

Chile's "left" enablers of Kast's counterrevolution

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This is the concluding part of a four-part series. Part one was published here, part two here and part three here.

The most politically significant aspect of the current situation in Chile is the role being played by the parties of the former ruling coalition—the Broad Front (FA), the Communist Party (PC), the Socialist Party (PS), and the Party for Democracy (PPD). Under former President Gabriel Boric, these parties implemented the same law-and-order agenda, the same anti-immigrant policies, the same fiscal discipline, and the same defense of capitalist property relations that the current administration of ultra-right President José Antonio Kast is now radically intensifying.

The Kast government did not emerge from a vacuum. The millions of workers who voted for Kast in December 2025 did not do so out of enthusiasm for fascism. They voted out of desperation after having been betrayed by the pseudo-left government that promised change and delivered more of the same. Kast won 310 of Chile's 346 communes. Jeannette Jara of the Communist Party, the candidate of the ruling coalition, captured only 36 communes and did not win a single commune in the southern regions. This was not a turn to the right; it was a rejection of a political establishment that had exhausted its credibility.

The evolution of the "left:" The four parties and the mega-reform

The four-month evolution of the Broad Front, Communist Party, Socialist Party, and Party for Democracy in relation to the Kast government's mega-reform cannot be understood through the lens with which these parties seek to portray themselves—as a principled "opposition" defending social rights against a far-right assault. A Marxist analysis must penetrate beneath the surface drama of negotiations, betrayals, and internal fractures to identify the class character of these organizations, the political function they perform, and the real content of their "opposition."

Before analyzing their tactical maneuvers, we must be clear about what these organizations are.

The Broad Front is a pseudo-left formation rooted in the affluent upper-middle class. As the World Socialist Web Site has documented, it is "explicitly anti-Marxist, substituting the fight to establish the political independence of the working class with the selfish concerns of the upper-middle layers for equality in corporate boardrooms and the capitalist state." Its historical function—identical to that of Podemos in Spain, Syriza in Greece, and the Democratic Socialists of America in the United States—is to ensnare radicalized youth and workers with left-sounding phraseology and dissipate their struggles into the dead end of parliamentary reformism.

Gabriel Boric's presidency (2022–2026) was a definitive expression

of this global political phenomenon. He appointed austerity-committed Mario Marcel as finance minister, slashed spending, showered the Carabineros militarized police with funds, and rammed through 15 pieces of repressive security legislation. The Broad Front is not a bulwark against the right. Rather it provides "progressive" cover for policies the right could never legitimize on its own.

The Communist Party is a Stalinist organization that severed any connection to revolutionary socialism within just a few years of its founding in 1922. By the 1930's it had adopted Stalin's "two-stage" theory of revolution, which subordinated the working class to the so-called "progressive national bourgeoisie," when no such section of the ruling class existed. During the 1970–1973 Popular Unity government, the Communist Party feared the independent mobilization of the working class far more than the threat of a military coup, the results of its policy written in blood by Pinochet's forces and 17 years of dictatorship.

During the restoration of civilian rule, the Stalinist party completed its transformation into an outright bourgeois organization, serving as junior coalition partner to President Michelle Bachelet and providing critical support to Boric's government. The new generation leading the party is, like the Broad Front, rooted in the affluent upper-middle class. Key cadre—Jeannette Jara as Labor Minister, ex-student radical Camila Vallejo as government spokesperson—administered austerity and police-state policies. In 2025, Jara ran for president on a platform that competed with the right on immigration and security. The Communist Party is not the "historic party of the Chilean working class;" it is a party of the bourgeoisie that uses the memory of workers' past struggles to betray them.

The Socialist Party and Party for Democracy are bourgeois reformist organizations of the old center-left Coalition of Parties for Democracy (Concertación) and New Majority. For 30 years after the dictatorship, they preserved and strengthened every pillar of Pinochet's neoliberal agenda—privatized pensions, two-tier health care, labor repression, constitutional protections for capital—while presenting themselves as the "democratic" alternative to the right.

The Socialist Party (PS) was founded in 1933 as an explicitly anti-Marxist and anti-Internationalist organization. It was from the beginning an instrument of capitalist rule, albeit with a mass working class base. Following the US-backed coup that toppled the reformist government of Socialist Party President Salvador Allende the PS was transformed into one of the instruments for the US-backed restoration of civilian rule. PS President Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) led a neoliberal government: his corporate tax rate at 17 percent was lower than what Kast now proposes. The PPD was created as the "instrumental party to bypass the PS's nominal socialist identity

while pursuing identical policies. Neither party has any connection to the working class. Their social base is the professional-managerial strata and sectors of the bourgeoisie that prefer a more “stable” form of class rule than the far right offers.

