

Communist Party's Jeannette Jara leads Chile's presidential polls

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In Chile's 2025 presidential race Jeannette Jara, a member of the Communist Party (PCCh) and presidential candidate for the alliance "Unidad por Chile" (Unity for Chile), is leading in the polls. November's election raises the possibility that for the first time in its 103-year history, the Chilean CP will head the executive committee of Chile's ruling oligarchy.

Unidad por Chile is a right-wing alliance which includes the pro-1973 coup Christian Democrats, President Gabriel Boric's Broad Front, the capitalist Socialist, Radical, Liberal and Humanist parties and some pseudo-left groups. It will continue and deepen the program of pro-market fiscal austerity and police state authoritarianism that has characterized the incumbent coalition "Apruebo Dignidad" (I Support Dignity). Boric's Minister of Labor until April of this year, Jara's signature "reforms" have had more in common with the International Monetary Fund's structural adjustments than any measures to ameliorate social conditions.

"Long live the individual capitalization system," José Piñera exclaimed after Jara's pension reform was passed with overwhelming congressional support last March. Piñera, who served as Minister of Labor for Gen. Augusto Pinochet in the 1980s, was the architect of the privatized pension system, regressive labor laws and other deeply anti-social and anti-working class measures entrenching extreme social inequality.

In his magazine, *Economía y Sociedad*, Piñera highlighted the new law's expansion of the private savings model by 60 percent, consolidating its validity "indefinitely" and generating an "enormous positive impact" on capital markets. Piñera is celebrating that the forced private savings of millions of workers in the Pension Fund Associations (AFPs), an amount approximating 70 percent of GDP, was intensified with the "reform," further engorging the parasitic Chilean oligarchs and international capital.

The Jara alliance will also seek to ingratiate itself with Washington, further integrate Chile's armed forces with the Pentagon's Southern Command, and support the NATO military alliance. She will closely follow in the footsteps of Boric who over the last three years attacked Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua as authoritarian to ingratiate himself with US imperialism, which is itself lurching towards dictatorship with Donald Trump's Nazification of the American state.

To not offend the current occupant of the White House, Jara's supporters in the liberal and fake left press and the trade union bureaucracies, along with her allied pundits on social media have all muted their pro-forma calls for "unity of the left" against fascism employed in every general election since 2017, when the Republican José Antonio Kast, Jara's leading rival, first ran for president. For several months now, they have steered away from this cynical campaign.

This is not because Kast has stopped presenting an immense danger to the working class and the broad mass of the population. He has promised, if elected, to mimic Trump and Milei and rule by emergency decree, place the military on the streets, expel en masse undocumented migrants and refugees, impose sweeping attacks on the working class and cut the taxes for the rich and the corporations. However, it is critical to understand that

most of these measures have already been initiated by Boric.

It remains to be seen if the Trump administration, which is threatening war against Venezuela and Latin America as a whole, will work with a "Communist." But like Boric, who became President Joe Biden's attack dog within South America, speaking at all the international forums on behalf of American foreign policy, Jara will try her hardest to please.

Jara's supporters are dutifully toeing the official line of Unidad por Chile, attacking Kast from the right. The present political and electoral thrust of Jara's campaign is to claim that Kast is fiscally irresponsible and untrustworthy because he refuses to detail how he will cut US\$6 billion from public spending. Jara, however, has a proven track record of securing business needs.

Last July *Jacobin America Latina* published a glowing appraisal of Jara's patently right-wing political CV and electoral campaign. Written by Karina Nohales and Javiera Manzi, "activists of the 8M Feminist Coordination of Chile," it expressed boundless enthusiasm for Jara's "extensive political career."

"In her role as Minister of Labor, Jara epitomized effective government management... During the campaign, her constant refrain was to highlight precisely this management capacity, particularly her ability to engage with the business community and the opposition, key players in the negotiation of (her) reforms," they wrote gushingly.

They claimed that she was not the "favored" candidate of the Communist Party but "then this distance has ended up strengthening rather than weakening the reach of her campaign."

