

12/7/70

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RARS-17



RESEARCH STUDY
BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

DECAPTIONED

December 7, 1970

Chile Project (#S199900030)

U.S. Department of State

Release Excise _____ Deny _____

Declassify: In Part _____ In Full CHILE: THE LEFTIST REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

Exemption(s) _____

The Leftist Revolutionary Movement (MIR), although not a member of Marxist President Salvador Allende's Popular Unity coalition, will continue to urge its radical line on the new administration. This paper attempts to analyze the MIR's origins, organization and ideology.

ABSTRACT

The Leftist Revolutionary Movement (MIR) is the largest and best organized of Chile's ultra-left groups. It is estimated that the MIR numbers approximately 500 hard-core militants, and the membership may total as many as 1,000. It is estimated further that the MIR may be able to mobilize a few thousand more supporters. Most militants are university students or ex-students who were either expelled from the youth wings of the Communist or Socialist parties for their extremist ideas or who resigned because those parties were not as radical as the students wished.

The MIR's avowed goals are the destruction of the existing order and the subsequent establishment of a socialist state. Armed struggle is believed to be inevitable. The masses, however, must attain a certain level of awareness before they join the "people's vanguard" to "tear down" society, and it is the duty

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of the Miristas to educate them. The MIR philosophy with regard to elections is guided by expediency, i.e., elections are acceptable in some cases and to be scorned in others.

Mirista activity has not been confined to issuing anti-establishment philosophical statements. Not only has the organization staged demonstrations and bank robberies, but Miristas have also set up guerrilla training schools. One such school that was discovered contained maps of bridges and rural areas, plans of army camps, military and guerrilla training manuals, ammunition, bombs and Molotov cocktails. There is evidence that Cuba has assisted in training Miristas for guerrilla warfare by providing schooling in Cuba to selected MIR leaders.

The antagonisms between the MIR and the Communist party--papered over during the 1970 presidential election campaign--are once again coming to the fore. The Communists condemn the MIR for its revolutionary tactics and its "irresponsible" activities, while the MIR attacks the Communists as lacking the proper revolutionary attitude.

There is no unified Socialist view of the MIR. The Allende wing rejects the strong-arm tactics as counter-productive and urges political compromise. The more radical Altamirano wing has close ties with the MIR and has even helped establish several guerrilla training schools.

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Although the MIR did not join the Popular Unity coalition (UP), it did tend to support the Allende candidacy, e.g., by toning down its rhetoric and by curtailing activities during the campaign. The MIR will probably give Allende some time to spell out his program and begin implementing it. If the MIR becomes convinced that Allende is too much the politician, and that his steps toward a socialist state are either too few or too slow, revolutionary activity will probably be resumed. Miristas will be more certain than ever that basic changes can not be made through "bourgeois" processes, and more determined to persuade the masses of this belief.

Allende will probably follow a live-and-let-live policy with respect to the MIR at the outset. He has already decreed an amnesty for persons being held only for political crimes. There are reports that Allende might use MIR personnel in a security role either as body guards or to staff intelligence units. At the same time Allende can be expected to monitor closely MIR activities with a view to determining how much support the organization has among the slum dwellers. If Allende's intelligence convinces him that the MIR is working at cross purposes with the government by agitating for more radical changes, he can be expected to move to neutralize the organization partly by accommodations and partly by intimidation. Both sides will seek to avoid a confrontation, aware that violence

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could work to the advantage of those who might be seeking to overthrow the government. Nevertheless, if the MIR continues to grow as a political organization among the urban poor it could become an embarrassing and troublesome group for Allende and his government.

INR/American Republics
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Extension : 22557
Drafting date: 11/27/70
Released by : *WJ*

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Birth

The MIR was founded in 1962 by a handful of university student revolutionaries, who early showed their intolerance of political compromise in their relations with other movements. During the first several years of its existence, the MIR devoted its efforts to drawing up a political program, recruitment, publicity, and mass mobilization (mainly of students). Its cohesion as a political group was first evident when Miristas won the Student Federation election at the University of Concepcion in 1967, a power base which enabled MIR to extend its influence among student groups. Concepcion remains a center of Mirista activity, and is probably the base of operation of a small council of 5-6 members that directs the movement. On the University of Chile campus in Santiago, Mirista strength is centered in the pedagogico (the Pedagogic Institute), which is controlled by a uneasy coalition of Communists, Socialists and Miristas.

