This article deals with the development of an alternative popular system of communication in Chile as a direct response to the military regime which overthrew the constitutional government of President Salvador Allende September 11, 1973. The rigid control imposed upon the means of communication and cultural expression in general, generated a peculiar response on the part of the popular sectors of the country.

Part one of the article deals with the formation of the modern state and the insertion of the armed forces in it. It will be suggested that in the case of Chile, the armed forces have imposed a military state which has suppressed, subordinated, and taken control of the functions appropriate to other sectors of the state: the parliament, executive and judicial power, education, media, etc. Next, the article briefly discusses the imposition of the National Security Doctrine and its effects in the media. It will be argued that by promoting a "protected" and "restricted" type of society, which favours the interest of the ruling class and big capital, the ground for the emergence of an alternative popular system of communication was created. This became a form of resistance and organization which challenges traditional political and communication studies (at least in Chile). It is not merely the expression of a combination of different cultural expressions; nor is it the classical working class press in the Marxist-Leninist sense. It refers to a combination of mechanisms, which by taking into consideration the socio-political and economic reality of the country, promotes and encourages popular participation. It also serves to express peoples' class alliances, specially since the military regime has closed all the spaces for political expression and participation.

The Theory of Dependency provides the elements for analysis of the modern military state in Chile. Interviews with popular journalists, social communicators, street actors, poets, musicians, etc., were conducted by the semi-legal video-collective TELEANALISIS, which provided the data for discussion of popular communication. I conclude that this system of communication is a powerful political tool and predict that it will play a significant role in Chile's continued search for freedom and democracy.

Editor's Note: This contribution was completed before the October 1988 referendum in which the majority of Chileans voted against the continuation of the regime of General Pinochet.
The Modern State And The Armed Forces

The concept of national state was born during the 16th century in Europe. It was understood as a political entity in charge of centralizing and reinforcing the political power which, during the feudal period, had remained under control of the crown. The state in this view was designed to create a wider political organization to facilitate the economic dynamics of capitalism. It laid the foundation for the existence of a big market, large scale production, and massive consumption of commodities manufactured by the growing industrial sector. Among the various complex ramifications of the rise of the modern state was the development of a centralized military force under the direct control of the central government. The existence of private armies organized by barons was considered legitimate during feudal times. Under extraordinary circumstances, or conditions of severe threat to their territories, the barons made their armies available to the kings. This method was inconvenient and awkward and contributed to the weakness of central governments until the 16th century.

From the moment that Niccolo Machiavelli (1513) wrote his well-known book *The Prince*, the maintenance of a "monopoly of violence" in the hands of the state became a political principle. This characteristic still obtains in all political systems whether capitalist, socialist, democratic, or dictatorial. There is a consensus that within a state only one organized military can exist, and it must be subordinate to the central political authority. When this principle is violated conditions conducive to the eruption of a civil war begin to exist. This constitutes the most serious threat confronting a state.

In a democratic system this "monopoly of violence" implies well-defined responsibilities. There is a need to regulate the military personnel and restrict them to narrowly defined functions while, at the same time, holding them responsible to make professional determinations proper to their sphere. The armed forces, (in the way that society understands them today), constitutes a particular arm of the state. The members are similar to other civil servants who obtain their incomes from public funds and who obey legally appointed civil authorities. Yet the military personnel have a resource which are unlike the resources of any other public workers. These resources are the weapons that the nation provide them for its defense. In view of the inherent threat which control of weapons implies, the members of the armed forces must be ruled by certain principles which define and control their position within the state: professionalism, hierarchical authority structure, and subordination of the whole to the civil authority represented by the President of the Republic or Prime Minister depending upon the nature of the political system (*Separata de Educacion Publica #12 [SED] June, 1988*).

Historical experience, nevertheless, demonstrates that the armed forces have exceeded their professional responsibilities on many occasions. For example, there have
been instances when the military have used their power and weapons outside the realms that society recognizes as legitimate. As a result, the armed forces interfere with the normal functioning of the state and create complicated, and sometimes embarrassing, situations leading to severe political crises. It is not coincidence, then, that some states maintain rigid supervision over their armed forces. Such is the case with the United States and the Soviet Union, the two world superpowers with importantly different political and socio-economic systems. Each maintains civil control over their military forces and neither superpower has ever faced an armed rebellion by their military institution.