They then quote Jara:

I do not want Chile to be subordinated to foreign governments or external models. That is why I will maintain an international policy based on independence and multilateralism, defending human rights wherever they are violated in the world.

Jara's claim of Chile's supposed "independence" is belied by the country's history—the Communist Party, her party, accounted for up to 16 percent of the thousands killed and disappeared and 21 percent of the tens of thousands detained and tortured by the US-backed 17-year military dictatorship. She repeated the same "defending human rights" argument Boric used to denounce countries historically oppressed by American imperialism.

The Feminist authors speak for a well-heeled milieu obsessed with identity politics, positions and privilege. The Apruebo Dignidad government was a blessing for a whole layer of academics, professionals, trade union bureaucrats and Feminist and LGBTQ+ careerists who were able to enter the corridors of political power.

The actual job Apruebo Dignidad was tasked with was saving capitalism from a profound crisis of rule because of explosive strikes and

demonstrations that erupted in October 2019, when long-standing and deep-seated opposition to capitalism, the state and the civilian political caste brought millions to the streets of Santiago, Valparaíso, Concepción, Antofagasta and every other regional city. The mass uprising's three general strikes and the largest demonstrations in the country's history were also in defiance of President Sebastián Piñera's imposition of a state of emergency that left 36 dead, hundreds mutilated and thousands detained and tortured in the ensuing mass sweeps.

The ruling class relied heavily upon the corporatist trade unions, the Stalinist Communist Party and the Broad Front to disorient and divert anti-capitalist sentiment behind appeals to replace the authoritarian constitution, the promotion of the parliamentary process and of "change through the ballot."

The Revolutionary Workers Party (PTR) and the International Workers Movement (MIT), and other Morenoite organizations who profess to be Trotskyist, also lent their efforts to smothering anti-capitalist opposition. Their specific technique for subordinating radicalized youth and workers to parliamentarism was to make cynical demands on the official "left" and trade union leaders, knowing full well that these ossified bureaucracies avoid, like the plague, anything that requires struggle, let alone against capitalism.

In 2021, Boric, the ex-student radical, became Chile's president in runoff elections, garnering 55.8 percent of the vote in a historic turnout of workers, students and youth.

In the lead up to the election, all the so-called "left" parties cultivated enormous expectations in Apruebo Dignidad which was promising to "bury neoliberalism," "reform" the murderous military police and replace the Junta's charter "with the most progressive constitution in the world." The "left" also placed immense pressure on the working class and youth to vote for Boric as the only way to stop Kast, the fascist, from winning.

In opposition to the euphoria over the pseudo-left's election victories, this website noted that "Boric had already shifted the axis of his platform to the right during the campaign, picking up talking points on 'security' and other issues from the playbook of his fascistic opponent." The WSWS warned that, sooner rather later, Boric would "work to immobilize the struggles of the working class ... straitjacket any movement against capitalism and at a certain point unleash state repression."

Not only state repression, but the scaffolding of a police state dictatorship began to take shape. The pseudo-left government's massive infusion of funds to the state apparatus and a whole gamut of repressive laws: the usurpation law, the Nain-Retamal (trigger happy) law, the law bringing together the various intelligence apparatuses and broadening their spying powers, a revamped Anti-Terrorist law, measures that retroactively protect state agents for the use of lethal force—were unprecedented since the return to civilian rule.

Authoritarianism is required to entrench "the accumulation of wealth at one pole (and) at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital," borrowing the words of Marx.

In 2025, the net worth of the Luksic-Fontbona family (metals, mining, banking, shipping) is estimated at US\$44billion placing it in the top 50 of Bloomberg's rich list; the late President Sebastián Piñera and family's net worth is US\$2.9billion; the late Horst Paulmann and family (retail) a net worth US\$5.5billion; Yarur Rey (banking) a net worth US\$1.3billion; Julio Ponce Lerou, Gen. Pinochet's son-in-law (chemicals, mining) a net worth US\$2.3billion; and the Angelinis (forestry, mining) a net worth US\$3.5billion.

The combined wealth of these five billionaire families amounts to US\$59.9billion. This is equivalent to 16.7 percent of Chile's GDP which is projected in 2025 to reach US\$362billion.