The Christian Democratic Party, which forms part of this “opposition” bloc, is a right-wing bourgeois party. It was the party of the 1973 coup’s enablers, of the civilian restoration’s architects, and of every major neoliberal reform since 1990. Its inclusion in the “opposition” coalition is not an anomaly—it reveals the coalition’s true character.

The real function of the parliamentary opposition

What, then, has been the political function performed by this bloc of parties over the past four months?

The answer is that they are managing the political fallout from a reform that the Chilean ruling class needs but that threatens to provoke social opposition. Their “opposition” is not directed against the capitalist system the mega-reform serves, but at mitigating the political and electoral consequences of being seen to support it. This is a division of labor.

The Broad Front engages in rhetorical maximalism. But in practice, its opposition is anemic and strictly parliamentary. It submits amendments within the legislative framework. It appeals to the Constitutional Court—an institution of the bourgeois state. It calls for “unity” with parties that administered the same austerity it now condemns. Its function is to contain opposition within safe institutional channels.

The Communist Party plays the role of labor disciplinarian. Its framing—the reform as an assault on “workers’ gains,” the 40-hour week, labor conditions—is calibrated to its trade union apparatus. The PC’s opposition is equally parliamentary: amendments, Constitutional Court challenges, Senate votes. The party that used its union apparatus to shut down industrial action during the 2019 uprising is not about to call a general strike against Kast’s reform. Its “defense of workers” consists of press conferences and legal briefs.

The PS and PPD play the role of “responsible” negotiators that can “improve” the reform through dialogue. This posture serves to legitimize the framework of the reform. By negotiating within the government’s parameters of accepting the corporate tax cut, accepting the principle of tax stability, accepting the reintegration of the tax system, the PS-PPD implicitly accept that the reform’s core is legitimate and that the only question is its precise calibration. It also provides political cover for the reform’s eventual passage.

This is the division of labor that has characterized Chilean “left” politics since the restoration of civilian rule.

The most revealing episode of the four-month drama was the PPD senators’ agreement with Jorge Quiroz, Kast’s finance minister, and its subsequent collapse. On July 8 Senators Araya, Celis, and Carvajal negotiated a deal on tax stability, only to see Quiroz introduce an amendment lowering the corporate tax rate to 22 percent, that is, one point below the 23 percent that was the explicit basis of negotiations. The PPD senators declared themselves “betrayed.” The agreement collapsed by July 10. Their “shock” was a calculated political posture. They are not naive lambs who failed to understand the nature of the wolves with whom they were dealing. They are seasoned bourgeois politicians.

The opposition is now threatening to appeal to the Constitutional Court over tax stability, the ultimate expression of commitment to bourgeois legality. The Constitutional Court is an institution of the capitalist state. Its function is to adjudicate disputes within the ruling

class and to ensure that legislation conforms to the constitutional framework that protects private property.

What is absent from the opposition’s arguments is as significant as what is present. Nowhere does the opposition call for the working class to organize independently against the reform. Nowhere does it call for strikes, demonstrations, or mass mobilization. Nowhere does it argue that the reform should be defeated by extra-parliamentary means. Nowhere does it connect the mega-reform to the broader crisis of capitalism or call for the socialist transformation of society. That would be asking too much.

The way forward

The Kast government’s program represents a social counterrevolution. It aims to roll back the limited social gains of the post-dictatorship period, to concentrate wealth and power even further in the hands of the oligarchy, to dismantle environmental protections, to criminalize social protest, and to discipline a working class that erupted in 2019 and has never been really subdued.

The Chilean “left” parties cannot and will not lead the resistance to this assault. Their strategy is to manage the crisis on behalf of the ruling class, to contain social anger within parliamentary channels, and to position themselves as the “responsible” alternative for the next electoral cycle. This is a trap. As the *World Socialist Web Site* has repeatedly documented, the political descendants of the forces that straitjacketed the working class ahead of the September 11, 1973, coup are today playing the same role. The Broad Front, the Communist Party, and the Socialist Party are not a bulwark against fascism, they are its enablers.

What is required is the building of a new revolutionary international leadership, sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in Chile and across Latin America, capable of uniting workers across national boundaries in the struggle against capitalism, imperialism, and war. The working class must break with the pseudo-left and the trade union bureaucracy, which have transformed the unions into instruments of corporate management. Workers must build independent rank-and-file committees to fight for their interests against the existing organizations. The working class must develop its own political party, based on a socialist program, that fights for the expropriation of the banks and major corporations, the dissolution of the repressive state apparatus and its replacement by organs of workers’ power, and the international unity of the working class against all capitalist governments.

Kast’s mega-reform is a declaration of class war. The working class must prepare its response—not in the corridors of Congress, where the pseudo-left begs for amendments, but in the streets, the workplaces, and the communities, through the mobilization of its collective power. The crisis of Chilean capitalism is deepening. The task is to ensure that the working class emerges from this crisis not as the victim, but as the gravedigger of the system that has produced it.

Concluded.



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