Composition

It is estimated that the MIR numbers approximately 500 hard-core militants and the membership may total as many as 1,000. It is estimated further that the MIR may be able to mobilize a few thousand more supporters. Originating as a university-based movement, the MIR continues to be directed by a core of students and ex-students (mainly upper-middle class), although it has extended its influence from the university into the slum areas, unions, and secondary schools, where Miristas actively recruit converts. Nevertheless, the majority of MIR activists are ex-members of the Communist Youth (JJCC) or the Socialist Youth (JS), who either were expelled for their extremist ideas or dropped out because these parties were not as radical as students wished.

The MIR apparently advanced to a fairly sophisticated level of organization due largely to strict control of the movement by two principal leaders: Miguel Enriquez, Secretary General, and Luciano Cruz, second in command until June 1970. Cruz, the 26-year-old son of a former army officer, attended the University of Concepcion School of Medicine. In 1964 he was expelled from the Communist Youth for his extremist views and quickly joined the MIR. The 1967 Student Federation elections resulted in his election to the presidency on a MIR-Socialist University Brigade coalition ticket, a position from which the charismatic youth was influential in extending the boundaries of the MIR's power. Miguel Enriquez, son of the ex-rector of the University of Concepcion, is the hard-line ideologist of the MIR and behind-the-scenes

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architect of its activity. He and Cruz ruled the MIR with an iron hand until recently, when a difference of opinion over tactics resulted in Cruz' expulsion from his position of leadership. Internal rivalries for leadership have resulted during recent months in a splintering of various factions from the MIR.* It is likely that Enriquez replaced Cruz as a step in a plan to consolidate his control over the movement during a time of internal dissension.

Ideology

With the rhetoric of revolutionaries, Miristas espouse the doctrine of "power to the people", declaring defiantly that the masses will be driven to break with the established order by the realization of their exploitation. Revolution is inevitable, since a true socialist state can be achieved only by armed struggle. The Cuban example will be repeated. However, the masses must attain a certain level of awareness before they join the "people's vanguard" to carry out destruction of the existing order, and it is the duty of the Miristas to educate them.

With the destruction of the existing order and the building of socialism its principal goals, the MIR has scheduled its political program to evolve through three stages. The first is organizational and involves recruitment, perfection of mass mobilization tactics, and publicity. The second phase, through which the MIR considers itself presently to be passing, is paramilitary, in which Miristas prepare for armed struggle by receiving training in guerrilla fighting and in anti-police action. A main goal in this phase of Mirista evolution is to cause the public to question the legality of the regime by provoking extra-legal action on the part of the police and the military and, at the same time, to convince the people that the MIR is capable of helping them confront the police. The final stage in the Miristas' political program is the military one during which political and military instructors for guerrilla fighting are trained, following the example of the Cuban Revolution. Cadres and support groups are to be formed and, with the aid of an atmosphere of heightened tension caused by either a national or international event, the Chilean Revolution will be launched. This Mirista-led revolution will be carried out through armed action in the countryside by city trained cadres.

* The Vanguardia Organizada del Pueblo (VOP) is considered to be a splinter of the MIR, although the relationship between the two has never been satisfactorily established. Styles are similar. Many robberies and armed incidents have been attributed to VOP over the past year, and it is quite possible that the terrorists claimed allegiance to VOP rather than to their own party in an attempt to confuse the authorities.

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The Mirista philosophy with regard to elections is guided by expediency. Participation in the electoral process is avowed to be "fighting on enemy ground"; since elections never result in giving power to the masses, the MIR disavows their value as a political process. However, the MIR is aware of the value of elections as a means to its end of building a socialist state. When the movement stands to gain from the electoral process, such as selection of university leaders or delegates to a union congress, Miristas do not appear to be bothered by the thought of operating on "enemy ground". The 1968 congress of the major labor confederation (CUTCh) was attended by approximately fifty Miristas. In view of their vacillating opinion of the electoral process, the MIR reaction to the recent presidential election is not unusual. Before September 4, Miristas reiterated their lack of respect of election results, thus preparing the way for protest if Alessandri or Tomic was elected. Once Marxist Allende won the first majority, however, the MIR pledged to defend his victory. At the same time it conditioned its support with demands that he follow a revolutionary rather than a conciliatory path as President.

Activity

Mirista activity has by no means been confined to issuing anti-establishment philosophical statements. The group has continuously engaged in disruptive activities: the organization of demonstrations, bombing of anti-revolutionary establishments such as the El Mercurio newspaper office, distribution of inflammatory handbills to workers and occupation of university buildings during campus disorders. In early summer of 1970 a rash of bank robberies was undertaken by the MIR to finance its activities. This tactic, however, may already be passé due to the negative reaction of the public.

