

"THOSE WHO MAKE THE REVOLUTION HALF WAY
ONLY DIG THEIR OWN GRAVES." -- Saint Just

You've come here to mourn for two men, Dr. Salvador Allende & Pablo Neruda.

Who were they? Heroes of the people, you say. A democratic Socialist leader murdered by his own army; a Communist poet and diplomat who died of cancer. The official truth.

But the official truth only serves to conceal the truth of officials. These men were officials. Neruda was a supporter of the Russian state that massacred millions of peasants in the rush to become a capitalist country like the rest -- with a bureaucracy playing the role of the bourgeoisie. He wrote odes to Stalin. Allende, for all his posturing about democracy, tried to bring back under his rule the mines, factories and lands that the workers and peasants had taken over and were running themselves. He allowed the military to disarm those workers and peasants only two weeks before the coup that everyone but him admitted they knew was coming.

For all their differences, Neruda and Allende had a lot in common. Above all, they wanted to speak for the working class -- Neruda through his "revolutionary" verse, and Allende as a politician. They wanted, along with their parties, to lead the working class to "socialism." They thought they were "Marxists." But it was Karl Marx who wrote: "The emancipation of the workers is the task of the workers themselves." No Party which seeks to represent us can achieve socialism, because those who represent are always those who want to rule. The victorious "Communist" parties of Russia, China, North Vietnam, Cuba, Hungary and the rest became the new masters of the economy; it is they who control the wealth produced by their workers, workers who sell their lives for a wage just as we do.

In Chile, the slaughter continues, along with the appeals to "duty," "patriotism", "self-sacrifice", and hymns of praise to the Family, the Fatherland, and Work. Sound familiar? It should.

In 1936, in Spain, a terrified coalition of "Socialists" and "Democrats" who formed the government of the Republic was confronted with the threat of a military coup, carried out on behalf of the landowning class, the Church, and foreign capital. The workers appealed to the Republic again and again for arms: it refused to provide them. The result was that, despite courageous and imaginative action by the workers, armed only with revolvers, ancient rifles, and gasoline, the Army under Franco seized power over nearly half of Spain. And a year later, the people of Catalonia and Aragon, who had taken over their factories and lands and were managing them collectively, were starved out by the "Popular" government and crushed by military police under the command of the Communist Party. The very politicians and bureaucrats who stood for "peaceful revolution" organized the counterrevolution. Like Allende, they would rather accept defeat by the fascists than the humiliation of having their constituency be able to do without them.

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The real reason for the coup in Chile was the same as the real reason for the one in Spain thirty-seven years earlier. The Republicans and Socialists are not a real threat to Capital (the current Business Week states that the major U.S. holdings nationalized by Allende will not be returned), but Capital must overthrow these makers of half-revolutions because their very weakness, their parliamentary and constitutional illusion, gives the workers a breathing space to take back their own lives, to abolish the wage-system and the State and manage the whole of society through their direct democratic organizations. Such organizations were already forming in Chile at the time of the coup; the cordones industriales and comites coordinadores, workplace and neighborhood councils, "armed workers bases" that the New York Times admitted were the real reason for the coup. They had begun to seize power, and it is their delegates who are being hunted down at this moment, who are being tortured and shot.

You've come here to mourn two men, Dr. Salvador Allende and Pablo Neruda, to experience a vicarious thrill of rage and grief, not to mention guilt as members of the "oppressor nation" -- to register an impotent protest at the murder of an impotent man. But are you really so privileged? When you leave this hall you'll return to what passes for your life -- polluted air, deteriorating quality for escalating prices, the misery of work or the misery of the search for it, boredom, loneliness. Everyone knows we're entering a depression -- even our bosses admit it.

So if you must mourn, mourn for the Chilean workers and their revolutionary aspirations. They made the mistake of trusting men like Allende even for an instant, and they're paying for it. But you should know one thing: the same desire that created workers' councils in Chile exists all over the world, and it's growing. We aren't mourning for dead bureaucrats and apologists of bureaucrats: their bones are already fossilized, their very names exude the stench of a dying world. We are fighting for a social revolution here and all over the planet, for self-management of the whole of society, for real communism. WE ARE FIGHTING FOR OURSELVES. This is the best service we can perform for the people of Chile -- not Christian pity, but the active solidarity of revolutionary practice. Let the dead bury their dead!

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