This condition, however, does not seem to characterize the dependent states of the Third World. This is, certainly, the case in Latin America where the armed forces of many of the nations have interfered with the functions of the state not proper to the military. Such interference can be seen to be an important factor contributing to the poverty and backwardness of the region. Improper interference of this sort can be defined as "militarism" and has taken many forms. Initially, it took the form of caudilismo which consisted of rebellion and generalized uprising on the part of the intermediate echelons against the higher ranking personnel, and civilian authorities. However, "militarism" began to appear in a new form, especially during the 1960's and 1970's when a chain of coup d'etat occurred in the region: Brazil in 1964, Argentina in 1966, Brazil again in 1968, Bolivia in 1972, Chile in 1973, Uruguay in 1976. This period ushered in the military state where the armed forces as a whole suppress, subordinate, and take control of the various functions of government appropriate to other sectors of the state. In the military state, parliament, the judiciary, the executive, the educational system, the media, and so forth, have been taken over by the armed forces (Vasconi: 1977).

The Chilean Military State

The military state appears when class confrontation sharpens the rift between the dependent productive and accumulative processes of a country. In other words, the military state is one response to a global crisis between the productive forces, on the one hand, and those who control the dependent productive apparatus of any particular country, whether that control is exercised from inside or outside or both. The military state is organized to accomplish the following functions: 1) to recover the economic losses inflicted by deposed populist and nationalistic governments which had applied socio-economic and political programs oriented to favour the popular and working sectors of the country, 2) to stop nationalization of banks and natural resources, and 3) to eliminate protectionist barriers against foreign capital and corporations.

Theoretically, this expression of the state does not fit the meaning of classic fascism in which a political organization (i.e. the fascist party) takes over the state apparatus and its leadership from the outside (Poulantzas, 1971: 118). In the Chilean situation, the reaction came from within the state itself through the armed forces
relying on the natural leadership of its high command, which had assumed all functions of that state (Vascon, 1977: 53). The main characteristic of this new military state was the establishment of an alliance between the High Commands of the Armed Forces and the financial sectors who thought to open up the gates to foreign capital in order to improve the economy of the country. But in order to attract foreign capital it was necessary to create a suitable and attractive financial environment so that it could reanimate dependent local capitalism in the region. Thus, the economies of these states were organized to stop the inflationary process and to impose a "liberal" economic model in which the main objectives were: 1) reduction to a minimal level of state expenditures, and 2) total privatization of the productive apparatus by reducing the role of the state to that of developing and maintaining peaceful and advantageous productive conditions. In addition, there was an elimination of price control policies through the process of implementing a free market model, imposing one rate of exchange of currency, and ending protectionist barriers to the national industry, which now had to become competitive within the international market. But, most important, was wage control which, in addition to increasing the intensification of the use of labour, imposed a policy of super-exploitation of labour upon the working class (Marini, 1974: 54).

The military state required a total paralysis of the working class and popular sectors, and at the same time, the imposition of ideological domination of the ruling class. The former was usually achieved through violence against the people perpetrated by the armed forces, and by the destruction of trade unions, political parties and organizations; in addition, the prohibition of collective bargaining, suspension of the right to strike, and many other socio-political and economic rights acquired during the past decades. Promotion of ideological domination on the part of the ruling class were implemented by the imposition of trade union leaders faithful to the regime, military control of universities, massive expulsion of academics, staff and students opposed to the new military program, elimination of critical studies mainly in the area of social sciences, and a rigid control of the media (Gilbert, et al, 1984: 2-13). After the coup d'etat of September 11, 1973, radio and T.V. stations, newspapers, magazines and journals suffered severe concentration and censorship. The members of the media supporting Allende's government, journalists, artists, intellectuals, and workers in general were expelled from their laboural sources, imprisoned, assassinated, or exiled. Repression against the media included those of the Christian Democratic Party who had directly, or indirectly, supported the military adventure of General Pinochet and the CIA. Newspapers and radio stations belonging to this party were closed down while those belonging to the political parties that made up the Popular Unity government were confiscated or destroyed by the military. They were never returned to their owners. Not a single space was left to those who disagreed with the military junta, nor any space available to denounce the atrocities and crimes being committed by the armed forces in that dirty war justified as a crusade against international communism. The Church, mainly the Roman Catholic Church, was the only institution
to defend human rights and to provide material and spiritual consolation to the people. The Church became the people's voice in a society condemned to silence.