The flamboyant, disruptive tactics of the MIR have obscured its potential as an effective political force. Guerrilla training schools and rural camps discovered by carabineros indicate a high degree of organization and a fairly sophisticated communications system. One training camp discovered in a mountainous region is an example of guerrilla training in earnest. Pockmarked with craters left by dynamite explosions, the camp was built with military-style log barracks, camouflaged, and was protected by various secret exits. Maps of bridges and rural areas, plans of army camps, military and guerrilla training manuals, ammunition supplies, and stocks of bombs and Molotov cocktails were found, as well as plans for future activities and information on the MIR members, according to carabinero reports. (The carabineros, however, have been notably unsuccessful in penetrating the MIR, regardless of the stores of secret information they claim to have unearthed.)

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Miristas appear to have assumed the role of profesores of revolution in Chile. As disciples of guerrilla warfare they claim the responsibility of briefing various leftist groups on communication methods, security measures, and insurgency. Evidence indicates that guerrilla schools have served to train small cells of the MAPU (a Christian Democrat leftist splinter party which joined the UP), members of the Popular Socialist Union (USP), and Socialist Party members as well as fellow Miristas.

Cuba has evidently assisted in training MIR members for guerrilla warfare. Both Cruz and Enriquez spent several months in Cuba. The Uruguayan Tupamaros, who are much admired by the Miristas, also may have given some assistance. Why the MIR has not yet attempted a kidnapping is a matter for conjecture. The Allende election may explain recent Mirista discretion. Also, in the past, the Chilean Government has imprisoned a relatively small number of Miristas, thus keeping MIR motives for kidnapping low. The principal need of the movement has been to finance projects, such as the squatter settlements (see below), and the bank robbery tactic has been quite lucrative. Thus kidnapping does not seem to have been necessary, either for financial or political reasons.

Peasants, slum dwellers, and workers are targets of increased Mirista activity. A significant tenet of the MIR philosophy is to educate the people to a level of greater awareness of the need for revolution, rather than to expect them to follow blindly the MIR vanguard. Thus activity in the slums is partially concentrated on education and improving living conditions. A number of Miristas have moved into the slums and, are engaged (reportedly with a high degree of success), in literacy campaigns, rehabilitation of youths (for the service of the working class), and establishment of schools and clinics. Progress among the poor has been especially evident in ex-strongholds of the Christian Democrats, who have of late neglected this group, and it is viewed with increasing concern by the Communists. At present the bulk of Mirista efforts is devoted to the urban masses, but the future will possibly see an increasing emphasis on activity in the rural areas.

One of the most effective activities directed at the masses is the Mirista sponsoring of the illegal "land grabs", in which they morally and financially (with proceeds from their robberies) assist squatters to invade and occupy large plots of land belonging to the "exploiting" class. Several such squatter settlements are supported by the MIR and constitute a source of political support for the MIR.

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In a recent experiment the MIR tested its communications system and its ability to mobilize workers in the slums. The occasion was a general strike of the Chilean Workers Central (CUTCH), during which the Communists and Socialists were involved in directing activity at the center of the city. As part of a long campaign to discredit Communist and Socialist loyalty to the urban poor, Miristas used radio broadcasts to convince the workers that the organized parties had "abandoned" them. Working from the outskirts with Miguel Enriquez directing the activity, Miristas put into action a plan to cut off the city of Santiago by barricading the major entrances with the aid of the workers. Coordination was accomplished with a communications system consisting of private telephones with messengers standing by with reserve telephones in case the lines were being tapped. While the degree of success is unclear, MIR feels that it demonstrated its potential for seriously disrupting Santiago by mobilization of the masses and infiltration of key public utilities such as telephone and electric plants.

The MIR: Its Allies and Enemies

The Communist Party of Chile (PCCh). With epithets such as "infantile revolutionarism" and "new fascism", the Communist Party of Chile condemns the MIR for its revolutionary tactics and "irresponsible" activities. Miristas in turn accuse the Communists of being radishes: red on the outside, white on the inside. The breach between the Moscow-oriented peaceful coexistence line and the ideology of armed struggle inspired by the Cuban and Chinese example has kept the MIR and the Communists intensely suspicious of each other. Publicly, the PCCh writes the MIR off as a bunch of wild-eyed radical kids. Yet the MIR poses a very real threat to the Communists. First of all, the Communists are afraid that MIR activities could precipitate a confrontation situation between the government and the MIR which might serve as a pretext for the Armed Forces to take control if public order deteriorated. Second, MIR accusations that the PCCh is a bourgeois organization, composed of "appeasement-minded reformers" and dulled by the opium of elections and parliament, have been widely circulated and appear to have affected Communist support, especially in the squatter settlements, where MIR progress in extending its influence has greatly disturbed the PCCh.

