign against Chile in the Seventies” in Hoffmann, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, 324.

<sup>43</sup> Jan Eckel, “‘Under a Magnifying Glass’: The International Human Rights Campaign against Chile in the Seventies.” in Hoffmann, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*; Jan Eckel, “Allende’s Shadow, Leftist Furor, and Human Rights”.

crystallised in the period surrounding the coup, materialising into a dynamic of Chile becoming the “lowest common denominator” within international fora, which meant that either countries had no sufficient reason to defend the Chilean regime or, conversely, they had plenty of motivation for going against it.<sup>44</sup> Shortly, local and national Chile committees organised all across the First World, organising protests and study groups, while pressuring their governments to assume a confrontative stance towards Pinochet’s government.

The rise and demise of the socialist project that Salvador Allende and the *Unidad Popular* had embarked upon eventually became one of the most myth-spun and paradigmatic events of the Cold War. It confirmed to those who had always been suspecting it that the United States would not shy away from discarding democracy in order to safeguard capitalism. It also crystallised an image of the empire’s new clothes — an empire made up of international banking institutions and CIA agents, not of colonial officers with rifles and whips. There was an infinity of lessons to be drawn by the coup, ever contingent on the eyes of the onlooker.

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<sup>44</sup> Jan Eckel, “Explaining the Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s” in Eckel & Moyn, *The Breakthrough*, 238.

## 2. Reaction, Mobilisation, and *Solidaritetskomiteen*

*There was not an intellectual in Europe or the USA who was not under the spell of Latin America, a continent apparently bubbling with the lava of social revolutions.*

Eric Hobsbawm, 2002.<sup>45</sup>

### 2.1. The Globalisation and Radicalisation of Norwegian Politics

In the 1960s and 1970s, Norwegian leftists, not too dissimilar to its other Western peers, experienced a period of rapid radicalisation. They even began to adopt ideologies that seemed incompatible with the affluent consensus based society that Norway had become by then. Even so, cracks were appearing in the political consensus of postwar Norway.<sup>46</sup> In this section, I will be discussing the process of radicalisation of the era, seeing that it was as much a development necessary to understand the political landscape which the Chilean solidarity movement navigated as it was a precondition to the movement's existence. Indeed, the solidarity movement was to a large extent an outgrowth of the globally minded and radical youth movements that shook Norwegian society from the late 1960s.

At the time of the coup, people living in the First World were more attuned to the political developments occurring in the Global South than they ever had been before. In an era of unprecedented communications, dramatic events in the distant corners of the earth took only instants to travel across continents. Activism was more global and transnational than it had ever been, as had been made very clear in the tumultuous year of 1968. Already then the "international connections between social movements" had been "synchronic", argues George Katsiaficas.<sup>47</sup> He goes on;

In May 1968, for example, when a student revolt led to a general strike of nearly ten million workers in France, there were significant demonstrations of solidarity in Mexico City, Berlin, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, and Belgrade, and students and workers in both Spain and Uruguay attempted general strikes of their own.

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<sup>45</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times*, 366.

<sup>46</sup> James Godbolt, "Den norske vietnamrørsla. Tradisjonell folkerørsla eller ny sosial rørsla?" in Helle et al., *Historier om motstand*, 65.

<sup>47</sup> George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left*, 3.

As televisions and radios became common items in most households in Western Europe, news travelled almost instantaneously from one corner of the earth to the other. But it was not only news that travelled across the hemispheres. After the Vietnam War had revealed the horrifying lengths that the United States would go to in order to preserve its hegemony in the Third World, young people in the First World increasingly sympathised with the countries of the Third World. In the fight against American imperialism, China, Cuba, and Vietnam were standing at the vanguard, while the traditional “Old Left” in European countries was either acquiescent or silent. The traditional leftist political parties had in many European countries enjoyed a hegemonic position in the decades since the Second World War. These were the dominant antisystemic movements of the mid-20th century. In the period between 1945 and 1968, the political parties of the Second and Third International, social democrats and communists, respectively, among with the national liberation movements of the world, enjoyed a “period of remarkable political achievement”.<sup>48</sup> These movements’ golden age was soon to be interrupted by the emergence of a “New Left”, whose rebellion was not only directed at the US, but also at these “Old Left” parties and their acquiescence with the status quo. In fact, this protest proved to be the “ultimately more passionate” facet of the New Left’s rebellion. Similarly, the alienation from the complicit Old Left and the increasingly confident imperialist pretensions of the United States served to push young leftists in the First World towards more radical ideological strains, as Mao Zedong, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, and Ho Chi Minh became symbols in a worldwide struggle against American imperialism and capitalist neo-colonialism.<sup>49</sup>

In Norway, 1968 seems to have arrived later than it did in other countries, and as a year it was rather uneventful in Norway. In contrast to what happened elsewhere, “no barricades were raised, no students were shot, no universities were closed”.<sup>50</sup> Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that in the years surrounding 1970, a profound politico-ideological transformation took place among Norwegian youth. The traditional leftist party and representative of the labour movement, *Arbeiderpartiet*, saw its influence among young

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<sup>48</sup> Wallerstein & Zukin, “1968: Revolution in the World-System”.

<sup>49</sup> Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air*.

<sup>50</sup> Førland & Korsvik, 1968. *Opprør og motkultur på norsk*, 8; Indeed, a growing number of scholars have criticised 1968 as a concept, among others Tor Egil Førland and Tony Judt in their respective works. Particularly, they criticise the centrality of the actors in creating the rebellion’s own legend, resulting in a hyperinflation of 1968’s historical significance. Even so, the period was undoubtedly subject to a rapid radicalisation among many leftists in Western Europe and Norway, with new leftist political movements and parties emerging onto the political tapestry.



leftists diminish significantly these years. Much of this was down to the fact that the AP was responsible for Norway's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which came to be detested by young leftists shaped politically by their opposition to the Vietnam War and American imperialism. In fact, in the early 1960s, fractions of the AP that wanted Norway to pursue an independent foreign policy, separate from either side of the Cold War chasm, had left the party and founded *Sosialistisk Folkeparti*. Subsequently, this party offered an alternative to the US-friendly left and stood for a non-aligned position in the Cold War. The SF was championing "a pragmatic, intellectual and humanistic approach to socialism ... eager to shed the image of communist dogmatism."<sup>51</sup> The SF was thus a bulwark against Norwegian involvement in the East-West conflict, and can be classified as a facet of the anti-authoritarian anti-Americanism present in Norway at the time. However, parts of this anti-American sentiment was soon tapped into by a rather authoritarian ideology.

The other significant, although not particularly numerous, political movement that sprung out from the youth's disenchantment these years, whose roots can be traced back to the SF, was the ml-movement. The ml-movement was a revolutionary political movement based upon the tenets of Marxism-Leninism supplied with the "thoughts of Mao Zedong", and became a serious force within student and youth circles in the seventies. It began within the SF's youth organisation, *Sosialistisk Ungdomsforbund* (SUF). A small group of young radicals principally from the eastern, working-class side of Oslo, whose parents were mainly radicals who had been alienated from the AP, stood at the forefront of the SUF's radicalisation.<sup>52</sup> Starting in approximately 1967, SUF gradually became more radical, as charismatic Maoists such as Tor Øgrim and Sigurd Allern managed to disseminate their views to the other members. Then, from 1968 onwards, the SUF started becoming increasingly radical and independent from its mother party, and it soon became apparent that there were widely different ideologies reigning between the party and the youth association. After the SF-leadership attempted to create an alternative youth organisation of a traditional pacifist and social democratic disposition at the party's national congress of 1969 in order to halt the radicalisation, the split became a reality as 66 Maoist members left the congress, singing *The Internationale*.<sup>53</sup> From then on, this fraction broke off from the mother party and added

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<sup>51</sup> Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, "The Scandinavian 1968 in a European Perspective", 329.

<sup>52</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, *Mao, min Mao*, 22-23.

<sup>53</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, *Mao, min Mao*, 33-34.

“(ml)” to their acronym, short for Marxism-Leninism. Thus the SUF(ml) set off to build a maoist revolutionary movement in Norway, founding the AKP(ml) as their mother party down the line, while *Klassekampen* was to be the news organ for the movement.<sup>54</sup> Throughout the 1970s, Maoism continued to gain traction in Norway, even to the extent that the country could boast the greatest number of Maoists per capita in the West.<sup>55</sup>

Although the importance of political parties that can be classified as the “New Left”-kind was limited in Norwegian electoral politics in the first half of the 1970s, the political constellation of student politics was a different matter altogether. A survey conducted by Tor Egil Førland and Trine Rogg Korsvik investigated the political preferences of 1246 students who were born between 1940 and 1950 and who were enrolled at the University of Oslo between 1964 and 1973. The survey found that around 38% of the participants claimed to have voted for *Sosialistisk Folkeparti* in the 1973 elections.<sup>56</sup> When isolating the non-conservative participants, the figure came closer to 60%. The corresponding numbers for those who voted one of the communist parties, the *Norges Kommunistiske Parti* (NKP) and *Rød Valgallianse*, were 13% and 21%. In that same election, the survey also reveals that the hegemonic leftist party, *Arbeiderpartiet*, garnered just 10% in both figures, meaning that they were less popular among young student than the far left Maoists.

If these numbers are representative of the student demographic in Oslo for that period, it would signify that a sizeable chunk of around half the students were radical leftist, which in turn sheds light on the radicalism which permeated the youth in these years. Adding to that, the survey revealed that between 70 and 80 percent of the Maoists and organised socialist participants were active in a peace, environment, solidarity, student, or feminist organisation, which is double the level of activity to any other groups.<sup>57</sup> Crucially, the survey also revealed that the Maoists dominated the various solidarity committees of those years, displaying by far the greatest participation with almost 50% having been members of a solidarity committee,

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<sup>54</sup> The literal English translation for *Klassekampen* is “the class struggle”.

<sup>55</sup> Julia Lovell, *Maoism. A Global History*, 268-269.

<sup>56</sup> Førland & Korsvik, *Ekte Sekstiåttene*, 231-232; The inclusion of the survey in this thesis is meant simply to provide an indication of the political preferences of the youth generation that was a large contingent of the solidarity movement for Chile. There are many limits to the study; it only shows the tendency among students that attended some select faculties at the University of Oslo. A study which includes all faculties at the university, or indeed all universities in Norway, might uncover an entirely different trend. Moreover, not all members of the solidarity movement were young or students. Be that as it may, the survey clearly demonstrates that a “great political revival” was happening among the Norwegian youth in that period, to borrow the phrasing of the famous Norwegian author Dag Solstad, himself an active member of the ml-movement for some time.

<sup>57</sup> Førland & Korsvik, *Ekte Sekstiåttene*, 240-242.

while also showing the highest level of participants who claimed to have been leaders of such a committee. This means that the Maoists of the AKP(ml) and SUF(ml) were more active and held more important positions within the solidarity committees than any other group. Although the previously constituted solidarity committees for Vietnam and Palestine probably amount to a big chunk of this figure, the Chilean solidarity movement would inevitably contain a disproportionate amount of Maoists.

Something which becomes painstakingly evident in this period is the centrality of geopolitics in Norwegian politics. The New Left movements in Norway, especially, can be seen to a certain extent as reactions to international events. The SF, for instance, was very similar to the AP when it came to their domestic political platform, although they did disagree on some domestic topics — mainly the extent of socialisation of Norwegian society. The main political difference, and the main reason for the split with the AP, was foreign policy. The SF wanted Norway to follow a “third way” in between the Cold War power blocs. It was anti-imperialist, pacifist, and against the possession and proliferation of nuclear weapons. All of these were topics that pertained not to the domestic political agenda, but to the geopolitical situation that the Cold War had created. Postwar Norwegian society and politics underwent a far-reaching process of internationalisation, something which made itself most manifest in terms of security policy.<sup>58</sup> In the media this trend became even more apparent. For instance, in the first half of 1953, six out of ten articles in the newly established paper *Orientering*, closely associated with the SF, were in one way or another tied to the superpowers and the East-West conflict.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, in the 1960s, *Orientering* among with the rest of the Norwegian media became increasingly occupied with North-South conflict and the Third World.

The ml-movement was also partly a product of global trends, and not necessarily domestic issues. Even the split between the SUF and the SF was propelled by geopolitical opinions, as the extent of disjunction between them had first been made evident when a resolution condemning the Israeli treatment of Palestinians had been adopted by the SUF.<sup>60</sup> The SF, on the other hand, was to a large extent supportive of Israel due to their fascination with

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<sup>58</sup> Hans Fredrik Dahl, *A History of the Norwegian Press, 1660-2015*, 184.

<sup>59</sup> Hans Fredrik Dahl, *A History of the Norwegian Press, 1660-2015*, 190-192.

<sup>60</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, *Mao, min Mao*, 27.

Kibbutz-socialism, while Finn Gustavsen saw the country as “Europe’s guilty conscience for the extermination of Jews”.<sup>61</sup> This disagreement had been made public in the newspaper *Orientering*, and had been one of the first clear, public signals of the youth organisation’s independence. In fact, the ml-movement was perhaps the most obvious example of what can be termed the globalisation of Norwegian politics. Indeed, if no news of the outside had reached Norway, it would be difficult to imagine that a fervent authoritarian movement advocating a violent proletarian revolution could have spawned in the egalitarian social democratic utopia that Norway had become by the late 1960s. In the words of the SF figurehead, Finn Gustavsen: “Look at the Norwegian worker; every Sunday he stands in front of his house polishing his car. This is what occupies the Norwegian worker, he is not interested in any revolution.”<sup>62</sup> But what Gustavsen neglected was that this generation of leftists was probably more connected to the world outside of Norway than any generation before them — a world that was anything but utopian. The historian Terje Tvedt, who himself was a member of the ml-movement, once explained:

There was upheaval all over the world, from Paris to Prague, from California to Peking, from Maputo to Hanoi, and in Norway. We looked around us ... and what did we see: numerous liberation movements across the globe fighting the West and the same authorities we could not come to terms with ourselves. They were led by declared Marxist-Leninists, in Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Cambodia. We saw our ally bombing the rice paddies of Indochina and Russian tanks squash Soviet socialism in Prague’s streets. We saw how anti-communism in Norway and the West tolerated dictatorships and totalitarian regimes in Latin America and Africa, and we experienced genocide in Asia.<sup>63</sup>

As is evident in Tvedt’s formulation, the formative political input for the young Maoists was found in the Third World. At the heart of this political formation was the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the figure of the “poet warrior” Chairman Mao Zedong.<sup>64</sup> “Mao had our sympathy and our trust, and his charisma could serve as a bridge between the radical and countercultural youth movement and the theoretical Marxist-Leninism”, explained a former

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<sup>61</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, *Mao, min Mao*, 26-28; Finn Gustavsen, *Kortene på bordet*, 20.

<sup>62</sup> Roar Hagen, “68-(m-l)” in Tvedt, *(ml) - en bok om maoismen i Norge*, 72.

<sup>63</sup> Terje Tvedt, “Hvordan forstå de nære, men likevel så fjerne 70-årene.” in Tvedt, *(ml). En bok om maoismen i Norge*, 14.

<sup>64</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, *Mao, min Mao*, 25.

member of the ml-movement.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, as the Norwegian historian Finn Fuglestad has asserted, Latin America was increasingly incorporated into the Western fascination with the Third World from the 1960s and onwards. He explains that;

To young Western radicals, Latin American guerilla soldiers became the embodiments of their own desire for rebellion. American authorities, the international mass media, universities, politicians, and activists all across the world at once developed a far stronger interest in Latin America.<sup>66</sup>

In the same period, a golden age of Latin American culture was blossoming, as Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, Julio Cortázar and Carlos Fuentes gained recognition throughout the world, while the older generation of cultural workers, such as Pablo Neruda and Jorge Luis Borges received a new burst of attention.<sup>67</sup> Latin America had thus gone from being the dully safe “backyard” of the United States to becoming a hotbed for revolutionary projects and an object of Western leftist fascination.