National Security Doctrine And The Media

Between 1973 and 1980, the only news or information broadcast or published in the Chilean media was that strictly authorized by the military regime. The only exception was a Christian Democrat magazine, Revista Hoy, which represented the right wing sector of that party and expressed a moderate opposition to the military government. Censorship existed over the media including those belonging to the Catholic Church.

The official information printed or broadcast in Chile contained and still contains ideological foundations of the so-called National Security Doctrine. This doctrine promotes the implementation of "restricted" and "protected" democracies under the rigid control of the armed forces. It is based on the idea of the existence of an internal enemy -the people- interested in promoting a Marxist-Leninist ideology and pro-Soviet/Cuban model in the region (Barber, et al, 1966).

This is an information policy that glorifies the regime, the armed forces, and the authorities. It contains or reproduces strong attacks against opposition leaders, religious figures or institutions, accusing them of being communist agents, Soviet or Cuban, which are alleged to have infiltrated the Church. The media have been utilized to instigate, and later to justify repression, murders, and all kinds of injustices against the Chilean people who demand bread, work, and freedom. Finally, another notorious characteristic of the Chilean media is the amount of information dedicated to cover soccer and sports in general, as well as crimes, private scandals, and the life of Chilean and international artists, in an attempt to keep people unaware of what, in fact, is taking place in Chile and other places. Thus, the only solution left to the opposition was to develop an underground network of communication, mainly through the publication of newsletters and small bulletins which began to circulate in the barrios, and working places. However, even those publications were severely repressed every time the military personnel and police discovered them.

The 1980's began with some important alterations in the socio-political economic model implemented by the Chilean dictatorship. To begin with, the economic model made in Chicago, by professor Milton Friedman and his "Chicago Boys" turned out to be unworkable. The Chilean national wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few families associated with big corporations from the U.S.. The national industry was completely destroyed. Bankruptcy occurred in many important financial institutions. Strong disputes arose within the Chilean ruling sectors, mainly between the industrial, commercial, and agrarian landlord sectors against the financial groups from the country and abroad (Dahse, 1978). Thus, the economic miracle preached by the military junta came to an end leaving a sad inheritance behind: a rate of unemployment close to 30%, elimination of public health, education and other social service
As a reaction to these calamities, the Chilean people responded with massive mobilization against the government by reorganizing their activities and organizations at all levels. This included legal, semi-legal and underground levels opening new spaces to express dissatisfaction and demands for democracy and freedom. At this moment, the popular and alternative press began to materialize after enduring a difficult period of gestation during the years following the coup d'etat. Let us briefly point out some of the characteristic of the opposition media within the limited spaces allowed by the military censorship.

Most of the opposition media represent political tendencies which vary from the center-right to social democrats on the left. These media sources are funded in the normal way, through sales and advertising. Some have the largest paid circulation in the country, which indicates that they have the attention of a large segment of the country's population. Because of the particular philosophy these media espouse they, however, lend themselves to use by certain political sectors and promote particular socio-political causes. Thus, political groups such as the Christian Democratic Party, Social Democrats, and moderate Leftist sectors are disillusioned with the military project and big capital, utilize these channels of communication. And it is because of this oppositional character that we can refer to these media as the "opposition media". Additionally, most of them attempt to establish a sort of dialogue with the authorities in power, especially, since all other channels of political discussion have been closed by the Military Junta.