Socialist Party (PS). The Mirista "friendship" with the PS is more difficult to analyze. Association with the MIR has caused the PS many problems in its partnership with the Communists. However, the Socialist Party is not united in embracing the politics of the MIR. Opinions seem to rally around two poles. Salvador Allende and Aniceto Rodriguez, Secretary General of the Socialist Party, represent the

traditional Socialists who reject the strong-arm tactics of the MIR and other leftist groups as counter-productive. Nevertheless, in certain circumstances Allende could find the MIR useful, i.e., if he wanted to underline the radical consequences of obstructing his more "moderate" program. Other Socialists rally around Senator Carlos Altamirano and are more extremist, advocating armed struggle. It is this branch that has closest ties to the MIR, and also has the most influence over the youth branch of the Party. Senator Altamirano, a university professor hostile to the Communists, won much popularity among radical youth when he delivered a lecture to his classes at the University of Concepcion in 1968 avowing the need to organize armed violence now and expressing his desire to turn Concepcion into a model "red university". Altamirano was soon nominated by all leftist student groups as a candidate for rector of the University; he was also arrested by the Chilean Government for posing a threat to national security, and was deprived temporarily of his senatorship. Senator Maria Elena Carrera also maintains close relations with the MIR as well as with the Socialist Youth (JS). The JS appear to be the MIR's closest ally in the business of making revolution, taking the MIR side during conflicts with the UP, thus causing their elders to tread softly in fear of alienating the youth. Some of the more extremist Socialist Youth work so closely with the MIR that they are considered to have dual membership.

There is a definite linking of efforts between the PS and the MIR in the sponsorship of guerrilla training schools. It is probable that a militant branch of the PS has established several of the schools and entrusted Miguel Enriquez with their direction. Allende, of course, disclaims any association of his party with the Socialists detained during raids of these schools, but it is likely that Altamirano has a hand in this activity.

Aftermath of the Election

In the interim between Allende's plurality election and the congressional run-off election there was an atmosphere of heightened tension and uncertainty, with numerous rumors of impending moves to deny Allende the presidency. In that atmosphere the MIR worked to project an image of dedication to the Popular Unity cause. The fundamental task of the movement, a MIR communique declared, was to organize politically and militarily for the political struggle of October 24 to defend Allende's victory. The MIR stand apparently flowed from a judgment that the election of Allende is another step toward revolution, resulting from the increased mobilization and politicization of the masses, and that as such it should be defended.

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Thus the MIR generally abstained from any activity that might have endangered Allende's chance of assuming the presidency. This abstention, however, should not be interpreted as submissiveness to the UP.

The MIR will give Allende several months' time to spell out his program and begin implementing it. The MIR quickly repudiated a declaration attributed to the Tupamaros which said that the Tupamaros would stand with the MIR in their fight against the "pseudo-left" (i.e., Communists). Although Allende has often stated that only those who belong to the UP will influence government policy, Miristas may seek to influence and radicalize the government through their "allies", the left wing members of MAPU. Since MAPU is a member of the UP, its adherents have received a number of government positions. If the MIR becomes convinced that Allende is a politician seeking primarily to stay in office, and is moving too slowly toward a socialist state, it will probably resume revolutionary activity, more certain than ever that basic changes cannot be made through "bourgeois" processes, and more determined to persuade the masses of this belief.

The Communists continue to be hypersensitive; some have accused the MIR and the right of working hand-in-hand to provoke a military coup. The PCCh reportedly also fears that since the UP program cannot be implemented immediately, they will soon be subjected to embarrassing criticism from the MIR. Illegal land and building seizures with which MIR has been involved are also causing concern. Not surprisingly, the Communist newspaper El Siglo has been pushing a strong anti-MIR line.

Allende will probably follow a live-and-let-live policy with respect to the MIR at the outset. He has already decreed an amnesty for persons being held only for political crimes. There are reports that Allende might use MIR personnel in a security role either as body guards or to staff intelligence units. At the same time Allende can be expected to monitor closely MIR activities with a view to determining how much support the organization has among the slum dwellers. If the MIR grows, Allende as well as the Communists will try, probably with some success, to infiltrate it in an effort to guide policy along lines compatible with the government. This would probably lessen the MIR threat. If Allende's intelligence should convince him that the MIR is working at cross purposes with the government by organizing large groups or by agitating for more radical changes, he will probably move to neutralize the organization partly by accommodations and partly by intimidation. Both sides will seek

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to avoid a confrontation, aware that violence could work to the advantage of those who might be seeking ways to overthrow the government. Over time the MIR may well undergo the fractionalization so characteristic of Chile's extreme left, with the formation of various pro and anti-government factions. In any event, the MIR could become an embarrassing and troublesome group for Allende and his government.

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