It is important to note that the Left already had a lengthy tradition of internationalism and solidarity, perhaps most prominently embodied in the various Internationals of the 19th and 20th century. Nonetheless, one should distinguish between “the communist international community with its long traditions and institutions” on the one hand, and “the Third World internationalism of the New Left” on the other, with the latter mainly consisting of “one sided proclamations of solidarity” which operated almost entirely on a “symbolic level”.<sup>68</sup>

However, this all goes to show that when the coup in Chile eventually unfolded, it was met by a Norwegian society acutely attuned to the political developments of Third World countries, eagerly waiting for the next event to provide them with an insightful lesson on the workings of the world — or at least another example that could confirm their pre-existing politico-ideological convictions. The Chilean coup did this, as it affirmed everything radical leftists already “knew” about the world; that the United States was an imperialist superpower that would not shy from murdering democratically elected presidents and tolerating fascism in their irrational global anti-communist crusade, that fascism was the bourgeoisie’s last resort in the face of socialist advances, and that socialism with a human face, whose

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<sup>65</sup> Roar Hagen, “68-(m-l)” in Tvedt, (*ml*) - en bok om maoismen i Norge, 71.

<sup>66</sup> Finn Fuglestad, *Latin-Amerika og Karibiens Historie*, 296.

<sup>67</sup> Finn Fuglestad, *Latin-Amerika og Karibiens Historie*, 296.

<sup>68</sup> Karen Steller Bjerregaard, “Danish Solidarity with the Third World” in Klimke et al., *Between Prague Spring and French May*, 215; Thomas Ekman Jørgensen as cited in Karen Steller Bjerregaard, “Danish Solidarity with the Third World” in Klimke et al., *Between Prague Spring and French May*, 215-216.

Czechoslovak attempt had recently been crushed in the East, would not be tolerated in the West either.

## **2.2. Immediate Reaction and Mobilisation**

The tentativeness which had to some degree characterised most Norwegians' relation to Allende and the *Unidad Popular* during their three-year government quickly dissipated when news of the military junta's violent crackdown on democracy was reproduced throughout Norwegian media in the immediate days following the coup. *Klassekampen*, the previously mentioned party organ for the ml-movement, could inform that in the week that followed the coup no less than three demonstrations were held in Oslo.<sup>69</sup> However, these demonstrations already foreshadowed some of the most decisive obstacles that the solidarity movement would have to contend with. The first of the protests that *Klassekampen* reported on was organised by *Det Norske Studentersamfundet i Oslo*, the main student organisation in Oslo, together with a host of youth organisations.<sup>70</sup> According to *Klassekampen*, this demonstration had around 2 000 attendees and was the first Norwegian mobilisation to the Chilean cause.<sup>71</sup> At this event, a speaker for the vocational students' union declared that the only road to freedom for Chilean workers and farmers was through "seizing arms and overthrowing the fascists with power".<sup>72</sup> The second protest was of a different character altogether, hosted by the trade union movement, and included pleas by both the leader of the LO, Thorvald Stoltenberg, and Ragnar Kalheim, a leader of the Norwegian Union of Iron and Metalworkers and a figurehead in the movement against Norwegian membership in the EEC in 1972. This second protest gathered around a thousand attendees according to *Klassekampen*.

These two demonstrations roughly reflect the main fault lines which came to define the Norwegian solidarity movement from the offset. There was the radical leftist student and youth segment of the movement, on the one hand, and the traditional Old Left and trade union segment of the movement, on the other. Although these boundaries were admittedly fluid at times, they were to define the solidarity movement's evolution through its existence. With a large radical leftist segment which rather frequently directed their hostility towards

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<sup>69</sup> *Klassekampen* 33/5, 19-25 of September 1973.

<sup>70</sup> *Klassekampen* 33/5, 19-25 of September 1973.

<sup>71</sup> *Klassekampen* 33/5, 19-25 of September 1973.

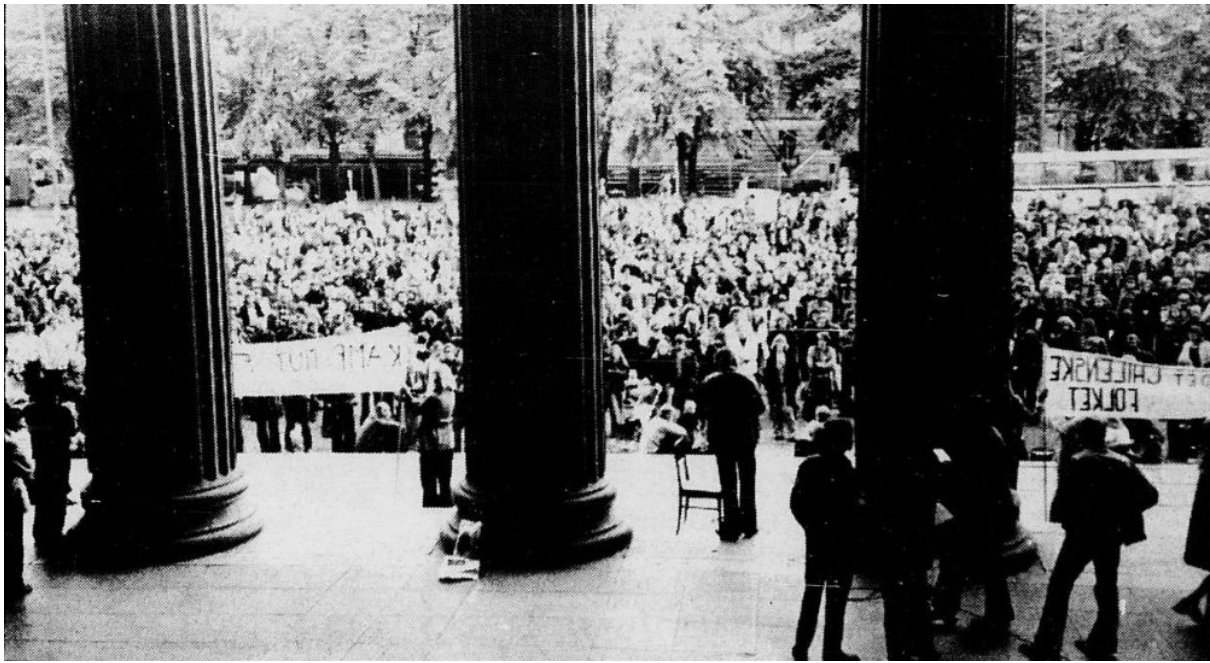
<sup>72</sup> *Klassekampen* 33/5, 19-25 of September 1973.

the social democratic Left, not the Right, and whose solution to the political crisis in Chile was armed conflict and not necessarily the reconstruction of democracy, it was not certain what the foundations for a bipartisan solidarity movement were to be. What consensus could the Norwegian civil society come to with regards to the highly ideological topic of the Chilean coup? And how could such a consensus be ample enough to secure that it did not alienate the less radically inclined fragments of the movement and civil society, while not being too toothless to resonate with the radicals? While the Maoists and democratic socialists evidently comprised one of the strongest groups of the movement, the Old Left and the trade unions were often equally engaged with the Chilean coup. Indeed, the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the AP, Knut Frydenlund, engaged himself deeply with the coup. In the autumn of 1973, he spoke at the Norwegian Parliament (*Stortinget*), saying; “One lesson we must learn from what happened in Chile is that our solidarity with democratic and progressive forces must not arrive too late.”<sup>73</sup> Through the personal engagement of prominent figures within the Norwegian political leadership, the solidarity movement would perhaps be in a position to harness resources and networks which would facilitate a corporatist civil society approach to the question of Chile. But in order for this to work, these actors could not be alienated by the radical factions within the movement. Surely, any organisation wanting to harness the opprobrium that the coup generated would need to undergo a balancing act of great difficulty. There was no pre-existing Chile committee in Norway at the 11th of September. So, in the immediate days after that, a group, “most of whom with a personal interest in or connection to Latin America, took the initiative to establish ‘*Solidaritetskomiteen for Chile*’”, wrote Petter Nore, the first chairman of the committee, in the first Annual Report.<sup>74</sup> These activists swiftly organised a working group which mobilised to the third of the abovementioned protests, taking place outside of the United States’ embassy in Oslo, illustrating that anti-American sentiment was central to activism in the early days of the solidarity movement. Then at the 5th of October, *Solidaritetskomiteen* was officially constituted, on the basis of an innovative organisational structure.

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<sup>73</sup> Torstein Gilje Buggeland, *Et ukonvensjonelt flyktningearbeid. Norge og statskuppet i Chile 1973*, 17.

<sup>74</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.



This first protest, arranged by *Det Norske Studentersamfundet i Oslo*, gathered 2000 people at the steps of the Domus Media at the University of Oslo voicing their opposition to the Chilean coup and their solidarity with the Chilean people.<sup>75</sup>

The Norwegian solidarity movement contained a difficult legacy from the anti-Vietnam War movement — the name even echoed its predecessor, *Solidaritetskomiteen for Vietnam*. Though both movements were indeed characterised by anti-American protest, Chile was not Vietnam, nor was Salvador Allende much alike Ho Chi Minh, as Chile initially attracted a more politically diverse membership. The Vietnam movement had been paralysed by its internal differences, something which everyone were determined to avoid repeating.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, it was decided that the committee board would be consisting of twenty people of whom half were to be representatives of political parties and organisations, while the other half would be “individual activists”.<sup>77</sup> Oslo’s main trade union, *Oslo Faglige Samorganisasjon*, was given a permanent seat on the committee board. Even though the organisational structure was designed to maintain the unity of the committee in the presence of political diversity, the board came to be dominated by activists pertaining to a variety of the more radical leftist ideologies. Indeed, of those board members whose political affiliations were accounted for in the Annual Report, eight out of eighteen belonged to parties

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<sup>75</sup> Klassekampen 33/5, 19-25 of September 1973.

<sup>76</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>77</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.



to the left of the AP.<sup>78</sup> Given that this was a time known for its radicalism within student and activist circles, it is probably safe to assume that at least some of the six members who were registered without party affiliation held political viewpoints of a deeper shade of red than the AP. Adding to this, the chairman, Petter Nore, came from the *Sosialistisk Folkeparti*, while the secretary and later chairman, Olaf Svorstøl, came from the AKP(ml). This meant that the leadership positions within the board as well as the working group were occupied by leftists from New Left political parties. It also signified that these leftists had a majority vote within the board. In light of this, it became clear that the political parties and organisations which were usually hegemonic in the general political landscape of the country, such as the AP's youth association, *Arbeidernes Ungdomsfylking*, would have to deal with the unfamiliar situation of being a minority. Moreover, with the AP's complicity in Norwegian NATO membership, which tied Norwegian foreign policy to the American conspirators thought to be behind the Chilean coup, this could mean that the AUF would suddenly find itself being represented in an organisation that harshly criticised its mother party. As we have seen, Maoists tended to take part in more solidarity committees and be more active within these committees than members pertaining to any other political party or affiliation. This meant that *Solidaritetskomiteen*'s political constellation was probably not atypical to the times. The ml-movement which swept parts of Norwegian youth into activism was more inclined to mobilise to the cause of distant Third World countries. And while they always remained a small fraction of Norwegian society at large, within the solidarity committees they were a force to be reckoned with due to their untiring activism. Even though those within *Solidaritetskomiteen* who identified politically with the Old Left or centre-right politics were probably in a minority position, there was no guarantee that they would be content with wielding less influence within *Solidaritetskomiteen* than they did outside the committee meeting rooms. Furthermore, it was anything but certain that the vociferousness of the ml-activists inside *Solidaritetskomiteen* would not scare away anyone who did not believe in the tenets of Mao Zedong. It was all an uneasy union, but there seems to have been a widely shared and genuine desire to bypass the traditional political fault lines in order to help the resistance to the Chilean junta — but the question remained whether *Solidaritetskomiteen* had any capacity to do so.

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<sup>78</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

In order for *Solidaritetskomiteen* to serve any good for the cause of Chileans suffering under Pinochet's repressive rule, compromises needed to be the main ingredient and wide consensus had to be reached in order to maintain equilibrium. The political platform was one of the places where such compromises needed to be made explicit. According to Petter Nore, the political platform was indeed a compromise.<sup>79</sup> There was no harmony when it came to defining what "rule of the people" meant in the aims and purposes paragraph of *Solidaritetskomiteen*, while representatives from the conservative youth association *Unge Høyre* dissented on the matter of breaking diplomatic relations with the junta.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, the very fact that *Unge Høyre* was initially involved in *Solidaritetskomiteen* is itself a testament to the initial political heterogeneity inside the committee.<sup>81</sup> Anyway, "apart from that, the paragraph provided a sufficient basis for the solidarity work to begin", the chairman ascertained.<sup>82</sup> Nore's certainty may in hindsight seem a bit misplaced, however, as it was exactly from the vagueness of the consensus that some of the greatest frictions inside *Solidaritetskomiteen* would emanate. That basis was founded on the following organisational slogans; "support the Chilean people in their struggle against fascism", "fight US-imperialism and international big capital in Chile", and "demand the liberation of political prisoners", while they demanded that Norway should break their diplomatic relations and stop all trade with the Pinochet regime.<sup>83</sup> The slogans, symbols, and discourses which *Solidaritetskomiteen* sought to unite around were charged with ideological connotations and possessed disputed significances, increasing the strains inherent in maintaining bipartisan organisations in a time of polarisation.

Be that as it may, *Solidaritetskomiteen* went on about its work with great enthusiasm in the final months of 1973. More than enthusiasm, there was initially outrage, since it had been revealed that the Norwegian Embassy in Santiago had been rejecting refugees, directing them instead to the various South American embassies in town, which were guarded by the junta's soldiers. This was accompanied by a scandalous interview made by the Norwegian Ambassador, Julius C. A. Fleischer, in the social democratic newspaper *Arbeiderbladet*, in which he publicly supported the coup and expressed strong doubts whether there was any

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<sup>79</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>80</sup> Norwegian: "Folkestyre"; Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>81</sup> *Unge Høyre* does, however, disappear from *Solidaritetskomiteen*'s records just a couple of months later.

<sup>82</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>83</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

truth to the claims that the junta was executing people.<sup>84</sup> Standing in stark contrast to the heroic actions of the Swedish Ambassador Harald Edelstam, Fleischer became the object of much ire, as the solidarity movement began demanding his immediate replacement. Meanwhile, the newspaper *Orientering* took this as evidence that the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was a tool for the “ruling classes” and that the whole ministry was a “loyal servant of capitalist interests”.<sup>85</sup> The interview thereby added force to the notion that the Norwegian elites could be inclined to support a similar coup in Norway should Allende’s Norwegian peers come to power there. The “Fleischer-case” therefore became one of the crucial early campaigns of *Solidaritetskomiteen*, and ended with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, apparently as shocked as the activists at their ambassador’s comments, sending Frode Nilsen as councillor to the embassy in Santiago and relieving Fleischer of all refugee related duties.<sup>86</sup> Nilsen was instructed to do as the other Nordic embassies and the work towards aiding refugees was much more successful thereafter. This eventually led to a greater feeling of mutual respect and an increased cooperation between Norwegian activists and authorities.<sup>87</sup> *Solidaritetskomiteen* would over the next two years develop into the main organ for the grassroots solidarity campaign in Norway. Much of this came from its ability to facilitate mobilisation at the local level.