A major focus of these media is on legal matters related to some of the most important issues of national interest. These include, among others, political participation, elections, exile, repression, torture, kidnapping and people who have disappeared. The emphasis, of course, varies according to the particular political line espoused. However, a significant characteristic observed in these media is the application of a kind of self-censorship to avoid confrontations and retaliatory actions on the part of the military authorities while, at the same time, trying to articulate their concerns. Differences, even disagreements, are to be expected among the opposition media and indeed are found. These differences concern the means to be employed in achieving social damage and a replacement for the military dictatorship. In the case of the so-called "moderate opposition" the strategy followed is to call for negotiations with the military in order to convince them to return power to civilians; to call for democratic elections, to re-open the parliament; to democratize the Judicial Power and the Armed Forces. Others disagree with the "moderates" arguing that democratic solutions are useless. They argue that the military has been repressing workers and assassinating ordinary Chileans for fifteen years on behalf of a minority class and foreign interests. People's rights to organize and defend themselves, including those
in the military, against institutionalized violence, repression, and state terrorism, are paramount concerns to these latter political groups.

In this environment journalists and communicators pay a high personal cost for daring to articulate their opposition to the military state. This is especially true for those who take a harder line against the government. They are continuously threatened, persecuted, imprisoned, expelled from the country, or simply assassinated. This last was the fate of journalist Jose Carrasco, the international editor of Revista Analisis, who was murdered in September 1986 by a para-military group connected with the secret police. Similarly, a photographer from the same magazine, C. Aleman, was shot by the police while she was covering an incident that took place during the Pope’s visit to Chile. There have been others. Rodrigo Rojas, a photographer living in New York, together with Carmen Gloria Quintana, a university student, were set on fire by an army patrol while Rojas was covering a national protest in July of 1986. Rodrigo Rojas died three days later and Carmen Gloria Quintana recuperates in a Montreal hospital.

Another barrier to Chilean democracy lies in the concentration of the mass media in the government hands. Table 1 shows that in the print media there is opposition representation whereas in broadcasting there is not. Two out of six newspapers and half of all magazines are in opposition hands. However only four of 200 radio stations and no television outlets are owned by the opposition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GOVERNMENT OR PRO-GOVERNMENT</th>
<th>OPPOSITION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television stations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio stations</td>
<td>over 200</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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* Christian Democrat newspapers authorized to be published in 1987 only, prior to the Pope’s visit in May of that year.

** (Please note that there may be some alterations of these figures, especially regarding radio stations)

SOURCE: Table compiled by the author from various sources.

This state of affairs has an impact on the content of information as shown by Table 2.

It is important to point out that during the week of June 30 to July 4, 1986, an important National Strike (Paro Cívico Nacional) took place in Chile, organized by an umbrella organization called Asamblea de la Civilidad. Hundreds of thousands of Chileans practically paralyzed the country for two days. The government, during that
TABLE 2
TIME AND SPACE ALLOCATED TO NATIONAL ISSUES BY THE GOVERNMENT MEDIA
(June and July 1986)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>June 2 - 6</th>
<th>June 30 to July 4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

week, made a greater effort to monopolize information to the population reducing the small amount of opposition information from 3% to 2%. Table 2 thus clearly demonstrate that divergent views coming from the opposition and the Church were practically ignored by the government. The evidence shows as well that "information" is a conscious military strategy to misinform and confuse the population.

The Response: Alternative and Popular Media

In addition to the traditional media under the Chilean military regime there is an alternative and popular system of communication created by the people. The forms, characteristics, audience, and the environment in which this system operates, are qualitatively different from that of the traditional media.

The alternative system includes street theater, folklore, poetry, graffiti and the popular press such as bulletins and newsletters. It has two main characteristics. To begin with, though alternative communication often operates within the legal confines permitted by the military regime, it is a mechanism which confronts and challenges the government and its socio-political and economic models. This is so because the neo-conservative concept of society which prevails in the military regime does not provide legitimate political arenas where other social sectors and their organizations may express themselves and deal with their problems. The people, furthermore need alternative communication channels because the military model assumes that class distinctions must be eliminated and the members of society should develop their plans through the market. Faced with this challenge, the Chilean state has utilized repression as its only means of social control. It has offered a military rather than a political response which, in fact, reflects the political weakness of the dictatorial regime (Gilbert, 1984: 10).