Defending and expanding this extreme concentration of obscene wealth

is the real legacy of Apruebo Dignidad. If she wins the presidential elections, Jara will continue this legacy.

Chile's Communist Party, from treacherous Stalinist to outright bourgeois party

While Boric's Broad Front alliance is increasingly a spent force—his approval rating hovers below 30 percent—there is a demonstrable popular groundswell around Jara.

Or more precisely, there is a significant turn to the left by the working class and the youth despite a reactionary, law-and-order and xenophobic political climate that Apruebo Dignidad has played a large part in creating and despite Jara's pro-business campaign.

Support for Jara and a leftward shift is explained by the immense expectations and illusions that have been created almost by default: Jara's association with the nominal Communist Party and the thousand and one myths surrounding the 1970-1973 Popular Unity government of which it formed a key part.

The tragedy of the Communist Party is that very early it severed any connection to Luis Emilio Recabarren who was inspired by Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky and the Russian Revolution to build the Chilean section of the Comintern in 1922.

By the 1930s, the Party was completely under the influence of Stalinism and its program of Socialism in One Country, and like all other Comintern sections, became a subservient appendage to the Kremlin bureaucracy and its foreign policy objectives.

The Chilean party adopted Stalin's "two-stage" theory of revolution, which at its heart subordinated the working class to the so-called progressive capitalists who would ostensibly overthrow the landed oligarchs and the yoke of imperialism, realizing the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution. They also adopted Stalin's "Popular Front," which argued that the threat of fascism necessitated the Communist Party forming a front with "progressive" capitalist forces and launching a war to defend bourgeois democratic rule.

The Communist Party remained wedded to these theories for four decades, promoting a national exceptionalist myth that Chile's bourgeoisie had democratic traditions and adhered to constitutional norms. It rejected any need for revolutionary struggle in favor of the "parliamentary road to socialism."

These were not mistaken ideas of misguided individuals, but the outlook of an organization that had abandoned the struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and that had been transformed, like Stalinism in every country, into a counterrevolutionary agency of capitalism within the workers' movement.

This is precisely the role it played when the Chilean working class and youth joined the international revolutionary upsurge of the masses caused by the global capitalist crisis in the late 1960s through the mid-1970s. Strikes, occupations and land seizures broke out across the country, posing the question of which class would control the means of production.

The Popular Unity government—the Communist and Socialist parties, the trade union bureaucracies, the Christian Left, MAPU and the Revolutionary Left Movement—which came to power in October 1970 on the back of radicalized masses, was, in fact, hostile to developing a revolutionary socialist strategy within the working class.

Popular Unity feared more the independent revolutionary activity of the workers than the threat of a military coup. It demonstrated its commitment to the Chilean capitalist state by mobilizing the military and the police to smash the "Cordones Industriales," rank-and-file action and defense

committees formed to fight employers' lockouts, fascist violence and the preparation for another military coup after the failed *Tanquetazo* attempt of June 1973.

Right to the last, President Salvador Allende placed his faith in the capitalist state and the forces of repression, bringing the military brass into his government where they used their positions to launch their coup, unleashing a nightmare lasting more than a decade and a half.

Jara personifies the transformation of the PCCh into an openly bourgeois party which took place more than three decades ago, when the Moscow Stalinists dissolved the USSR, plunging the masses into poverty and making oligarchic owners out of the former directors and managers of the privatized state-owned industries.

The critical question confronting the Chilean working class and youth is that of revolutionary leadership. A new party must be built based upon the genuine program of revolutionary international socialism fought for by the International Committee of the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky. Only this international party has defended the political continuity of Marxism through its implacable fight against Stalinism, Social Democracy, Pabloite revisionism and every other form of nationalist anti-Marxism.

As the working class enters new decisive struggles, amid the rise of fascism, the danger of dictatorship and threat of war in the region, it will come into direct conflict with the Communist Party, among Chilean capitalism's oldest and most astute defenders. Workers and youth must learn the lessons of the bitter betrayals and defeats the Stalinists inflicted on the working class in Chile and internationally if it is to be victorious.



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