Under the umbrella of *Solidaritetskomiteen*, a myriad of local “solidarity with Chile” committees blossomed in towns and cities all over the country. Revealing the initially strong interconnectedness between the solidarity movement and student and youth activism, local solidarity committees were established in such small townships as Nesna, Volda and Stord due to the institutions for higher education present there.<sup>88</sup> Further highlighting that tendency, numerous student associations quickly became members of *Solidaritetskomiteen*. Both the sizeable and influential confederation of Norwegian student democracies, *Norsk Studentunion*, and the radical leftist student association *Progressiv front ved de høyere lærestedene* joined the fold.<sup>89</sup> Not all the local solidarity committees were dominated or even tied to student organisations, however, as the addition of the miners and workers of Mo i

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<sup>84</sup> Arbeiderbladet, 2nd of October 1973.

<sup>85</sup> Orientering, 3rd of October 1973.

<sup>86</sup> James Godbolt, “Solidaritet med Chile”, 287.

<sup>87</sup> James Godbolt, “Solidaritet med Chile”, 297.

<sup>88</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>89</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

Rana is an example of.<sup>90</sup> In fact, by the summer of 1975, there existed local solidarity committees for Chile in at least 22 cities and towns all across Norway, supported by a variety of organisations, trade unions and political parties.

Additionally, *Solidaritetskomiteen* was becoming the main link between the Chilean exile community in Norway and the Norwegian solidarity movement. As Chilean refugees took their first steps on Norwegian soil, they swiftly began to organise into their own committees working to mobilise support. With the Chileans came also the trade unions and parties that had been outlawed in Chile, with both the *Unidad Popular* and the Chilean confederation of trade unions *Central Única de Trabajadores* establishing their presence in Norway.

Although *Solidaritetskomiteen*'s connection to the solidarity movement outside of Norway would remain rather limited, some linkages between Oslo and the abroad existed. Nonetheless, these were mainly tied to the trade unions, and had little to do with *Solidaritetskomiteen*. In the period of *Solidaritetskomiteen*'s hegemony, between 1973 and 1975, few international events were hosted in Oslo, and those that took place were not arranged by *Solidaritetskomiteen*. Likewise, when Frankfurt held an international conference on Chile in 1974, no representative from *Solidaritetskomiteen* was present, probably due to a lack of funds.

Contrastingly, in October 1974, the LO arranged an international workshop in solidarity with the trade union movement in Chile, which included a speech by Luis Figueroa of *Central Única de Trabajadores*, harshly condemning the junta's crackdown on labour rights.<sup>91</sup> Representatives from the AP were also present at the workshop. Together, the AP and the LO, who at the 18th of September 1973 stated that they both "had established close contacts with President Allende and his government", were in the end the most internationally minded parts of the solidarity movement.<sup>92</sup> As we shall see in chapter 4, this linkage between the Norwegian Old Left and the Chilean opposition in exile would eventually be decisive in determining the trajectory of the Norwegian solidarity movement as the obstacles to its success gradually became clear. First, it is essential to look at how *Solidaritetskomiteen* was overwhelmed by the ideological divisions it guarded within, leading to the end of a bipartisan approach to the solidarity movement.

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<sup>90</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>91</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>92</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

### 3. The Insights from Chile

*The dream of a peaceful road [to socialism] was shot dead at the football stadium in Santiago.*

Pål Steigan, 1985.<sup>93</sup>

#### 3.1. Political Foundations and Exotic Imaginaries

As solidarity committees began to flourish all over Norwegian cities and townships, there crystallised a collective imagination around the notion of “Chile” which appealed to and was at the same time shaped by the prevalent worldviews of the 1970s Left. This collective imagination, or imaginary, was crucial in attracting such a multitude of people to the Chilean cause. In the following section, I will be analysing this imaginary, which informed the activists in *Solidaritetskomiteen*’s understanding of Chile and stimulated political mobilisation and activism. This corresponds to the third stage of the “evolutionary pattern of solidarity action”.<sup>94</sup> The act of representation and the construction of a popular imaginary of the rise and fall of the *Unidad Popular* was integral to the establishing of a common basis for *Solidaritetskomiteen* to work.

By the term “imaginary”, I am referring to the collective set of assumptions and conceptions that informed activists’ understanding of the Chilean situation and how they framed the recent history of events in the country.<sup>95</sup> However, the movement was heterogeneous and conceptions of Chile were equally multifarious. This was one of the obstacles for *Solidaritetskomiteen*, as activists inside the committee had diverse interpretations of what the Allende government was all about, what the coup had signified, and what the future of the Chilean people should look like.

In Allende’s lifetime, there had reigned a certain amount of suspicion and tentativeness with regards to Chile in Norwegian leftist circles, both among the social democratic, democratic socialist and the communist left. After the coup, that all changed. The previously disinterested, sceptic or ambiguous immediately turned enraged. The immense public outrage

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<sup>93</sup> Pål Steigan, *På den himmelske freds plass*, 214.

<sup>94</sup> Christiaens et al. “A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 13-14.

<sup>95</sup> This corresponds to a great extent with Dufner’s understanding of the term in Georg Dufner, “West Germany: Professions of Political Faith, the Solidarity Movement and New Left Imaginaries” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*,

that followed the coup, apparent for instance in the early demonstrations, is testament to this, and needs to be seen in light of a greater shift in the imaginary of Chile activism entailing the death of Allende and the fall of his government project. It appears that the heterogeneity of solidarity with Chile comes partially as a result of the *Unidad Popular*'s own diversity.<sup>96</sup> The *Unidad Popular* had been a figurehead in a popular social movement which spanned many different political and cultural arenas. However, since the UP was comprised of six parties, the ideological contents of their program was capaciously built around notions of democratic socialism and progressivism. Meanwhile, social and cultural movements latched themselves onto the *Unidad Popular*, meaning that the movement occurred in very diverse sectors of society. The result is that this large socialist movement appears almost like one of the famous ink blots of a Rorschach test, where the subject's own worldviews and convictions were revealed through its interpretation of the object. Likewise, Norwegian activists, in their search for an understanding of what had occurred, attached meaning to Chile, the *Unidad Popular*, and the coup, clearly reflecting their own political beliefs and ideological outlooks. This becomes all the more apparent when taking into account the manifold organisations that committed themselves to *Solidaritetskomiteen* in the wake of the coup.

Solidarity, as I mentioned earlier, travels between two dimensions; that of recognising closeness and proximity, and that of differences and distance. This meant that the various interest groups that engaged themselves with the cause of Chile emphasised very different aspects of the Chilean pre-coup society in their resolutions and declarations, often suggesting that their solidarity was above all connected to, and sometimes even restricted to, a specific group or party within that society or a specific aspect of the UP's political enterprise. One example of this comes from the second-wave feminist association *Kvinnefronten i Norge*, which asserted that it was an "important task" for them "to work for the support and solidarity with Chilean women in their fight against the country's fascist regime".<sup>97</sup> The group emphasised the breakthroughs in gender equality that the *Unidad Popular* coalition had been at the forefront of. Although these breakthroughs were somewhat limited, above all due to parliamentary opposition from the Christian democrats, significant advances were made in

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<sup>96</sup> Klassekampen 33/5, 19-25 September 1973.

<sup>97</sup> English: The Women's Front in Norway; Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

the short reign of the UP.<sup>98</sup> In this way, the *Unidad Popular* was not only socialist, but feminist as well.

Another interesting departure for solidarity is found in the realm of popular culture. Popular culture not only facilitated dialogue among activists, connecting people in disparate locations and from divergent class, cultural and political backgrounds, but that it also “offered an opportunity for solidarity activists to reach people not engaged with politics or unaware of what was transpiring in Chile”.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, the artistic movement called the *Nueva Canción* (the new song), which included icons such as Víctor Jara, Violeta Parra among with groups such as Inti-Illimani and Quilapayún, attracted many to the solidarity movement.<sup>100</sup> Professed *allendistas* and loyal members of the Chilean Communist Party, these artists took the traditional folk songs of the Chilean countryside, combining them with new, often revolutionary, lyrics centred on the plight of the Chilean agrarian and working classes, spreading it out to popular audiences.<sup>101</sup> This movement had a transnational outlook, with Víctor Jara’s call for peace in Vietnam in his song *El derecho de vivir en paz* serving as a prime example of that.<sup>102</sup> Although it was clearly inspired by American pioneers such as Peter Seeger, Bob Dylan, and Joan Baez who had applied lyrics of popular resistance to the tunes of traditional folk songs before them, the *Nueva Canción* partly grew forth in opposition to the supposedly homogenising effects and cultural imperialism of American popular music.<sup>103</sup> These musicians attempted to promote the traditional folkloric indigenous culture among popular audiences of Chile by playing Amerindian musical instruments such as the *charango* and even singing in Quechua, while their revolutionary songs served as battlecries in strikes and demonstrations. Jara neatly summed up their motivation:

Our duty is to give our people weapons to fight this (the North American commercial monopoly in music); to give our people its own identity with a folklore which is, after all, the most authentic language a country has, to make our people understand their

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<sup>98</sup> Javier Maravall Yáñez, *Las mujeres en la izquierda chilena durante la Unidad Popular y la dictadura militar (1970-1990)*, 28-29.

<sup>99</sup> Brenda Elsey, “‘As the World is My Witness’. Transnational Chilean Solidarity and Popular Culture” in Mor, *Human Rights and Transnational Solidarity in Cold War Latin America*, 179.

<sup>100</sup> An extraordinary example of this cultural facet of solidarity with Chile is Sverre Ingstad’s book of translated *Nueva Canción* songs titled *De kan ikke myrde en sang*, which in English translates to “they cannot murder a song”.

<sup>101</sup> Jane Tumas-Serna, “The ‘Nueva Canción’ Movement and Its Mass-Mediated Performance Context”, 146.

<sup>102</sup> The title translates to “the right to live in peace”. The song is in many ways an ode to “Uncle Ho” and Vietnam, a country where “flowers are destroyed by genocide and napalm”.

<sup>103</sup> Jane Tumas-Serna, “The ‘Nueva Canción’ Movement and Its Mass-Mediated Performance Context”, 130.

reality through the protest song ... and through music — without labels of “classic” or “popular — to help our people unmask the world around them, to transform it not with paternalistic prophecies, but together with the people.<sup>104</sup>

Due to his musical activism, Víctor Jara suffered greatly at the hands of the military regime. In the days of the coup he was captured and brought to the notorious National Stadium in Santiago, where vengeful soldiers tortured and maimed him before killing him.

The cultural movement that Jara stood for, which sought to lift the traditional “low culture” up into the national limelight, had a counterpart in Norway, although in a less revolutionary form. *Visebølgen* (the folk wave) was a musical and cultural phenomenon in Norway from the mid-sixties, and was a forceful cultural opposition to Norwegian membership in the EEC in 1972.<sup>105</sup> This cultural resistance also had an outlet in Norway in the struggle for the diverse regional accents in Norway to gain recognition in that same period. Therefore, when the solidarity committee got up and running, various cultural organisations and interest groups joined the fold. One of these was *Kulturfronten*, which explicitly cited the gruesome death of Víctor Jara, and voiced their intent of “defending the people’s culture” in the face of “alien, imperialist oppression”.<sup>106</sup>

The solidarity movement in Norway would always maintain this cultural side. The study circles organised by the various local chapters of the solidarity movement were often accompanied by Pablo Neruda’s poems and music from the troubadours of the *Nueva Canción*. Illustrating this, the local committee in Bergen screened the movies “We Accuse” and “Venceremos”, and arranged plays by various artist, among other by a group named *Victor Jara Gruppen*.<sup>107</sup> Meanwhile, *Solidaritetskomiteen* even attempted to bring Inti-Illimani to Oslo in 1974, who at that time lived in exile in Italy, but the attempt was eventually abandoned.<sup>108</sup>

Although there certainly existed many distinct reasons for joining the cause and many diverse interpretations of pre-coup Chile, some aspects of the imaginary of the Chilean coup were almost ubiquitous within the movement. In the *Zeitgeist* of the 1970s, there was a very strong trend of analysing Chile according to a North-South binary logic, influenced heavily by

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<sup>104</sup> Jane Tumas-Serna, “The ‘Nueva Canción’ Movement and Its Mass-Mediated Performance Context”, 146.

<sup>105</sup> For instance, see chapter 5 in Førland & Korsvik, 1968. *Opprør og motkultur på norsk*.

<sup>106</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>107</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>108</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.



dependency theory and Marxist thinking. This meant that the United States, and to a lesser extent Western Europe, were perceived as imperialist entities “pulling the strings” in almost every important account of Latin American life, which in the end added up to a rather simplified picture.<sup>109</sup> However, I would argue that the simplicity with which one could make sense of Chile and the ease with which it slotted into a leftist outlook on geopolitics made the imaginary all the more powerful. Consequently, the Marxist, anti-imperialist interpretations seem to have won forth among practically all members of *Solidaritetskomiteen*.

With the Marxist class perspective and the tools of dependency theory, the word “Chile” even gained its own new significances and set of images. The word “Chile” came to mean something similar to “Chile popular” or “Chile of the people”, corresponding strongly to the UP parties’ usage, meaning that all other sectors of Chilean society were excluded from “the people” and “Chile”.<sup>110</sup> Subsequently, the remaining parts of Chilean society were reduced to oligarchs, servants of the bourgeoisie, and henchmen to American imperialism. This exact notion seems to have been widespread in the Norwegian solidarity movement, as they with great frequency spoke of “the Chilean people” or “Chileans” in a sense exclusively referring to the working and agrarian classes among with fighting revolutionary leftists. Accordingly, there was a widespread belief that the vast majority of Chileans were opposing the regime and actively fighting insurrectionary warfare against it — a belief with little foundation in reality.

Furthermore, scholars have identified an “indigenist forms of exoticism, spiced with the fascination of revolutionary upheaval” within the Chilean solidarity movements.<sup>111</sup> This had roots in an older tradition of “Western sense of guilt and romantic assumptions of life outside the confines of Western civilization”.<sup>112</sup> Thus, the old motif of the “noble savage”, which had existed in Western thinking since the age of explorations, became the “noble revolutionary”, fashioned in the clay of Ernesto “Che” Guevara and, now, apparently the not so revolutionary Salvador Allende, both of whom became symbols of anti-imperialism and revolutionary élan. Anti-fascism and anti-imperialism, among with a desire for revolutionary change in Chile,

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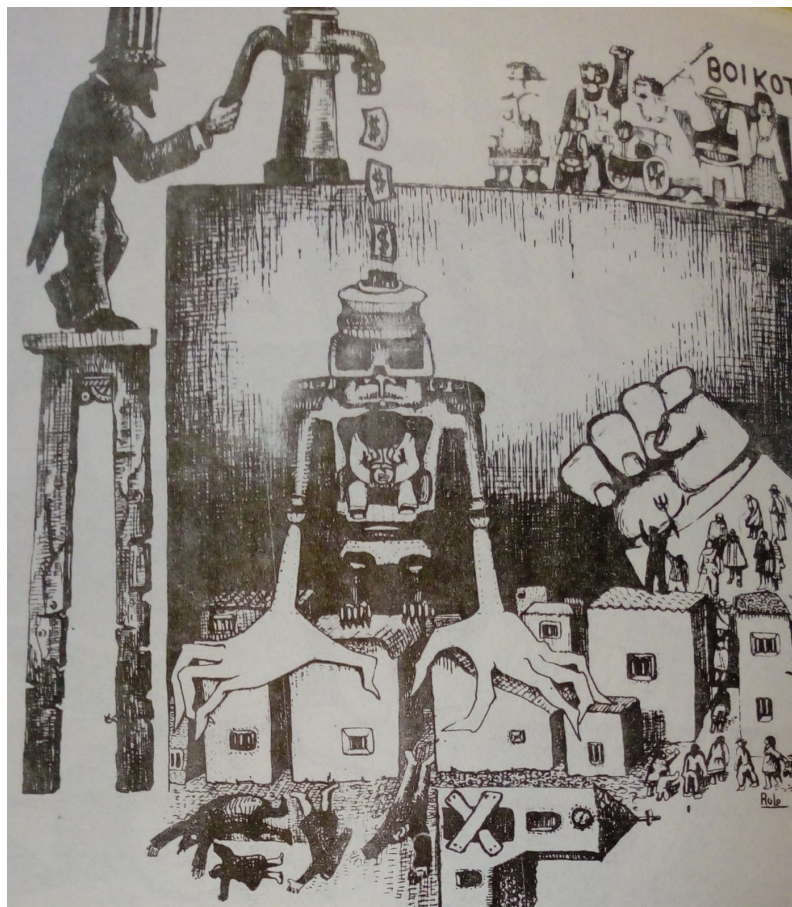
<sup>109</sup> Georg Dufner, “West Germany: Professions of Political Faith, the Solidarity Movement and New Left Imaginaries” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 169.