The second characteristic implicit to the concept of alternative communication is its "popular" content. That is, it is made by the people, and for the people. It is based on collective participation and deals with local problems which affect the daily life of a barrio, region or sector. In addition, popular communication has a local effect only. It does not pretend to reach a national audience, despite the fact that it is inspired by,
and responds to, the national situation of the country. It addresses the reality of a specific area or sector of the population and its problems and it allows massive participation of the people. In this way, popular communication covers all possible social spaces through a variety of forms of expressions. Popular and alternative communication does not take place in a social vacuum. It corresponds to concrete historical, socio-political, ideological, and economic manifestations of the various social classes which exist in a particular society. Thus, any attempt to study the characteristics and expressions of alternative popular communication must consider who the people are and what groups they contain. Transcripts of several interviews conducted by the semi-legal video-collective, TELEANALISIS which produced a video-documentary entitled Popular Communication "captures" examples of how street actors, poets, popular artists and journalists use communication under a dictatorship.

**Popular Communication in the Chilean Barrio:**

PERSON #1: "We see on the street actors, magicians, singers, etc. and I think it lends more joy to the street... in short, we must make the street come alive. It should not be silent, dead, as we have been for a long while."

STREET ACTOR #1: "Every 3 months we are in prison. Sometimes the police allow us to perform but, most of the time they put us in jail. So we have to wait until 9 P.M. when they leave. Repression is terrible, not only for us, but for street vendors too."

PERSON #2: "The street vendors say that the street belongs to them, so they display their merchandise here at Paseo Ahumada or any place where they can sell their things. Actresses from the street theater also say, "We have a place here, on the street to perform our plays." In fact, we have many places here on the street. In front of the Continental Bank; another in San Antonio and Ahumada, etc. At night, we have another one: the corner of Huerfanos and Ahumada Street and many other places. In different ways, then, we take over the street.

PERSON #3: "I work here, downtown, at the telephone company. I always see these young people that make people come alive. They transport us to other places and that is beautiful. They show us art and despite the fact they are not allowed to perform in a theater, they perform here, on the street. I have seen them for years playing here in the streets. They cannot always perform on the same place, but they are always here, downtown. Sometimes, myself, I feel like an artist because I am close to the people. I don't know whether I was born to be an actor, but any time I have to install a phone as part of my job I feel linked to the public. I probably feel like these young actors here on the street."

STREET ACTOR #2: "I have always been told to continue, not to stop, to move ahead. The idea is, I think, to make a break from the attitude of immobilization. The objective is to stand up on the street, to socialize here, on the street, to feel that the
street is also our home, that the city belongs to us; to make the repressive apparatus of this country: the police, the army, feel that they are in a place which does not belong to them; to make them understand that the street belongs to us and they have nothing to do here."

Let us now move into the barrio, in the city, to observe the forms that alternative and popular communication develops and materializes to make people aware of their own reality and destiny.

POPULAR ACTOR #1: "...we have developed an historical chronology divided into three periods: a) Women established the first period, which we call the period of hunger. b) The second period is the period of organization where we reenacted the moments where people got together to diagnose organizational stages. c) The third period is the one that women have called "the beginning of autonomy: or "overcoming fear." That is, since the start of national demonstrations (1983)..."

POPULAR ACTOR #2: "Theater here is understood as a tool, as an instrument, and without denying that it can have an artistic value, what is a real concern is to fuel certain processes such as communication as well as educational and organizational processes. These are the objectives of this type of theater."

POPULAR ACTRESS: "Our wish is that most of the people and our companeros from the poblacion get to see our plays. That is the reason why we are going to all the places we are invited to perform, to show them that we are trying to do some things regardless of the fact that this is a protest. However, we believe that if expressing our reality is something political, well, we will all be politicians."

ACTOR #3: "...what is of interest here is the process; these are processes lived with a lot of intensity and force where we share and develop democratic models which, undoubtedly, will develop new products; arrogant products, which have not been contemplated in a professional or bourgeois mode of production."

ARTISAN #1: "We decided to do it in order to narrate our reality. While we are together, we work together, because there are many people who do not know. So, we decided to stay at this place. That has happened previously with some artists who worked with us. We are also making these arpilleras despite the fact we are cold and hungry. Personally, this experience has helped me a lot to become a person. For example, I can stand criticism; before, I used to get mad when I was criticized."

With respect to the popular press, the situation is not much different in the city and the countryside. The following testimonies, from the same report produced by TELEANALISIS, allow us to obtain additional elements in order to better understand the role of popular and alternative communication in today's Chile.