<sup>110</sup> Georg Dufner, “West Germany: Professions of Political Faith, the Solidarity Movement and New Left Imaginaries” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 170.

<sup>111</sup> Georg Dufner, “West Germany: Professions of Political Faith, the Solidarity Movement and New Left Imaginaries” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 172.

<sup>112</sup> Georg Dufner, “West Germany: Professions of Political Faith, the Solidarity Movement and New Left Imaginaries” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 172.

were central pillars among many of the more radical activists in the solidarity movement, and the imaginaries constructed around the vast concept of “Chile” were therefore liable to be instrumentalised for political motives. The issue was that these notions were intended to serve as foundations meant to buttress the solidarity work and unite the activists — something which would be jeopardised if these concepts were to be instrumentalised. In the following section I will discuss these concepts and assess some of the issues which were inherent in the consensuses *Solidaritetskomiteen* had been established around.



This illustration appears in a pamphlet made by *Chileaksjonen* in their campaign for boycotting Norwegian trade in Chilean wine. It shows the United States, represented by Uncle Sam, pouring money into a gruesome monster wearing Augusto Pinochet’s characteristic sunglasses. In the background, the Chilean people are preparing for revolution, while, in the top right, Norwegians are boycotting Chilean wine. Further than revealing the imaginary of what was meant by “the Chilean people”, this illustration portrays the Pinochet-like monster as dependent on the money it receives from the United States and Norwegian consumers, showing the binary logic by which foreign actors and their puppets were behind all important aspects of society in the country.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Arbeiderbevægelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2178, X, L0001.

*Solidaritetskomiteen* was from the onset characterised by the necessity of keeping in check the political and ideological heterogeneity that it held within and ease frictions among the various groups. The solution which had been hatched out in order to do this was to found the committee around some concepts, framed as “minimal consensus”, which circled around notions of anti-fascism and anti-imperialism.<sup>114</sup> The problem with these sets of symbolic discourses and imaginaries was that they did not have the homogenising effect they were supposed to, but they rather made more apparent the internal disagreements within the organisation. This was due to their highly ideologically and symbolically laden character, which consequently turned these terms and discourses into areas of contention.

*Solidaritetskomiteen* was meant to be anti-imperialist in its approach. Specifically, it was “against US imperialism”, as one of their organisational slogans said. Yet, to a large majority of Chileans, the idea of Chile being an oligarchic vassal state to American imperialist exploitation did not really resonate.<sup>115</sup> This notion had steadily gained ground in Chile during the Eduardo Frei and Salvador Allende presidencies, but was still not a prevalent understanding among Chileans of their own nations’ place in the world. Mirroring this, the junta was shocked by the harsh international response that followed the coup, as they saw “their regime as an integral part of the Western world”, and was “sure that their anti-communist policies would gain the approval of Western states”.<sup>116</sup>

For the teeming solidarity movement, however, there was no doubt that what had happened in Chile was the very epitome of American imperialism. James Godbolt has contended that “compared to the conflicts in both Vietnam and Palestine, the situation in Chile was tailored to Marxist imperialist analysis”.<sup>117</sup> Anyone who had read Vladimir Lenin’s take on the phenomenon of imperialism would be sure to incriminate the junta.<sup>118</sup> Interpreting the coup as a classic example of foreign intervention in order to safeguard (neo)colonialist, economic interests came naturally. Indeed, this was a commonplace interpretation, and Dag Hareide’s *Chile. På vei til sosialismen?*, which initially was the main source of information on pre-coup Chile in Norwegian activist circles, was clearly influenced by Marxist and dependency

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<sup>114</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>115</sup> Georg Dufner, “West Germany: Professions of Political Faith, the Solidarity Movement and New Left Imaginaries” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 169.

<sup>116</sup> Jan Eckel, “‘Under a Magnifying Glass’. The International Human Rights Campaign against Chile in the Seventies” in Hoffmann, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, 330.

<sup>117</sup> James Godbolt, “Solidaritet med Chile”, 283.

<sup>118</sup> Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism — The Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

theories. This was especially apparent in Petter Nore's contribution regarding the *Unidad Popular's* economic policy in the book:

For us to understand the background for the [*Unidad Popular's*] programme, it is absolutely necessary to understand the role of imperialism in the economic development of Chile. Marx said: "Humans do not shape their own history as they want it. They create it under conditions which are provided and transmitted from the past". In order to understand the UP's thinking, one has to understand terms such as "dependent capitalism". This is a direct result of the imperialism Chile has been a victim to since the mid 19th century.<sup>119</sup>

This passage not only demonstrates the tools Petter Nore had at his disposal when assessing the Chilean situation, but also sheds light on the intellectual contents of the principal academic work on Chile which the local solidarity committees all over Norway consulted in order to understand the country's history, society, culture and politics. Now, of course, it is difficult to ascertain to what degree activists reading the book agreed with its content and framing. Nevertheless, seeing how the book was circulating throughout the local solidarity committees whose activists were eager to understand what had happened in Chile, there is sufficient reason to assume that this book was important in the formation of opinions and imaginaries. The book itself heavily emphasised European and North American imperialist involvement in Chilean history. Citing the father of dependency theory, Andre Gunder Frank, Nore went on to explain the *Unidad Popular's* economic policy through a framework of dependency and Marxist theory — thus firmly framing Chile as a peripheral satellite dependent on its "metropole-nation", the United States.<sup>120</sup> Adding to this, the book even included a Norwegian translation of the notorious "ITT-papers", which details the American multinational enterprise International Telephone & Telegraph's various attempts at lobbying the US government, as represented by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, into overthrowing Allende and his government coalition.<sup>121</sup> This all fed even more into this binary logic according to which imperialist powers and their lackeys were responsible for everything terrible that ever occurred in Chile, completely omitting Chileans' agency from their own country's most decisive event.

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<sup>119</sup> Dag Hareide, *Chile. På vei til sosialismen?*, 109.

<sup>120</sup> Dag Hareide, *Chile. På vei til sosialismen?*, 109.

<sup>121</sup> Dag Hareide, *Chile. På vei til sosialismen?*, 160-182.

In addition to being anti-imperialist, *Solidaritetskomiteen* was to be built on an anti-fascist foundation. The Pinochet junta was widely framed as a fascist dictatorship of the kind that existed in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s, and so the rhetoric was centred around a staunch anti-fascist consensus. Indeed, the Norwegian solidarity movement benefited from a common European memory of the crimes of fascism.<sup>122</sup> The heritage of the struggle between fascist and anti-fascist forces of the world was well rooted in European societies and had been successful in creating alliances before— such rhetoric had already mobilised many Norwegians to fight for the Third Republic during the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939, for instance. With the Norwegian collective memory of the Second World War and the Nazi-occupation still fresh in mind, the appeal to the struggle against global fascism was still strong in the country. In post-war Norway, none would deny the horrors of fascism. The Chilean exile community seems to have taken note of this, and in his greeting to the 1975 Annual Congress, Adolfo Henríquez of the *Frente Patriótico*, the main Chilean exile organisation in Norway, appealed to the Norwegian collective memory of Nazi-occupation:

In the Norwegian working class, the memory of the five years of struggle against the Nazis during the Second World War live on. The Norwegian people knows what such a struggle costs. Therefore, it must show solidarity to those who are fighting against fascism and for freedom in Chile today.<sup>123</sup>

Yet, even though anti-fascism was well-founded in Norway, it soon became apparent that one of the decisive ambiguities in the solidarity work for Chile surrounded the term fascism. In the post-1968 era, it seemed that the radical left extended the term to such a length that it was simultaneously used to describe both the United States and the Soviet Union — states that fought a costly and horrible war against Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy just thirty years before. Writing much later, in 1992, Roger Griffin lamented that “the term’s inflation seems to have spread like a semantic virus”.<sup>124</sup> However, there was a general consensus among all the various committee members that the regime which had disposed of Allende was of an indisputably fascist ilk. This assumption was founded in very distinct strains of thought whose definitions of fascism coincided when it came to Chile.

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<sup>122</sup> Christiaens et al. “A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 22.

<sup>123</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>124</sup> Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 2.

On the one hand, there were the Marxist theories on fascism made in response to the proliferation of fascist regimes in the 1930s, which was well-known among any student at the social sciences or humanities faculties at that time.<sup>125</sup> These saw fascism as a phenomenon emerging in capitalist countries in the “general crisis of capitalism” and expressed the interests of the most reactionary and aggressive forces of the imperialist bourgeoisie and represented counter-revolution by the forces of capitalism in league with the vestiges of feudalism.<sup>126</sup> It is not difficult to see how this interpretation would incriminate the Chilean junta. It could easily be envisioned in terms of an anti-proletarian and reactionary coup of a military junta set on curbing the *Unidad Popular*’s challenge against the country’s oligarchic social hierarchy and exploitative monopoly-capitalism. According to this framework, Augusto Pinochet had acted as the hard man the forces of capitalism had required in order to save their skins from an increasingly class conscious working class movement advancing their demands of equality.

Among the less radically inclined members of the committee, this Marxist notion of fascism was not always as appealing. There was, however, a commonly held notion that both communism and fascism were extremist variants of leftism and rightism, respectively. According to such a definition, “extremists at either end of the political continuum develop into advocates of dictatorship, while the moderates of the center remain the defenders of democracy”.<sup>127</sup> Thus, those who saw fascism in light of this logic understood the Pinochet regime as fascist due to it being an extremist manifestation of right-wing ideology.

What both notions of fascism held in common was that they clearly defined the Chilean military junta as such, thus providing a common basis for anti-fascist resistance. Still, these divergent definitions and conceptualisations of the Chilean junta sowed the seeds of an ideological and rhetorical contest within *Solidaritetskomiteen* on establishing the limits of what could be denominated as fascism and what could not, and therefore also the limits of where the anti-fascist struggle was to take place. If there were fascists in Norway, was it not right that *Solidaritetskomiteen* should dedicate itself to fighting the struggle there too?

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<sup>125</sup> In chapter XII of his work titled *Postwar*, Tony Judt writes of the New Left’s rediscovery of Marxism and the ubiquitousness of Marxist theory in academia and in politics from the late-1960s and onwards. Judt argues that “there was general agreement across the political spectrum that anyone wishing to understand the world must take Marxism and its political legacy very seriously”.

<sup>126</sup> Roger Griffin, *Fascism*, 282; Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 3; Original italics.

<sup>127</sup> Roger Griffin, *Fascism*, 285.

The notions of anti-imperialism and anti-fascism themselves were not merely negative concepts as their prefix might suggest. They were both notions with a long heritage and possessed different symbolical, rhetorical, and ideological meanings. Anti-fascism was a term whose symbolic value was linked to widely diverging historical actors and movements whose connotations were diverse; from the anti-fascist fronts of the interwar period and the democratically minded resistance movements during Nazi occupation, to the North Vietnamese fighting the “fascist” South Vietnam or, conversely, the freedom-loving Czechoslovakians’ dreams being squashed by the “fascist” Soviet Union. By the same token, anti-imperialism had a genealogy rooted in such diverse places as Nasserism, the UN Charter, Maoism, and the American Declaration of Independence.

So, in the Argentine philosopher Ernesto Laclau’s words, “anti-fascism” and “anti-imperialism” were both *empty* and *floating* signifiers: empty due to the plurality of meanings that could be ascribed to them and floating because there were political contests over what their meanings really were in *Solidaritetskomiteen* and Norwegian society at large.

<sup>128</sup> Therefore, the vagueness that was supposed to unify instead came to bring attention to the very different meanings given to the terms. In section 3.3., we will see this dynamic in play at the 1975 Annual Congress, where the label “fascist” was flung around quite whimsically by the most radical members of the committee. However, before looking at this, we must direct our attention to the political and strategic alterations that were taking place within the AKP(ml). The Maoists, a valuable source of activists for the solidarity movement in this anti-American rebellion, had likely been rocked more than any other political party by the Chilean coup. To them, the failure of Salvador Allende’s democratic socialism was a presage that no one else seemed to recognise, so they set about proselytising.

### **3.2. Maoist Appropriation**

The very same feature which was initially decisive in prompting thousands of Norwegians to the cause of Chilean solidarity was that which turned the solidarity cause into an arena of political contention; the coup offered countless lessons on world politics, which added weight to previously held ideological convictions and political arguments. That is to say, the cause of Chile was easily appropriated and domesticated by Norwegian activists in order to formulate

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<sup>128</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 69-74.

arguments aimed at their domestic political opponents. In this way, Chile became a test case from which Norwegian activists could draw wisdoms and insights that they considered transposable to their domestic political situation. Thus, having seen the heterogeneous political composition of *Solidaritetskomiteen*, it hardly needs to be said that the committee would encounter problems when factions within it started using it as an arena where they could field arguments about Norwegian politics. If that was not enough, it gradually became apparent that the AKP(ml) carried ulterior motives and that their stated intent of not repeating the failures of previous bipartisan committees was not as sincere as they initially had made it out to be.

It is perhaps more difficult to fathom how *Solidaritetskomiteen* did not run into trouble on an earlier stage than it is to understand that it ultimately did so. The problems accompanying cooperation with the AKP(ml) were already apparent in the immediate days following the coup. In the issue of *Klassekampen* published the week after, — the same issue that covered the various demonstrations and advocated mobilisation to *Solidaritetskomiteen* — one could read the awkwardly formulated headline “Chile also shows: Revolution — the only way to socialism”.<sup>129</sup> Below the headline followed an article densely packed with interpretations and insights drawn from the UP’s failed project. It appealed to the “forces to the left of the *Arbeiderpartiet*-leadership” to finally understand that the only manner of creating a socialist society was through a violent revolution, with the article lambasting “modern revisionism’s enduring attempts at obfuscating the tenets of marxism-leninism”. The article ended on the conclusion that;

Chile has provided us with yet another example of a peaceful and parliamentary road to socialism drowning in tanks and blood. Only a working class able to “break into pieces” and destroy the “ready-made state machinery” and establish their own state can be truly free. We are firmly convinced that the Chilean people will rid themselves of their yoke.<sup>130</sup>

This paragraph truly accentuates some of the main problems with the AKP(ml)’s motives for engaging themselves in the solidarity movement. First, it is already manifest that the Maoists did not really sympathise with Salvador Allende and his political project. To them, the *Unidad Popular* was a haphazardous revisionist attempt at using the bourgeoisie's own

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<sup>129</sup> Klassekampen 33/5, 19-25 September 1973.

<sup>130</sup> Klassekampen 33/5, 19-25 September 1973.



system of power against it — something which in their view, and Karl Marx’s for that matter, was always destined for failure. Meanwhile, had the *Unidad Popular* succeeded with their road to socialism, it would have added legitimacy to the “revisionist left” all over the world, and more importantly to the *Sosialistisk Folkeparti*, whose vision of democratic socialism coincided to a great extent with that of the UP’s *via chilena* socialism. So when the Allende administration was overthrown, the AKP(ml) presented it as unmistakable proof of their own revolutionary line’s verisimilitude and the impossibility of a *via noruega*. Figures inside the SF had for a time lifted up Salvador Allende’s parliamentary road to socialism as an example for the democratically minded socialists in Norway to follow.<sup>131</sup> Now that very road had been indefinitely shut, or in the words of one of the AKP(ml) leaders, Pål Steigan, “the dream of a peaceful road [to socialism] was shot dead at the football stadium in Santiago”.<sup>132</sup>

As it happens, the 11th of September coup signalled a significant turning point within the ml-movement. The AKP(ml) had since 1972 followed a “unitary line” in order to cooperate with other leftists in their fight against Norwegian entry into the European Economic Community and hopefully gain members by tapping into the widespread anti-EEC sentiment.<sup>133</sup> This meant that they had happily welcomed people into their organisation which did not necessarily hold the “right” views on all matters. However, the coup came as a wake-up call to the AKP(ml)-leadership. From that moment on, the party went into a period of restructuring its politics, strategies, and organisational structure.<sup>134</sup> In consequence, a two-year period of confrontation within the AKP(ml) ensued, in which the leadership attempted to weed out the “rightist deviations” inside the party and secure the ideological rigour of the party and its members.<sup>135</sup> This generally meant a gradual solidification of the revolutionary, Maoist line and an unwavering hostility towards everything social democratic, among with a renewed emphasis on settling the “class problem” within the movement—namely, that so many members were educated intellectuals, not proletarian workers. It also signified that the rhetoric aimed at the other leftist parties became more aggressive and that suspicion towards ideological deviation inside the AKP(ml) was at an all-time high.

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<sup>131</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, *Mao, min Mao*, 103.

<sup>132</sup> Pål Steigan, *På himmelske freds plass*, 214.

<sup>133</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, *Mao, min Mao*, 102-105.

<sup>134</sup> Pål Steigan, *På den himmelske freds plass*, 215.

<sup>135</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, *Mao, min Mao*, 105-107.

The second issue that the passage from *Klassekampen's* article showcases is that the possibility of a Chilean socialist revolution would garner all the support among the Maoists that the *Unidad Popular* had never been able to rally. Norwegian Maoist support would inevitably be less than enthusiastic for the *Unidad Popular's* "revisionist" socialism, but when the failure of Allende was evident, it appeared to them that leftists in Chile would have no other option than to take up arms and answer the junta's violence. This meant that solidarity with Chile signified something entirely different to the AKP(ml) than it did to the less radical parts of *Solidaritetskomiteen*. The AKP(ml) cared only for Chile in that the coup opened the horizon for a civil war from which a radical socialist state would be the outcome. This in turn signified that another part of the supposed common ground was built on a shaky, or rather "empty", soil.

Thirdly, the article that appeared in *Klassekampen* partly exposes the ultimately more ulterior motives which guided AKP(ml)-involvement in *Solidaritetskomiteen*, namely their intent of spreading their interpretation of the Chilean coup inside the committee in order to convert activists to their cause. This was exactly what had happened in previous solidarity committees, which the AKP(ml) had attempted to turn into "party-building organisations" and had subsequently led to an alienation of large parts of these committees. There is reason to believe that the AKP(ml) elements within *Solidaritetskomiteen* never really prioritised collaboration within the solidarity work. Indeed, a directive from the central committee sent to all AKP(ml) members active in a Chilean solidarity committee said that "there exist revisionist notions of the possibility of a depoliticised solidarity work" within *Solidaritetskomiteen*. However, the AKP(ml) never had any illusions about this, with the directive revealing that the party had actually tried to "fight for" a polarised political situation within *Solidaritetskomiteen* based on right versus left.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> ML-historie, [www.akp.no](http://www.akp.no).



Taken at the 11th of September commemoration of 1974, this image shows a group of protesters waving Chilean flags and banners declaring their solidarity with the Chilean people's struggle outside the United States Embassy in Oslo. In the front walks the chairman of *Solidaritetskomiteen* at the time, Olaf Svorstøl, raising his clenched fist towards the Americans.<sup>137</sup>

To be sure, there was a variety of manners in which one could appropriate the Chilean coup and domesticate it in order to form a political argument directed at the domestic electorate and opposition, and the AKP(ml) was not the only group to do so. The labour unionists of the movement would for instance emphasise the threat that multinational enterprises posed to social democratic society and norms. Likewise, the NKP, SF and AP contingents of *Solidaritetskomiteen* highlighted the fact that the People's Republic of China had opened diplomatic relations with Augusto Pinochet's military government, contrasting it with the USSR's staunch denunciation of the coup, which to them showed that the Soviets were real socialists, while the Chinese were something else entirely.<sup>138</sup> This was the power of Chile — it meant different things to different individuals, and its appropriation was equally diverse. Further complicating things, ml-activists were not the only ones convinced that the fall of *via chilena* socialism was the definite signal that the United States would not allow any socialist attempts in the West, democratic or otherwise. Even so, for the AKP(ml) Chile was the event which confirmed all the convictions they already adhered to, subsequently propulsing the

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<sup>137</sup> Klassekampen, 35/6, 18-24 of September 1974.

<sup>138</sup> ML-historie, www.akp.no; The fact that Chairman Mao Zedong had opened diplomatic relations with the junta was likely subject to quite an effort of mental gymnastics by the Norwegian Maoists who had been lambasting the Norwegian government for not breaking off diplomatic relations with General Pinochet for some time.

further radicalisation of the movement and the crystallisation of Maoist rectitude. Moreover, this came in a period when the AKP(ml) was more confident and self-assured than ever following the success of the anti-EEC movement. Their leader, Sigurd Allern, had interpreted this as irrefutable proof that “the consciousness of the working people is being politicised and revolutionised”.<sup>139</sup> At this point, it is also important to be aware that the AKP(ml) was organised through a system of democratic centralism, which in its essence meant that once the party’s central committee had decided on a matter, all the members had to accept and support their decision.<sup>140</sup> When the events in Chile unfolded, the stage was thus set for a Maoist movement brimming with confidence to again forcefully assert that their way was the only way and any other way would inevitably fail. This reinvigorated and ambitious AKP(ml) would be an insurmountable obstacle for *Solidaritetskomiteen*. The tensions would reach its climax in 1975 at the Annual Congress of all the Norwegian solidarity committees, where the radical parts of the solidarity movement struck the final blow to any bipartisan approach to the solidarity work involving the AKP(ml). Instead of preparing the solidarity movement for the year to come, the Annual Congress proved to be the match which sparked the kindles that had heaped up inside the movement.

### **3.3. The Solidarity Movement’s Very Own Coup**

By the 14th of June 1975, when the Annual Congress was to be held, Petter Nore had been succeeded by Olaf Svorstøl as chairman of *Solidaritetskomiteen*. Whereas Nore had been involved in the SF, Svorstøl was a member of the AKP(ml). Svorstøl had not entered the leadership position without merit. He was fluent in Spanish and was, as the Maoists tended to be, extremely active within the committee, having served as *Solidaritetskomiteen*’s secretary from its inauguration. Whether it was his own personal volition or directives given from the AKP(ml) central committee that guided him, Svorstøl immediately began steering *Solidaritetskomiteen* leftwards at his coming to power. As we have seen, the AKP(ml) sought to use the solidarity committee to strengthen the party by getting their people into leadership positions and thereby dominating them from the inside. At the 1975 Annual Congress, significant reconfigurations in the political composition took place within

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<sup>139</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, “Maoism in Norway”, 485.

<sup>140</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, *Mao, min Mao*, 90-91.

*Solidaritetskomiteen*, and subsequently the most leftist viewpoints and rhetoric seemed to win forth. Yet with *Solidaritetskomiteen* being comprised of widely diverse political parties and interest groups, this aggressive behaviour jeopardised the whole movement's integrity. Therefore, the Annual Congress, later characterised as an AKP(ml) coup, became a watershed within the movement. From the 14th of June to 26th of September 1975, the problems inside *Solidaritetskomiteen* snowballed, ultimately leading to the estranged parts of the movement establishing their own rival committee. That committee, in turn, heralded the beginning of the end for *Solidaritetskomiteen*.

The first signs of friction began with Olaf Svorstøl's opening speech, which was an assessment of the current political situation in Chile and the solidarity work in Norway. What especially occupied Svorstøl's mind was the developments among the various Chilean opposition parties and organisations who had begun to quarrel with one another due to political and strategic differences, and he bemoaned the fact that two years had passed and still no unitary resistance front had been organised in Chile. Svorstøl identified a division among the Chilean opposition between those who engaged themselves in "active resistance" through the so-called "resistance committees", which were in essence guerilla groups, and the political parties in exile that sought rapprochement with the Christian Democrats in Chile in order to assemble as great an opposition as possible. The former was represented by the most radical leftist revolutionary parties in Chile which wanted to fight the junta with guerrilla warfare, while the latter strategy came from the *Unidad Popular* parties and trade unions in exile. According to Svorstøl, the lines could be drawn between an "active strategy of resistance versus a passive wait and see attitude" and a "democratic unitary front versus bureaucratic and undemocratic party dominated organisations".<sup>141</sup> Svorstøl then continued to assert that no sectarian resistance nor solidarity movement could aim to defeat the junta, pledging his and *Solidaritetskomiteen*'s support to "all those who are actively fighting in Chile".<sup>142</sup> This would in practice mean that *Solidaritetskomiteen* would not help any of the *Unidad Popular* parties in opposing the junta, but would instead send aid to small insurrectionary groups organised into resistance committees. Someone who was probably meant to benefit from this was the AKP(ml)'s Maoist sister party in Chile, the Partido Comunista Revolucionario (PCR). Svorstøl then proposed discussing a restructuring of

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<sup>141</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>142</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

*Solidaritetskomiteen*, on the basis that the organisational representatives were not active enough. As he saw it, *Solidaritetskomiteen* was at its “deathbed”, with some activists doing all the work while passive party representatives decided everything. Svorstøl wanted the activists to be the “backbone” of *Solidaritetskomiteen*. Finally, he warned that “we must not have an organisation which, in structure, is not too different to the fascists’ organisation in Chile”.<sup>143</sup>

In reaction to Svorstøl’s speech, Steinar Hansson, who was an active member of the SF and a representative on the committee board, took the word. Hansson was clearly troubled by the implications that Svorstøl’s suggestions would have for the committee. He asked the attendees whether it was right that the Norwegian solidarity committee was to decide who to support or how the fight was to be fought in Chile, and wondered “how are we ... to decide whether the Socialist Party is fighting actively or not?”.<sup>144</sup> In Hansson’s eyes, these were dangerous implications that could threaten the integrity of solidarity work in Norway without really helping the cause, and he reminded the people present that *Solidaritetskomiteen* had always built on a political platform which supported *everyone* opposing the military junta — a platform which the committee board had unanimously approved once again at this congress. What is remarkable at this point is that the division which Svorstøl saw as hampering the Chilean resistance in exile to a great extent mirrored divisions inside *Solidaritetskomiteen*. From its establishment, as we have seen, the committee board was organised into two groups of ten, half of them activists and the other half listed as organisational members. This division had maintained the influence of political parties and trade union organisations inside *Solidaritetskomiteen* and thus bolstered their willingness to involve themselves in the committee, which was crucial for the committee to be able to exert influence on the political leadership in the country. Now this cornerstone of *Solidaritetskomiteen* was facing pressure from those who wanted the committee to be organised exclusively around “activists”, without regard to the “passive” political parties.<sup>145</sup> In this manner, the tension between the activist groups and the organised established political parties in Chile developed analogously inside the Norwegian solidarity movement — and this tension would gradually evolve into a “raw power struggle”.<sup>146</sup> It is also possible to see this in terms of New versus Old Left, as the

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<sup>143</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>144</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>145</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>146</sup> James Godbolt, “Solidaritet med Chile”, 284.

activists tended to come from the SF, AKP(ml) and youth associations, while the other fraction came from the AP and the trade unions. There is however a problem with this interpretation; SF representatives, such as Steinar Hansson, tended to be much more inclined to side with the Old Left and trade unions on these matters. In that light, perhaps a division between the authoritarian and anti-authoritarian sectors of the movement is more fruitful to understanding the dividing lines; that is, the AKP(ml) and the youth associations in which they had a majority versus the SF, AP, trade unions, and the centre-right parties.

A decisive strike to the activist-organisation equilibrium came at that Annual Congress, as new board members were to be elected. The AKP(ml) wielded a majority in this election, leading to virtually all traces of the AP and its youth association, AUF, being thrown out of the committee board in favour of more radical organisations or activists. Arne Kokkvold, who had been the AUF representative on the board almost since its inception, was thrown out among with two SF-members on the basis of not having been sufficiently participative in the solidarity work.<sup>147</sup> This echoes the “activist principle” of the AKP(ml), which dictated that all members should be engaged and active within their organisation, lest they be discharged. Meanwhile, the AP lost out on a vote for a board position against the feminist association *Norges Kvinnesaksforening*, whereas no political party was granted new committee board representatives.<sup>148</sup> This meant that the AKP(ml), with some support from other radical leftist members, wielded an even larger majority within *Solidaritetskomiteen*.

This leap in influence did not remain unused for long. The first show of force came when the Annual Congress moved to approve two radical resolutions which made painstakingly clear that the AKP(ml) was now the dominant force in *Solidaritetskomiteen* and that they would use that force to direct attention to domestic political matters. Consequently, the first resolution focused entirely on Norwegian domestic politics. Specifically, it demanded determined action against the “blossoming fascist movement in Norway”, and denounced the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) for comparing neonazis to communists, classifying it as a “mockery of the anti-fascist liberation struggle in Norway during the war”, and that it was an affront to “the Chilean people’s struggle today”.<sup>149</sup> Again, the activists

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<sup>147</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>148</sup> Instead the teacher student’s organisation *Landslaget for Norges Lærerstudenter* (LNL) received one seat, while an organisation going under the acronym FR, whose full name I have not been able to unearth, received the other.

<sup>149</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

attempted to link themselves up to the anti-fascist symbolisms and rhetoric tied to the Norwegian wartime experience.

The second resolution, on the other hand, started off by protesting the Norwegian government's decision to accept 83 South Vietnamese refugees, claiming that these were "partly agents of the Thieu-regime and United States imperialism and partly people scared into flight by the massive amount of false propaganda about the FNL's 'massacres'."<sup>150</sup> The resolution stated the committee's indignation with the government "preferring to collaborate with the fascist junta in Saigon instead of anti-fascists from Chile". Åke Hartman from *Unge Venstre*, the liberal party's youth association, proposed to tone down the resolution's rhetoric, by, among other things, not naming the Vietnamese refugees as agents of fascism and imperialism, but it was bluntly rejected.<sup>151</sup>

Finally, a proposal for *Solidaritetskomiteen* to seek cooperation with the *Arbeidernes Internasjonale Støttekomité* (AIS) — a committee established jointly by the AP and the Norwegian trade union confederation, LO, in order to coordinate their support for trade unions and the labour movement in other countries — was resolutely opposed. The AKP(ml) representative at the Annual Congress, Kjersti Ericsson, an important member of the party throughout the 1970s, claimed that "the AIS's history does not really provide evidence of a consistent pattern of anti-imperialism", referring to their work within the Vietnamese solidarity movement.<sup>152</sup>

Suddenly, the main organ for the solidarity movement for Chile was becoming a battleground in a perceived struggle between global fascist and anti-fascist forces, in which the term "fascism" itself was flung around capriciously, used in describing anything from Nazi Germany and the Pinochet junta to Vietnamese fugitives of war and an organisational structure which favoured political parties. Everyone had agreed that *Solidaritetskomiteen* was anti-fascist at its inception, but suddenly there was no knowing what the next thing receiving the epithet "fascist" would be. When would a resolution denouncing the AP as "fascists" for their support of NATO and EEC membership appear? The hard turn leftwards which Svorstøl had initiated therefore instigated a period of alienation and polarisation, through which *Solidaritetskomiteen* was gradually being perceived as another bipartisan movement overrun

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<sup>150</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>151</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>152</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, *Mao, min Mao*, 91; Arbeiderbladet, 14th of July 1975.



by fervent Maoists. Anti-fascism as an empty signifier was no longer enough of a glue to secure the committee's cohesion.