POPULAR JOURNALIST #1: "For a long time, the popular press has been the one that on many fronts has maintained and created a critical perspective; the need to
transform the social conditions which exist in the country; to create vehicles of communication; to create an alternative counter-cultural project, one that is democratic. The popular press is something clearly democratic. It operates from the bottom to the top, to put it very simply."

POPULAR JOURNALIST #2: "Participation here is realized by the working group itself where both workers and leaders participate, as well as with the collaboration of other sectors, with reports, news, information, etc. And finally, through the discussion and critiques of the material in our working sessions. In this way, our newsletter has facilitated the creation of other newsletters by the unions. Their number is relatively small, but some very positive experiences have developed."

POPULAR JOURNALIST #3: "Our popular press has several objectives. I think one of the most important is to communicate to the people our experiences and concerns. At the same time, taking into consideration that this is a very simple bulletin, we try to create alternative media. Not to compete with the big media enterprises, but, at least, to propagate our news objectively among our people...

...the T.V. is a mass media that, despite being very dynamic puts people to sleep because everything comes prepared, researched, completed, so people do not need to think."

POPULAR JOURNALIST #4: "Those sectors that put forward popular communication must realize they cannot give to the people information that has already been digested. Sometimes, because of our intentions to serve the people, to help, we digest the information for them. We don't allow the people to defend their right to be mistaken...

...we gradually discovered the importance of popular communication and thus, we saw our newsletter as a kind of task to research and to value what popular expression means. Popular expression is understood as a form of communication....we have a two-page newsletter and one of them is geared to women. Thus, we invite the people to collaborate with our newsletter so they will feel represented by it. Otherwise, the newsletter will simply interpret the concerns of the group and not the concerns of the pobladores."

POPULAR JOURNALIST #5: "We must produce communication, not misinformation, nor, the manipulation of the information. And the only way to do so is by attempting a serious dialogue with our interlocutors. Now, popular media has a greater opportunity that the traditional media to carry out such a task because it is addressed to a limited audience, to a relatively small group of people in a social, generational, or geographic area. Accordingly, it is much easier to express, precisely, the concerns of the people and to open our newsletter to people's participation; to convert them into a tribunal and discussion forum; not only as an instrument to sell our particular views."
The situation in the countryside and the campesino press is not different from that already described in the cities according to the following interviews.

CAMPESINO JOURNALIST #1: "...those, for example, are a bunch of grapes which have been picked by peasants. This newsletter only speaks about what interests people here. Women want to know the wage paid for picking grapes. How much are they going to get paid; how should they organize as a pressure group to obtain better prices for the grapes they pick. We also have sporting activities. When we interview a center forward who scored the winning goal in a soccer game it becomes more important when it is published in our newsletter than the sport section of the regular media. This information circulates in the family, among friends, in social circles, labour centers, on the bus, etc. In other words, it has local repercussions because our newsletter circulates within our community, districts, neighborhoods, etc. It does not have a provincial repercussion. It is surely not going to produce any transcendental social change. It is simply underlying the purest values of the people. However, it is incredible what happens when an athlete is interviewed in the barrio. There are 80 soccer in this commune alone. So you can understand what happens when people read that interview with that athlete. Everybody waits for the new issue of the newsletter to see if their statements appear in the newsletter or bulletin."

CAMPESINO JOURNALIST #2: "The experience of our popular journalists has been that the people invite them to interview their players who they consider a soccer star or a leader in their communities. Thus, the newsletter here does not only deal, specifically, with political or cultural information. In the end, it deals with everything because, the most important politics are to make people think. ...one of the main objectives of any bulletin is to promote the mobilization of people, not around the bulletin but around their interests. The bulletin then, is like the alarm clock of a new language. The people must learn how to speak, and to do it they must first learn how to think, to reflect. This is the reason why our bulletins are always produced based on reflection groups."