Steinar Hansson must have left the 1975 Annual Congress with a heavy mind. Most of all because he seems to have been truly committed to helping Chilean's in their struggle with the junta and to that end he deemed it absolutely imperative to include as much of Norwegian civil society and the political parties as possible. On the one hand, the AKP(ml) had no legitimacy among Norwegian policymakers, nor did they count on the funds and political connections that the AUF or the LO possessed. The one thing they did have, however, was a large reservoir of activists who, although often both vociferous and divisive, were activist in the true sense of the word and worked avidly to *Solidaritetskomiteen's* benefit. On the other hand, the other political parties in the committee, except the SF perhaps, were unable to attract young people into their folds, whereas their representatives tended to be lethargic and quiescent. Therefore, the ideal situation was one in which all of them joined forces by combining passionate activism with organisational experience and political deftness. However, seeing the AKP(ml)'s overconfidence, something had to be done in order to salvage *Solidaritetskomiteen* from internal disarray.

Hansson and his fellow SF-member, Christopher Fürst, decided to act. Instead of voicing their concern to Svorstøl, as might have been expected, they went straight to the *Friheten*, a newspaper most closely associated with the Norwegian communist party, the NKP, tied to the Comintern and to Moscow. First, a small notice announced a "divided *Solidaritetskomiteen*", then a week later the divisions within the committee were there for all to see, under the headline "Sectarianism and abuse of power threaten the solidarity work".<sup>153</sup> Taking the form of an interview, the article displayed a concerned Hansson and Fürst. They made it known that the AKP(ml), "had registered numerous organisations which they dominated into the committee, all of which were present at the Annual Congress".<sup>154</sup> Then, they had proceeded to use their newly procured majority in order to push through several issues, completely ignoring a large minority of dissenters. Furthermore, the AKP(ml) had opposed the principle that every local solidarity committee had to attend all the Labour Day parades organised in town, something which the interviewees saw as traditionally having "allowed *Solidaritetskomiteen* to not take a stance towards the divisions of the Norwegian Left", and

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<sup>153</sup> *Friheten*, 18th of June 1975; *Friheten*, 25th of June 1975.

<sup>154</sup> *Friheten*, 25th of June 1975.

which had acted as a “guarantee against party-political abuse of the committee”.<sup>155</sup> Hansson and Fürst derided this all as “a mixture of political inadequacy and organisational abuse of power” on the AKP(ml)’s part.<sup>156</sup> Seeing all this, however, they were very clear that they had not yet given up and would continue their work within the committee “wholeheartedly and constructively”. Still, they would refuse “to be ‘hostages’ within an AKP-front”.<sup>157</sup>

That July, a very heated debate between the various party representatives of *Solidaritetskomiteen* ensued in the *Arbeiderbladet* newspaper, mainly between Kjersti Ericsson, the AKP(ml) representative, and the representatives of AUF, *Unge Venstre* and the chairman of the AIS, whose reputation had been slandered. Meanwhile, it appears as if virtually all of the major newspapers in Oslo, save *Klassekampen*, were engaging in a collective display of *Schadenfreude*. They revelled in the fact that the AKP(ml) had once again been revealed as irrational and malignant lunatics incapable of cooperating, even when it came at the expense of Chileans suffering at the hands of an atrocious fascist dictatorship. Duly, the conservative newspaper *Aftenposten* smugly reported in their headline that *Solidaritetskomiteen* was “torn apart after an AKP(ml) coup”.<sup>158</sup> The situation had then reached the bitter irony that an organisation which had been formed in reaction to Pinochet’s coup d’état in Chile, had succumbed to a putsch of their own.

Leading up to the second anniversary of the Chilean coup, *Solidaritetskomiteen* was spiralling. Not unexpectedly, the AKP(ml) was again the epicentre of controversies. First, at the 27th of August, *Klassekampen* published an article which must have made the blood boil among the non-Maoist contingent of the solidarity movement. Below the announcement encouraging people to join the demonstrations, appeared a small article arguing that it was the “revisionist party’s politics”, the UP, which had “led Chile to fascism”.<sup>159</sup> It continued, “it is important to assert that pre-coup Chile was not on its way to socialism. Chile was developing into a state monopoly, with a new bourgeoisie of revisionists and careerists at the helm”. It was all obviously aimed at the SF, as one of the subheadings called the UP’s a “programme like the SF’s”. Still, the most disconcerting aspect of it all was that the article claimed that Allende’s project “had to end in fascism”, either in the form of “the open,

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<sup>155</sup> Friheten, 25th of June 1975.

<sup>156</sup> Friheten, 25th of June 1975.

<sup>157</sup> Friheten, 25th of June 1975.

<sup>158</sup> Aftenposten, 10th of July 1975.

<sup>159</sup> Klassekampen, 33/5, 27th of August 1975.

traditional fascism or the type which adorns itself with socialist phrases; Social Fascism. The revisionists in power in Chile would signify a fascist society like that of the Soviet Union.”<sup>160</sup> Subsequently, what was supposed to be a unifying act of commemoration — that is, the 11th of September parades in honour of the *Unidad Popular*, Salvador Allende, and the Chilean people’s struggle— instead aggravated the by then very public disagreements within the movement. In the parade, AKP(ml)-members could be seen with placards encouraging people to “fight revisionism”, while dubbing the UP as a social fascist project.<sup>161</sup> Thus, *Solidaritetskomiteen* had one less consensus, as the dominant party within the committee considered Allende a fascist. Nothing could save the bipartisan composition of the committee at this point.

Although the AKP(ml) wielded a majority inside *Solidaritetskomiteen*, they were supported by less than a percent of the Norwegian electorate and were practically non-existent in the halls of power. So when the board of *Solidaritetskomiteen* rejected a proposition to hold a new Annual Congress forwarded by the local committee in Bergen (which might have made possible a reconciliation, but ended with a vote of 10 to 9), the alienated factions of *Solidaritetskomiteen* took to stronger means. Together, ten important organisations — from the women’s organisation *Norges Kvinneforbund* and the SF, to the capital’s powerful trade union, *Oslo Faglige Samorganisasjon* — launched a joint statement with a list of demands that needed to be fulfilled in order to secure their continuance inside the committee. According to the demands, the committee board had to “declare support for all of the Chilean resistance”, to “declare its intent to be a bipartisan organisation” that is, maintain its current organisational structure, “not express itself on matters outside of its work field as a Chile-committee”, commit itself to cooperate intimately with the trade union movement, let the AUF or the AP back into the board, and, finally, “provide guarantees that a situation like that of the previous Annual Congress never again arises”.<sup>162</sup> To them, “the belief that *Solidaritetskomiteen* can be a unifying organisation for the entire Norwegian people’s solidarity with Chile has all but disintegrated”, and these actions were absolutely essential for the restoration of that belief. Steinar Hansson then went on to formally present the demands to the committee board at a meeting the 26th of September, where he also stated that it was a

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<sup>160</sup> Klassekampen, 33/5, 27th of August 1975.

<sup>161</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>162</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

“prerequisite that the committee views the military coup which happened at the 11.9.1973 as a fascist coup that ended popular rule in the country. Those organisations that do not share this view cannot be members of the committee.”<sup>163</sup> Nonetheless, it was to no avail. As the “white book about the division”, published by *Solidaritetskomiteen* later, explained, “the majority could not accept a new Annual Congress” and the “undemocratic resolution” of promising to never repeat the events of the 1975 Annual Congress was also denied.<sup>164</sup> In the aftermath, this “white book” was published by *Solidaritetskomiteen* in order to clarify what had led to the split, and it conveyed the sense of injustice carried by the members of the committee in relation to the events. Most of all, the press was criticised for its harsh treatment of the AKP(ml).

It had been in the cards for a long time. The ideological divisions, the unstable foundations, and the AKP(ml)’s tireless efforts at controlling the committee all led to the end of *Solidaritetskomiteen* as an umbrella organisation for the Norwegian solidarity movement with Chile. Most of the contingent had wanted to create an organisation through which a joint Norwegian effort for aiding Chileans in their struggle against the junta could be coordinated, but instead it had turned into a political arena for domestic political contestations and had been subject to an AKP(ml) set on transforming it into a party-building organisation in which they would have the political advantage and wield the rhetorical power. It had been yet another proof of the insurmountable divisions reigning among the Norwegian Left. Moreover, this push by the AKP(ml) to take over the organisation can in many ways be seen as an attack on the traditional corporatist approach of doing activism in Norway, which proved intolerable to those who believed that such an approach was necessary for the functioning of the movement. Norwegian sociologists have asserted that within this Nordic corporatist model of society, “traditionally, interest organizations have to a great extent been included in decision-making processes via representation on public committees”.<sup>165</sup> It was not viable for the solidarity movement to integrate itself into this Nordic model in its current state. Therefore, there was a bright side to the situation; in comparison to the divisions between the AKP(ml) and the rest, all other divisions seemed like mere trivialities and could surely be overcome, while the connections between the solidarity movement and the political

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<sup>163</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>164</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>165</sup> Engelstad et al.. *Institutional Change in the Public Sphere*, 62.

leadership and trade unions could be honed — restoring the corporatist model of Norwegian civil society. With a new committee — one where the AKP(ml) was excluded — one might possibly set the solidarity movement back on course by drawing upon the goodwill of influential figures engaged in the question of Chile, such as for instance Knut Frydenlund and Thorvald Stoltenberg. So just two days after that fateful meeting, on the 28th of September, the inauguration of *Chileaksjonen i Norge* was announced, with Steinar Hansson as its first chairman.<sup>166</sup> Thus began a new period in the solidarity movement's lifespan, characterised by the competition between two rival organisations seeking to control the movement. From then on, the 11th of September commemorations in the cities and townships of Norway would feature not one, but two parades.

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<sup>166</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2178, A, L0001.

## 4. Solidarity Transforming

*Ever since President Jimmy Carter launched his politics of human rights, it has become habitual that Latin American regimes that were imposed thanks to American intervention formulate fiery declarations against American intervention in their internal matters.*

Eduardo Galeano, 1980.<sup>167</sup>

### 4.1. The Struggle for the Solidarity Movement

Even though the creation of the parallel committee, *Chileaksjonen*, heralded a new phase of competition for the solidarity movement, the most extraordinary aspect about this phase is really how little of a competition it was to be. Seeing that *Solidaritetskomiteen* had already spent two years building itself up as an organisation, one might venture that it would have the advantage against its newly formed rival. Despite that, the complete opposite was the result. Scarcely three years later, in 1979, *Solidaritetskomiteen* saw their influence drop to the point that the Annual Congress, attended by just nine persons, voted to cease all activities of the organisation.<sup>168</sup> The remaining members were then encouraged to instead join the *Latin-Amerikagruppene i Norge*, an organisation whose attention was more fixed on other current causes such as the *sandinistas* in Nicaragua and the military dictatorship in Argentina.<sup>169</sup> *Chileaksjonen*, on the other hand, would continue their tireless work for the liberation and protection of political prisoners, aid Chileans in exile, and cooperate with Pinochet's opposition both in and outside of Chile all the way up until the end of the military junta and the restoration of democracy in 1990. How did this shift within the Norwegian solidarity movement occur? What factors were decisive for *Chileaksjonen* to be able to consolidate itself as the leading organisation for the whole solidarity movement in such a brief period of time? How would the two organisations interact in those three years of competition? These are all questions that I will attempt to cover in the following section.

Immediately after arriving at a name for the organisation, Steinar Hansson proposed for the interim board of *Chileaksjonen* that they should discuss the political platform of the new

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<sup>167</sup> Eduardo Galeano, *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*, 348.

<sup>168</sup> James Godbolt, "Solidaritet med Chile", 295.

<sup>169</sup> English: The Latin American Groups in Norway; James Godbolt, "Solidaritet med Chile", 295.

organisation. Hansson argued that *Solidaritetskomiteen*'s platform should serve as a basis, but that they should “incorporate that which we have always agreed upon, and incorporate that which the Annual Congress removed or did not incorporate”.<sup>170</sup> Eventually, the platform agreed upon became rather similar to the one that *Solidaritetskomiteen* had landed on two years earlier. At the suggestion of Arne Kokkvoll, the AUF representative who had been ejected from *Solidaritetskomiteen*'s board, it was promulgated in five slogan-like articles: 1) “Support the Chilean people’s fight against fascism”; 2) “Unconditional support to the entire resistance”; 3) “Fight US imperialism and international big capital in Chile”; 4) “Isolate the junta — economically and diplomatically”; and 5) “Liberty to the political prisoners”.<sup>171</sup>

What is noticeable about the political platform is that it was seemingly formulated in a way that made it difficult to use the committee as an arena for fielding domestic political arguments. It emphasised that it supported simply the *Chilean* people’s fight against fascism and fought US imperialism and international capitalism only in Chile. The role of these highly transnational phenomena on the far side of the borders of the Andean nation was regarded as beyond the work field of *Chileaksjonen*. If the new committee was to be able to overcome the divisions reigning within the Left of the post-1968 era, there could be provided no room for contentious appropriations. “However”, as the report from the constitutive meeting in *Chileaksjonen* asserted, “the situation is completely different when the AKP(ml) is not involved.”<sup>172</sup>

Perhaps the most fundamental difference between *Solidaritetskomiteen* and the new organisation was what parts of the solidarity movement they sought to form the closest collaboration with. Whereas *Solidaritetskomiteen* had, at least under Svorstøl’s tenure, been chiefly preoccupied with rallying the support of individual activists, *Chileaksjonen* fixed their eyes on the trade unions and political parties. Initially, the committee was to be centred around the ten organisations that had broken with *Solidaritetskomiteen*, but the members were to immediately start with inviting new organisations. Meanwhile, in order to get funds, every party political affiliate within the committee were asked to approach their party for contributions, with especially high expectations from the AP.<sup>173</sup> The committee also immediately sent an application for funding to the AIS, and, seeing that they had recently

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<sup>170</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2178, A, L0001.

<sup>171</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2178, A, L0001.

<sup>172</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2178, A, L0001.

<sup>173</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2178, A, L0001.

been derided by *Solidaritetskomiteen*, they were likely more than happy to help those who had come to their support.<sup>174</sup>

It rapidly became apparent that *Chileaksjonen* had much better access to the resources and connections possessed by the important trade unions and political parties in Norway, to no small extent because of the membership's own involvement in those organisations and parties. Steinar Hansson was the editor of Pax Forlag, an important leftist publishing company in Oslo with roots in 1960s pacifism, then later went on to be the press secretary of the SF, until finally becoming the editor of the party's novel news organ, *Ny Tid*, in 1979.<sup>175</sup> Arne Kokkvoll, on his part, was the long-time managing director of the trade union movement's archives and library, ARBARK, from 1962 until 1987.<sup>176</sup> While the position itself meant that he had the favour of the political leadership of the AP, it also meant that his office sat in the same building as the powerful LO, the Norwegian confederation of trade unions. These were young, influential and ambitious men with strong connections to both the anti-totalitarian New Left and the Old Left's trade unions and the AP. This was decisive in *Chileaksjonen*'s outmaneuvering of *Solidaritetskomiteen*. The connections that *Chileaksjonen* managed to establish to the political leadership in Norway was eventually formalised in the Norwegian Parliamentary Group for Chile, which was comprised of representatives from all the political parties represented in the Norwegian Parliament. Established in 1977, the constitutive meeting of the Parliamentary Group was even inaugurated by Christopher Fürst who informed the attending politicians about *Chileaksjonen*'s work and aims.<sup>177</sup> Indeed, the mandate of the Parliamentary Group stated that "the group will cooperate with *Chileaksjonen*" and *Chileaksjonen* would "bring forward to the group issues wherever it is considered that the group's effort may contribute".<sup>178</sup> This was the definite formalisation of *Chileaksjonen*'s cooperation with the Norwegian political leadership, and this official support was decisive in securing the support of the most interested faction within the solidarity movement, namely, the exiled Chileans living in Norway.

In fact, this superior network proved crucial most of all when it came to interaction with the Chilean exiles. The solidarity committee that could count on their endorsement and

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<sup>174</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2178, A, L0001.

<sup>175</sup> "Steinar Hansson" in *Norsk biografisk leksikon*.

<sup>176</sup> "Arne Kokkvoll" in *Store Norske Leksikon*.

<sup>177</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-1006, F/Fa, L0015.

<sup>178</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-1006, F/Fa, L0015.



engagement would be in possession of a legitimacy which neither activist nor trade union support could ever hope to convey. Conversely, the committee that did not count on the exiled Chilean community's support would appear devoid of legitimacy and without viable solutions for supporting the Chilean people's cause. The struggle for this segment of the solidarity movement was therefore paramount to both the committees.

Here, too, *Chileaksjonen* was in an auspicious position. Little over a month after the founding of the committee, Adolfo Henriquez, who was the chairman of the *Frente Chileno*, announced to the newspaper *Ny Tid* that they were "working closely with *Chileaksjonen*".<sup>179</sup> The *Frente Chileno* had supported the calls for a new Annual Congress proposed to *Solidaritetskomiteen* and, when that was dismissed, they had pulled out of the committee among with the founders of *Chileaksjonen*. Accordingly, the press, always ready to seize a chance to humiliate the AKP(ml), reported that "the Chileans left, the AKP remains".<sup>180</sup> Later down the line, in 1977, when another recurrent friction between the two committees arose, the exile chapters of the *Unidad Popular* and, perhaps more surprisingly, the radical Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria in Bergen would publish a joint declaration harshly condemning the AKP(ml) and *Solidaritetskomiteen*. The document assured that;

Like in 1975, we once more declare our entire support to *Chileaksjonen*, and recognise it as the only legal solidarity organ for Chile, basing itself in the broad support to the Chilean people's struggle, independently from what form this struggle may take at any given moment or of the political organisations which participate.<sup>181</sup>

Indeed, why would the Chilean exiles in Norway align themselves with *Solidaritetskomiteen*? It was the same committee which had slandered the *Unidad Popular* as "passive" and had pushed for weakening their influence within the solidarity movement. It had seemingly been more preoccupied with criticising the Norwegian government and political parties than it had been interested in pressuring them into action. In reality, there had never existed any significantly large ideological gap between the political leadership in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and large parts of the Chile-movement.<sup>182</sup> So while *Solidaritetskomiteen* was busy attacking their domestic political opponents, they were hampering cooperation with the Norwegian authorities, which the Chilean exiles in all likelihood wanted to cultivate in order

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<sup>179</sup> *Ny Tid*, 10th of November 1975.

<sup>180</sup> *Dagbladet*, 19th of December 1975.

<sup>181</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>182</sup> James Godbolt, "Solidaritet med Chile", 286.

to save Chileans and pressure the junta. Meanwhile, the Norwegian political leadership seemingly had much more in common with the *Unidad Popular* than any of them had with the leadership of *Solidaritetskomiteen*. The prominent AP figure Reiulf Steen sighed over the fact that his wife Inés Vargas, former Vice-Minister of Justice under the *Unidad Popular*, was regarded as an “outer wing revolutionary because she held somewhat the same views on life and society as the former PM Clement Attlee, the former national leaders Einar Gerhardsen and Tage Erlander..., or the Spanish PM Felipe González or the French President François Mitterand.”<sup>183</sup> The UP likely identified more with the European social democratic Old Left than it did with New Left radicals and Maoists. Similarly, the UP was much more alike the SF than the AKP(ml). In addition to this political divergence between *Solidaritetskomiteen* and the Chileans comes the fact that the Old Left guarded political influence and resources which the Chilean opposition in exile undoubtedly sought to tap into. *Solidaritetskomiteen*, now delegitimised and ridiculed by trade unions, press, and parties alike, simply could not offer anything similar to the Chileans.

What is more, the networks and resources held by the trade unions and Old Left political parties which *Chileaksjonen* had gained access to was not confined to Norway. These institutions also maintained strong ties to their sister parties around the world. The AP, for instance, had been a part of the Socialist International since 1951. Since *Chileaksjonen* had a more formalised relationship with the Norwegian political leadership and the AP than *Solidaritetskomiteen* had ever had, they were able to remain in greater contact with the solidarity movement internationally. In 1978, Kari Berit Morthensen was therefore able to represent *Chileaksjonen* at the Norwegian delegation to the World Conference of Solidarity with Chile hosted in Madrid, together with Leonard Larsen, the Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stein Ørnhøi from the Norwegian Parliamentary Group for Chile, and Martin Gunnar Knutsen, the chairman of the NKP.<sup>184</sup> Revealing the benefits of collaborating with the political leadership and the Old Left, Morthensen and Ørnhøi had only been able to attend the Madrid conference because *Chileaksjonen* received economic support from trade unions and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>185</sup> They had also been present at a “World Solidarity Seminar” in Benghazi that year, for which they had also received substantial contributions

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<sup>183</sup> Reiulf Steen, *Inés — og det elskede landet*, 12.

<sup>184</sup> *¡Por Chile! Conferencia Mundial de Solidaridad con Chile Madrid 9-10-11-12 Noviembre 1978*.

<sup>185</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

from the government. Indeed, the resources provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the LO had made it possible to do things that *Solidaritetskomiteen* could only have dreamt about. Under half a year after its creation, in 1976, it had not only received sufficient funding to join a delegation of parliamentarians and prominent jurists going to Chile, but *Chileaksjonen* also found itself in a position to host a “Chile hearing” in Oslo.<sup>186</sup> The hearing gathered jurists, politicians, trade union leaders from a host of countries and Chilean eye-witnesses providing testimonies of their experiences. In order to arrange this, *Chileaksjonen* had obtained 40 000 NOK from various organisation, in addition to a contribution of 15 000 NOK from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>187</sup> The Annual Report from that year’s congress in *Chileaksjonen* revealed the enthusiasm and optimism that was filling the organisation at the time, classifying the hearing as “undoubtedly the greatest boost that the solidarity movement has ever experienced in this country”.<sup>188</sup> That boost was only made possible due to substantial help from powerful people in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the trade unions.

Having secured the support of the Chileans in Norway and the ears of the political leadership, a mass exodus from *Solidaritetskomiteen* to *Chileaksjonen* began, as Christopher Fürst and Steinar Hansson personally went around the country converting activists to their cause, establishing new local committees where they went. In a short period of time there was a *Chileaksjonen* group in Bryne, Arendal, Oppegård, and all across the country where there had been solidarity committees. By the 1st of January 1978, *Chileaksjonen* had 3600 members all across Norway.<sup>189</sup> Meanwhile, *Solidaritetskomiteen* was in tatters.

If *Solidaritetskomiteen* was not exclusively an AKP(ml) party-building organisation before, it was by then. Practically everyone else had already left. However, this meant that they could follow the line laid out by Svorstøl at the Annual Congress. They still had local committees all around the country, but they were much smaller and weaker than they had been before. It appears that in 1977 only thirteen local committees tied to *Solidaritetskomiteen* remained in all of Norway.<sup>190</sup> Yet, with the money gathered by these local committees, among other sources, Svorstøl sent aid to resistance committees and revolutionary parties operating in

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<sup>186</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>187</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>188</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>189</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>190</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

Chile with the aim of initiating popular insurgency against the regime. But it seemed that resistance was drying up, or, at least, successfully repressed inside Chile.<sup>191</sup> No armed struggle ever managed to seriously trouble the regime.

*Chileaksjonen*, on their part, would follow an entirely different strategy in the years to come. Their focus was to cooperate with the Norwegian authorities in working towards the release of political prisoners, spreading of information on the military regime's violent practices among the general public, launching boycott campaigns on Chilean goods, and accommodating Chilean exiles coming to Norway. As working towards overthrowing the Chilean regime became gradually less of an option, strategies had to be reconsidered. Meanwhile, although the AKP(ml) had been put safely on the outside of *Chileaksjonen*, disagreements persisted into the new committee and the political foundations of the committee were still exposed to the same vagueness as we saw earlier on in *Solidaritetskomiteen*. Yet, *Chileaksjonen* had begun gathering around a new banner, or a new "empty signifier"; namely, they had adopted the worldviews and discourses of human rights. With this new foundation, alliances that had been both inconceivable and unattainable in the past were suddenly possible.

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<sup>191</sup> James Godbolt, "Solidaritet med Chile", 291.



This poster was made by *Chileaksjonen* for the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the coup in 1978. Above it reads; “5 years — the resistance is growing. Increase the support to the Chilean people”, while the slogan “We will win” appears in both Spanish and Norwegian below. The wording demonstrates that although much was different in the new committee, the imaginary surrounding the “Chilean people” seems to have persisted.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2178, X, L0001.

## 4.2. The Solidarity Movement's Human Rights Breakthrough

By the latter half of the 1970s, a socialist revolution overthrowing the military regime seemed a remote dream. In the face of the military's repression, the most prominent domestic opposition to the dictatorship was by then being led by the Catholic Church through the *Comité pro Paz* and the *Vicaría de Solidaridad* — the only opposition that the regime was unable to quell.<sup>193</sup> Even though the notion that countless Chileans were sitting on the edge of their seats waiting for the armed struggle to be unleashed still persisted among some activists within the solidarity movement, especially within *Solidaritetskomiteen*, there was a gradual recognition that Chile would not be won with arms. There were two outcomes of this recognition. On the one hand, those who had joined the movement in order to support armed struggle seemed to redirect their attention to other, “more successful” armed struggles in Latin America, notably, the *sandinistas* in Nicaragua.<sup>194</sup> It is therefore not surprising that the members of *Solidaritetskomiteen*, bent on aiding the Nicaraguan insurrectionary left in establishing a socialist state, instead went on to join an organisation for the whole of Latin America in 1979. On the other hand, those that had been interested primarily in aiding Chileans who were suffering under a repressive regime and wanted the return of a (social) democratic society, had to discover an alternative strategy to fruitless denunciations of a regime that continued to oppress its own people regardless of outside opinion. This strategy had at times only served to accentuate the political and ideological gaps that existed between the Norwegian activists and between the Chilean exiles. With these divisions in mind and the Helsinki Final Act's ratification of human rights activism in memory, human rights became the watchword of solidarity with Chile all around the world — including within *Chileaksjonen*.<sup>195</sup>

As a matter of fact, in the immediate years after its creation, the human rights emphasis of *Chileaksjonen* became increasingly more pronounced. By 1977, the political platform of the

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<sup>193</sup> Shirin Hirsch, “The United Kingdom: Competing Conceptions of Internationalism” in Christiaens et al., *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 154.

<sup>194</sup> Christiaens et al. “A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 26-27.

<sup>195</sup> The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) hosted in Helsinki, and which resulted in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, was an agreement on the principles guiding East-West relations in Europe. While the Soviet Union ended up achieving their goal of formalising their borders in Europe, the principles also committed them to recognising and protecting human rights dissidence in Eastern Europe. This, in turn, gave way to an emerging transnational network of human rights activists, whose outgrowth was among others the Helsinki Watch; Sarah B. Snyder, *Human rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*.

organisation explicitly included demands for the protection of Chileans' human rights.<sup>196</sup> From 1976, *Chileaksjonen* established what came to be the “human rights working group”, dedicating its work exclusively and exhaustingly to the protection and “adoption” of political prisoners.<sup>197</sup> On top of this, *Chileaksjonen* sent an application for financial support to every municipality in Norway in 1977, formulating itself in a succinct human rights rhetoric.<sup>198</sup> Indeed, the proceeds from the fundraiser would go to the Catholic Chilean human rights organisation, *Vicaría de Solidaridad*. This all demonstrates the salience human rights had achieved within the movement in this short period. Although the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist rhetoric persisted, they were increasingly accompanied by calls for the observance of human rights.

Human rights have often been thought to serve “as a vehicle to overcome the deeply rooted cleavages in the political landscape of Western democracies.”<sup>199</sup> Although the Norwegian terrain was clearly as rough and ravined politically as it was topographically, it is noteworthy that what was probably the main source of divisions within the Norwegian Left, the AKP(ml), had already been removed from the Chilean solidarity movement's ranks and therefore also from its human rights shift. Effectively, *Arbeiderpartiet* and the *Sosialistisk Folkeparti* had been pushed closer to one another by the advent of the AKP(ml) — a party which they both viewed with suspicion and contempt for its inherently authoritarian ideology and organisational structure. Further complicating things, although the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist foundation of *Solidaritetskomiteen* had proved unstable, it was left all but untouched going into *Chileaksjonen*. Seemingly, the members of *Chileaksjonen* did not think that these concepts were problematic as long as the AKP(ml) were not there to obfuscate their meanings. The discussions surrounding the new political platform at the creation of *Chileaksjonen* seemingly did not stop to consider that these sets of discourses and symbolisms were potentially problematic in their essence.<sup>200</sup> So, if the leftists already considered their common grounds sufficiently stable and were optimistic about bipartisan collaboration, why did *Chileaksjonen* develop such a strong human rights emphasis in their work for solidarity with Chile?

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<sup>196</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>197</sup> Norwegian: menneskerettighetsutvalget; Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>198</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2912, D, L0001.

<sup>199</sup> Jan Eckel, “The International League for the Rights of Man...”, 204.

<sup>200</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2178, A, L0001.



This image found in a pamphlet published by *Chileaksjonen* in many ways encapsulates the shifting emphasis of the solidarity movement. The recurring motif of brave Chileans resisting oppression was to an extent substituted by images like this, which instead focused on the suffering of Chileans at the hands of the junta. The text reads; “For the life and liberty of the political prisoners. Let us open the prisons in Chile”.<sup>201</sup>

In the end it seems that *Chileaksjonen*'s human rights rhetoric was aimed at something more ambitious than uniting the Left. First, it was meant to unite actors across the political spectrum under one banner. The Norwegian Parliamentary Group for Chile is an example of this, since it was a project that sought to include members from all political parties represented at *Stortinget*. “The Group’s purpose is to raise issues regarding human rights violations in Chile, through inquiries both to Norwegian authorities and international

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<sup>201</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-2178, X, L0001.



organisations”, read the mandate of the Norwegian Parliamentary Group for Chile.<sup>202</sup> Although it was spearheaded by Haldis Havrøy, who as a member of parliament for the AP likely considered the Pinochet-junta as a fascist regime, there were no denunciations of imperialism or fascism found in the Parliamentary Group’s founding documents. Indeed, the sole mandate and programme of the Parliamentary Group was founded in human rights. Havrøy, who was the driving force in the group’s formation, managed to unite together representatives from parties all over the political spectrum. Future Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik joined from the Christian democrats in the Krf, there was Johan J. Jakobsen from the agrarian centrist *Senterpartiet*, Stein Ørnhøi from the SF, and Hans H. Rossbach from the liberal *Venstre*.<sup>203</sup> After a period of hesitation, even the conservative party *Høyre* sent a representative in Jo Benkow.<sup>204</sup> With the addition of him, the Parliamentary Group had gathered representatives from all the political parties represented in *Stortinget* since the 1977 elections. Representing the whole Norwegian populace, the Parliamentary Group signalled the return of a consensus-based and corporatist civil society. This feat was made possible only through exclusively framing the group’s mandate in a human rights language.