**The Role of the "Alternative" Popular Media**

As the interviews show there exists a wide range of mechanisms which characterize alternative popular communication in Chile. It is a system in which the particular interests of the different social sectors of the country can articulate appropriate social functions, goals, and needs. In a strict sense, it is a truly democratic mechanism of people's participation facilitated in Chile by the tendency of the popular movement to organize as a class. It is a system which promotes massive community participation in discussions, organizational matters, and problem-solving, brought forth the individuals participant's own evaluation of reality. The idea is to promote and achieve degrees of social awareness, to do things not to be passive, in order to open those parts of the political structure which oppresses them. In my opinion, the expression of
alternative forms of communication demonstrates an important weakness of the military regime because it has not been able to take over the areas of the popular movement, and diminish the effectiveness of these forms of expression and representation. Nor has the military regime been able to win the people ideologically.

Alternative popular communication has played a critical role regarding the official media in particular and communication in general. It includes all types of expressions, such as popular theater, street theater, popular folklore, poetry and writings, humor, handicrafts, and intellectual activities in general. The idea is to demonstrate that the official media and their messages do not express the social reality of the country. In other words, the objective is to create a critical component in the environment of the recipient of the official message, and to rescue for discussion the real concerns of the Chilean society. This system of communication gives identity and a sense of pertinence to a type of social reality not acknowledged by the military regime. The idea is to emphasize that the Chilean people are not local or regionally isolated social groups inserted into a socio-political and economic model which only represents the particular interests of a minority sector. On the contrary, this alternative popular system of communication strongly promotes the idea that Chileans are one single national component of the nation. This is very important, especially in the provinces, where the only link with the rest of the country is through the State controlled T.V. station, Channel 7, and a few newspapers and radio stations also controlled by the government or the financial groups that support the military government.

Popular and alternative communication in Chile also serves as an input for the aspirations of the people in to the political projects of the opposition parties. Because of its massive and democratic composition it provides a surveillance function over the parties themselves (most of which are outlawed), pressuring them to aim beyond sectarian, ambiguous or reformist projects. In addition, it serves to pressure political organizations to reach out for the same kind of alliances and agreements that the popular sector has reached in their barrios, and communities. In this way, it is not strange to observe demonstrations and actions taken by the people without the participation of some of these political organizations which form the opposition. Sometimes, these actions far exceed the scope of the opposition parties, which, in order to interpret the demand of their supporters often find it necessary to restructure or modify their political programs. Evidently, up until now, there has been no consensus among the opposition to form a unitary political line out of the particular interests of the various class sectors of the country. Consequently, popular communication, through its various expressions, serves as an instrument which can promote unity among contending opposition outlooks. In addition, it allows production of socio-political and economic projects which respond to the real needs of the people. In other words, these alternative forms of communications are incipient mechanisms of popular power being forged by the people themselves outside the "established" order. Political parties and organizations must give due consideration to these and incorporate them into their own structures if they do not want to be superseded by the actions of the masses. This
potential power of these forms of communication continuously occasions a great deal of discussion among members of those factions which would like to negotiate concessions with the military.

One of the most important characteristics of the popular and alternative system of communication, is that it encourages people to favor social change, to rebel and react against the institutionalized violence which characterizes the military state, to organize and reclaim the rights which the Chilean people won in their struggles against the traditional ruling class and foreign capital some decades ago. Although these manifestations and expressions are oriented to local, community or regional concerns, they do not represent isolated and disconnected actions of separate sectors of the population. On the contrary, they were all part of the same aspect of the political struggle against the military conditions which exists in Chile. To confuse this level of actions and organization achieved by the Chilean popular movement signifies the failure to understand that only the alliance of all sectors of the population and the combination of all forms of struggle will put an end to the dictatorship.