Second, human rights held a vocabulary that strongly resonated when addressing international organisations and NGOs, as well as being the language spoken by local activists in Chile. Partly due to a slackening of repression by the military regime, human rights had expanded even further in Chile by the end of the 1970s.<sup>205</sup> Most importantly, the Catholic organisation *Vicaría de Solidaridad*, aided by the networks of the Catholic Church, developed into a “human rights NGO with international resonance”.<sup>206</sup> This organisation, funded by the World Council of Churches, served as a “unifying force” between the competing factions of the Chilean Left, which it did in large part due to its de-politicised human rights emphasis.<sup>207</sup> On their part, the Chilean Catholic opposition had partly learnt the language of human rights from activists at Amnesty International and the Organization of American States and through the United Nations, whose Ad Hoc Working Group, created in

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<sup>202</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-1006, F/Fa, L0015.

<sup>203</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-1006, F/Fa, L0015.

<sup>204</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-1006, F/Fa, L0015.

<sup>205</sup> Jan Eckel, “Explaining the Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s” in Eckel & Moyn, *The Breakthrough*, 234.

<sup>206</sup> Christiaens et al. “A Global Perspective on the European Mobilization for Chile (1970s-1980s)” in Christiaens et al. *European Solidarity with Chile 1970s and 1980s*, 29.

<sup>207</sup> Patrick William Kelly, “‘Magic Words’. The Advent of Transnational Human Rights Activism in Latin America’s Southern Cone in the Long 1970s” in Eckel & Moyn, *The Breakthrough*, 103-104.

1975, would produce damning reports on the human rights abuses in Chile.<sup>208</sup> With a stronger human rights emphasis inside of Chile and within international fora, the gospel of human rights would inevitably spread into Norway as well. Human rights activism has been compared to a boomerang, in that domestic actors blocked from influencing their governments tended to identify external actors who could exert pressure more effectively from there.<sup>209</sup> An increased human rights emphasis in Chile would in that case affect the activists in Norway as well, as the boomerang of human rights swivelled back and forth across national borders.

This thoroughgoing and transnational human rights emphasis seems to have struck a spark in the Norwegian civil society and, particularly, in the solidarity movement. That is why, in 1978, *Chileaksjonen* organised a letter-campaign, by which numerous affiliated trade unions, youth organisations, and local committees sent letters directly to Augusto Pinochet voicing their alarm due to the “systematic violations of the human rights in Chile” in support of a hunger strike organised by the family members of disappeared prisoners.<sup>210</sup> Such strategies as letter-campaigns and “adopting” political prisoners had before been exclusively the domain of NGOs such as Amnesty International. Human rights were no longer merely aspirational, and instead increasingly seemed as the most pragmatic manner of opposing the encroached junta. Although human rights definitely appears as an advantageous instrument for playing down ideological differences and finding common grounds, one should not dismiss them as mere tools. Appealing to something universal, based on empathy and respect for human dignity, they provided many with an alternative to the dogmatism and sectarianism that had characterised the period.

Human rights burst onto the late-1970s and even reached the top of the Western political leadership. At the Nobel Institute, lying on the other side of the Royal Palace from the Norwegian Parliament, Amnesty International had been declared as the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate merely ten days before the creation of the Parliamentary Group. Meanwhile, developments in the United States were surely noticed from afar, as Jimmy Carter had been elected to the presidency in 1976, promising to incorporate human rights into the

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<sup>208</sup> Patrick William Kelly, “‘Magic Words’. The Advent of Transnational Human Rights Activism in Latin America’s Southern Cone in the Long 1970s” in Eckel & Moyn, *The Breakthrough*, 104; Jan Eckel, “‘Under a Magnifying Glass’. The International Human Rights Campaign Against Chile in the Seventies” in Hoffmann, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, 324.

<sup>209</sup> Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*, 11.

<sup>210</sup> Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek, ARK-1006, F/Fa, L0015.

superpower's foreign policy.<sup>211</sup> Among other things, this led to provisions banning military aid to the Chilean junta.<sup>212</sup> 1977 did indeed look like “a year of shocking and altogether unpredictable prominence of human rights”.<sup>213</sup>

Decisive, perhaps, to the Chilean solidarity movement, human rights was adopted by youths and activists too. Could it be that the disenchantment with both the superpowers which was at the centre of the creation of both the SF and the AKP(ml) was also the main driver behind human rights' breakthrough in this period? Samuel Moyn surely thinks so, claiming that they were the “last utopia”, as socialism with a human face received its “deathblow” in Prague and Santiago.<sup>214</sup> Most utopia-seeking leftists in Norway, except the Soviet-oriented NKP, had in essence been seeking the same thing; a third way which broke with both the oppressive totalitarian socialism of the Soviet Union and the exploitative, neo-imperialist capitalism of the United States. Human rights provided a manner of surpassing the ideologically laden hypocrisies of previous decades. On the one hand, an AKP(ml)-activist could, for instance, denounce the news of cruelties inflicted by the Chilean military regime on their own population, all the while being incapable of recognising that the North-Vietnamese committed similar atrocities in Indochina.<sup>215</sup> A centre-rightist, on the other hand, could scathingly criticise the treatment of objectors in the Soviet Union, without ever voicing their concern about the repression of opposition in Chile or South Africa. Hypocrisies such as this would inevitably make every denunciation of cruelty a political argument, and therefore hampered the viability of bipartisan collaboration.

The power of human rights laid in providing a shared normative minimum between political opponents, appealing to a “nonpartisan morality” which existed “outside and above” the “soiled utopias in politics”.<sup>216</sup> Historian Jan Eckel has theorised that;

Human rights in the 1970s appear as a multifaceted promise of moral renewal that in view of the profound changes in the structure of national and international politics came to be seen as increasingly attractive both ideologically and strategically. Their essential attractiveness lay in the fact that human rights seemed to provide a way of

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<sup>211</sup> Kathryn Sikkink, *Mixed Signals*, 48-49.

<sup>212</sup> Kathryn Sikkink, *Mixed Signals*, 48-49.

<sup>213</sup> Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 121.

<sup>214</sup> Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 140.

<sup>215</sup> As we saw above, the AKP(ml)-dominated Annual Congress of 1976 viewed the FNL's atrocities as “false propaganda”.

<sup>216</sup> Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 132.

responding to the failure of older political projects, of transcending the logic of the Cold War, of basing political action on a moral foundation, and of reaching a vantage point that supposedly was above politics.<sup>217</sup>

This vantage point was indeed what *Chileaksjonen* sought in order to unify as much of the Norwegian civil society and political leadership as possible. In Norway, the network was now comprised of the trade union movement, a bipartisan parliamentary group, Amnesty International, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, journalists and media personalities, and the Norwegian Refugee Council, with *Chileaksjonen* working in close cooperation with all of them.<sup>218</sup> In addition, *Chileaksjonen* managed to increase its connections with the solidarity movement outside of Norway. It was from the late-seventies and onwards that the solidarity movement in Norway became part of what the political scientists Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink have dubbed a “transnational advocacy network” which spanned a range of societal levels.<sup>219</sup> *Chileaksjonen* gradually became connected to various UN organs, Chilean exile organisations, and the solidarity movements abroad. All of this was made possible through the unifying effects of human rights.

So it appears that human rights were not adopted in order to seal the crevices that had fissured out from opposition to the US-friendly Left’s political hegemony in the 1960s. They were rather a language which restored the prospects of forging alliances across political dividing lines, especially within a left-right axis. It made it possible to encounter the consensus which, for a long time, had been impossible to obtain.

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<sup>217</sup> Jan Eckel, “Explaining the Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s” in Eckel & Moyn, *The Breakthrough*, 228.

<sup>218</sup> James Godbolt, “Solidaritet med Chile”, 298

<sup>219</sup> James Godbolt, “Solidaritet med Chile”, 298; Keck & Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*.

## 5. Conclusion

In his tour de force of the most dramatic century in human history, Eric Hobsbawm shared his view on Western leftists' increased fascination and obsession with the booming Third World movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Speaking with his usual eloquence and keeping to his geological metaphors, he wrote:

The Third World now became a central pillar of the hope and faith of those who still put their faith in social revolution. It represented the great majority of human beings. It seemed to be a global volcano waiting to erupt, a seismic field whose tremors announced the major earthquakes to come. [...] The entire Left, including humanitarian liberals and moderate social democrats, needed something more than social security legislation and rising real wages. The Third World could preserve its ideals; and parties belonging to the great tradition of the Enlightenment need ideals as well as practical politics. They cannot survive without them.<sup>220</sup>

This need for an ideal, for an input of revolutionary élan, was unmistakably present among Norwegian leftists in the 1970s. Chile, although in many ways a reformist project, captured the imaginations of many Norwegians, as their peaceful road to socialism was the same road that many Norwegian leftists wished to walk. At this time, even the AP was sometimes proclaiming their commitment to a future socialist society in Norway — their concept of a “third way” between the Cold War’s dichotomisation. Salvador Allende’s *via chilena* in many ways incarnated this “third way” in the mind of foreign observers, not only in its brief existence, but also, and perhaps especially, after democracy fell in Chile. The fact that the agents of American imperialism and the oligarchy benefitting from it were so evidently involved coincided seamlessly with the Left’s tools for understanding the world, rooted in Marxist analysis and dependency theory. In this way, the coup in Chile struck right at the *Zeitgeist* of the early 1970s. Thus, it resonated strongly even with those who had considered the *Unidad Popular* to be reckless and revisionist, as it turned into another protest against American foreign involvement. It is therefore not strange to see the rather leftist formulations of *Solidaritetskomiteen*’s political programme, firmly founded in anti-fascism and anti-imperialism. What is more unusual, however, is the fact that *Solidaritetskomiteen*’s programme reveals that such leftist imaginaries had come to dominate the imaginary of Chile.

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<sup>220</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, 436-437.

Yet, adopting leftist exoticist imaginaries and Marxist tools without going the further steps of converting to Marxism-Leninism was not enough for some. In this way, the lessons from Chile were appropriated, domesticated, and so transformed political arguments aimed at domestic opposition. Although this was done by many, the AKP(ml) was the most aggressive, as their ideology had long led them to pronounce the inevitable failure that any “revisionist” attempt to achieve socialism would be subjected to. To them, Chile was the ultimate confirmation of the rectitude of their beliefs and the ideal criticism for their adversaries in the SF. No doubt seeing it as their duty to disseminate their view to the rest of the solidarity movement, *Solidaritetskomiteen* in due time became another arena for the polarised political contests endemic to the period.

It is important to note that, even though the Maoists had tended to generate divisions, their early involvement and initiative were crucial to the success of the solidarity movement, since it enabled an effective mobilisation of activists, whereas their demands for participation from their members made them a force to be reckoned with. That can probably help explain why the Maoists often ended up in leadership positions in solidarity committees. However, the Maoists’ offensive within the movement finally proved incompatible with a bipartisan solidarity movement, and while it was seemingly the *Sosialistisk Folkeparti* and *Arbeiderpartiet* that left *Solidaritetskomiteen*, it was in the end the solidarity movement that left the committee.

The Old Left’s access to and knowledge of the political system paired with the democratic socialists of the New Left’s activism was crucial in securing *Chileaksjonen*’s supremacy in the struggle for the solidarity movement. Interestingly, it was their convincing of the Chileans to their cause that was the conclusive development, since Chileans naturally held the strongest claim to legitimacy in the solidarity movement. This definitely proves that the Chilean exiles wielded considerable power over the solidarity movement and reminding us that their agency should not be left aside.

A desire to not step into the same quagmires that the previous committee had been swamped in, together with the increased resonance this language found internationally, made *Chileaksjonen* adopt a human rights rhetoric and a humanitarian purpose, which served to depolarise the solidarity movement. This shift made it possible to cooperate with a much larger web of actors across all societal levels. The human rights revolution occurring within *Chileaksjonen* thus had the effect of knitting the Norwegian solidarity movement closer

together with the political leadership and civil society at home, and with the NGOs, international organisations, and its sister movements operating abroad. Emerging around solidarity with Chile, an image of an even more globalised civil society in the name of human rights crystallised. Human rights streamlined the solidarity work significantly by gathering actors around common concepts and a shared language that most could come to terms with. This all sees the Norwegian solidarity movement for Chile go down in history as one of the arenas where the polycentric evolution of human rights occurred in the 1970s, shedding light on this international and transnational concept's history in the Norwegian national context. It also showcases the prominent role of human rights in the reconfiguration of the Norwegian Left.

Although the Norwegian movement in many ways reflected those of other Western European countries in that it was initially built on a radical anti-imperialist and anti-fascist foundation which in time converted into a human rights emphasis, there seems to have been some significant idiosyncrasies in the Norwegian movement. To be sure, domestications and appropriations were commonplace in solidarity movements all over Europe, but the initial prominence of the Maoists in the movement and their attempt at controlling it seems to be unique to Norway where the ideology found such fertile ground among the disgruntled youth and which developed into such a rigidly controlled movement, unlike any of its Scandinavian counterparts. The fact that the solidarity movement was able to get a foothold all over Norway, even in the rural and provincial parts of the country, testifies to the strength of not only the Maoists, but also the democratic socialists that had become such an important part of the post-1968 youth rebellion in Norway. These New Left movements were paramount to mobilising the youth to the movement and engaging them in a meaningful way.

Furthermore, the AKP(ml)'s so-called coup had struck at the roots of the traditional corporatist way of doing activism in Norway. When the movement was wrestled out of the AKP(ml)'s hands, this model seems to have been restored albeit within a much larger network connected to the international sphere. To paraphrase Hans Petter Sjøli, the Maoists' actions within the solidarity movement seems to have "made Norway more Norwegian".<sup>221</sup> In some ways, the Long Sixties of countercultural rebellion and new social movements was left behind in the solidarity movement, as Chile ended the process that the Vietnam War had begun. And so a renewed version of the Nordic model enhanced by human rights became the

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<sup>221</sup> Hans Petter Sjøli, "Maoism in Norway".

motor of solidarity with Chile. Nevertheless, only a more comprehensive work of a comparative nature would be able to encounter answers to what was particular and what was common to the Norwegian movement in relation to its counterparts in other places.

When the 1988 plebiscite for democratisation in Chile took place, *Chileaksjonen*, the anti-racist organisation *Antirasistisk Senter*, among with *Latin-Amerikagruppene* hosted an event together, with activists staying up all night anxiously waiting for the results.<sup>222</sup> After news of a democratic victory filtered through, the prominent *Arbeiderpartiet* figure Einar Førde held a celebratory speech. In front of a backdrop of posters demanding freedom and democracy, he thanked only *Chileaksjonen* for their “tireless work”. Ostensibly, there were no posters denouncing American imperialism and no mentions were seemingly given to *Solidaritetskomiteen*, whereas no snarky remarks about Allende’s “revisionism” were apparently uttered. At that point and among that audience, democracy and observance of human rights were the only requirements.

Few contemporary observers would have postulated that the death of Allende and the crushed aspirations of the Chilean Left would result in one of the most prosperous avenues through which individual human rights could make their vigorous breakthrough in the 1970s. In a surprising turn of events, Augusto Pinochet was apprehended in London in order to stand trial in Spain.<sup>223</sup> Had it not been for his release due to health issues, he would have become the first head of state to ever stand trial in a foreign court for abuses committed against his own people. In the end, the failure of his trial and the return of popular unrest in Chile last year demonstrate the very significant limitations that human rights had and still have.

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<sup>222</sup> Ny Tid, 8th of October 1988; To be precise, Chileans actually voted in 1988 on whether they should extend Pinochet’s dictatorship for another eight years. The victory of the “No” side proved to be a vital step in the process of reinstalling democracy in Chile. However, the completion of the democratic transition is often dated to 1990, when a presidential election was held resulting in Patricio Aylwin becoming the first democratically elected president in the country since Salvador Allende.

<sup>223</sup> Skidmore et al. *Modern Latin America*, 294.



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