The incapacity of the military regime to delimit and discredit the power of alternative popular communication initiatives has become more evident since the military authorities announced the intention to hold a plebiscite, sometime in 1988, to institutionalize the military model. This year the regime will attempt to put a legitimate face on a project born of an illegitimate act: the coup d'Etat of September 11, 1973. The opposition, which is made up of 16 (mostly outlawed) political parties has gone through deep debates and analysis regarding the plebiscite within the current national reality (coyuntura). Alternative communication, including the opposition media, have played a significant role in promoting discussion and unifying the opposition parties. As a result they all agree on the need for free elections with candidates representing the various political tendencies. In addition the likelihood of a manipulated plebiscite, forced the opposition, to agree to participate by voting massively against the military intentions to perpetuate its power. Governmental authorities responded to this initiative by making a set of populist promises (housing, employment, bikes for workers, etc.), and by intensifying repression against the opposition media. In June 1988, there were 28 journalists prosecuted by military tribunal. Editors of the most representative opposition magazines have been condemned and are serving sentences in Chilean jails. Others have been forced to pay large sums of bail to obtain conditional release. This constitutes a well organized campaign of intimidation and harassment against freedom of expression and the media which the military junta sees as a dangerous vehicle for popular mobilization.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the alternative and popular model of communication in Chile does not obey a single leader or constitute a Machiavellian manipulation by some pro-Soviet or Cuban groups "infiltrated" into the country. To assert the contrary is a ploy constantly utilized by the military authorities (and some North American media) practicing disinformation. The evidence demonstrates that
popular and alternative communication initiatives are one of the only solutions left to a people determined to defend their identity. Through them the Chilean people search for their own destiny and express and discuss freely the type of political and economic model they want. During Allende's government a popular newspaper used to include this pregnant sentence: "Caveman [Reactionary] thought can neither be fined, nor jailed." No one at *Diario El Clarín* imagined that after September 11, 1973, the Chilean armed forces would attempt to assassinate it.

**END NOTES**

1. Furthermore, in this article, the concept of popular forces refers to all class sectors, sub classes, or social groups in addition to the working class. In Chile and Latin America, there exists many other subclasses or social groups which are not necessarily part of the strict definition of "working class" (direct producer of surplus value). This is the case of *pobladores, campesinos*, poor from the city and the countryside, intellectuals, women and student fronts, segments of the Church, petite bourgeoisie, etc. Their revolutionary potential, however, has been and continues to be fundamental within the social transformations of the region. Therefore, when I refer to popular forces, sectors, movements, struggle and the press, it includes the participation of all the afore-mentioned.


3. Anti-communism and anti-Marxism/leninism are common elements found in any speech, declaration of principles or documents produced in Chile by General Pinochet and the ruling military junta. See for example Malu Sierra (1974) "11 de Septiembre: El informe del General Pinochet,"*Ercilla* #2042 (September), p. 3; also from the same journalist (1975) "Interview with General Pinochet,"*Ercilla* #2090 (August), pp.16-18.

4. There are many documents and reports produced by the Roman Catholic Church, most of them through the *Vicaria de la Solidaridad*. In addition, this religious institution publishes a weekly newspaper called *Solidaridad* and owns Radio Chilena.

5. "There is a fake organism belonging to the Communist Party called The World Council of Churches which distributes money, generously. They [the Communists] are not only struggling against us like a political party but, also, with some religious institutions". Declarations of General Pinochet and reproduced by Vicente Parrini (1988) "El Idioma del Guerrero", *Apsi* #261 (18-24 Julio), p.14.
6. For a more complete study of the content of the official press in Chile see the valuable work of Fred Landis (1975) about *El Mercurio* newspaper, *Psychological Warfare and Media Operation in Chile*, 1970-1973, (University of Illinois-Urbana), Ph.D. Thesis

7. Due to time and space limitation, the analysis of the different political tendencies represented by the opposition media has not been included in this article.

8. See for example the declaration of the *Alianza Democ ratica* (Democratic Alliance) of May, 1985. This political coalition included the Christian Democrats, some Social Democrats, and right-wing opposition sectors.

9. These elements were expressed in 1985, in a declaration of the *Movimiento Democratico Popular* (Popular Democratic Movement), which includes the Communist Party, some Socialist sectors, and the Revolutionary Left Movement.

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Paramilitary troops patrol deserted street in Dhaka after state of emergency declared.

**Harsh controls on press announced in Bangladesh state of emergency**

Riot policemen use clubs to beat protesting students.

Bangladesh braced yesterday for a second opposition-led strike in three days to protest against the government's recent issuance of a controversial bill, which one opposition leader described as the army's attempt to control the elections.

The bill, which has sparked widespread protests, grants the army unprecedented powers in key rural districts. It is aimed at preventing the opposition from fielding candidates in the upcoming elections and has been condemned by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has warned that the bill could undermine the army's role in maintaining law and order.

The opposition has called for a general strike on November 30 to protest against the bill and has accused the government of attempting to rig the elections in favor of the ruling party.

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