

The Making of *Chile: With Poems and Guns* and Lucha Films A Personal Recollection

By Marjorie Woodford Bray

After September 11, 1973, progressives everywhere sought ways to speak out against the military overthrow in Chile of Socialist President Salvador Allende. The former senator headed a democratically elected government of the *Unidad Popular* (UP–Popular Unity, a coalition of socialist, communist, and other leftist parties) government. U.S. activists had met in Madison, Wisconsin, well before the coup, to organize against the threats to the UP that were already clearly occurring. They created what would become a nation-wide organization known as NICH (Non-Intervention in Chile) that became the focal point of solidarity activities related to Chile. *Latin American Perspectives* (LAP) founding members Timothy Harding, Donald Bray and I participated in the Madison meetings, and we even coined the NICH appellation on the plane trip back home.

Soon after the coup, a group of Los Angeles area Latin Americanist professors and graduate students were approached by filmmaker Frederick Kuretski, a faculty member of the California Institute of the Arts who was just starting a film program at California State University, Northridge, with a proposal to make a film that would explain the coup: what the Unidad Popular had accomplished and how the United States opposed it. The result was “*Chile: With Poems and Guns*,”^[1] and what follows is an effort to recount the process by which the film was made and the subsequent history of the group that made it.

Solidarity Role of Los Angeles

In Los Angeles activists, students and academics had created the Los Angeles Group for Latin American Solidarity (LAGLAS), an umbrella group that worked with local organizations of Chileans, Argentines, Brazilians, and Central Americans to promote progressive movements and to bring attention to and protest U.S. government activities regarding those nations. To promote awareness about these issues LAGLAS sponsored speakers at different campuses in the region. LAGLAS started as COBRA, the Committee on Brazil, in 1969 or 1970. Its first act, other than a newsletter, was a protest outside the Los Angeles Coliseum against a Brazilian team playing in a soccer match there. COBRA produced a slide show that revealed the economic and political repression and torture occurring in Brazil under the military dictatorship. After the coup in Chile it became LAGLAS in order to be more inclusive. The newsletter continued, using mailing labels produced on IBM equipment a member had access to, and mailed from the Latin American Studies Center in the basement of the Library at California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA). (Sometimes there was an advantage to being in the basement.) The group was notable for the ability of its participants to avoid sectarian disagreements. It met monthly at the UCLA campus ministries center. Many of the original members of the LAP collective were participants. Over the months and years following the coup, Los Angeles became a center for Chilean resistance activities. We learned that the Chilean secret police regarded solidarity organizing in Los Angeles as a major adversary. Important to Chilean resistance in Los Angeles was the poet, printer, and cultural worker David Valjalo, who had been Allende’s unpaid Cultural Attaché in Los Angeles. He printed publicity posters for LAGLAS events and published the journal *Literatura Chilena en el Exilio*. This journal became the focus of a conference held at CSULA in the winter of 1976 that included writers and scholars who came from Canada and Mexico as well as the United States. After the coup Allende’s widow, Hortensia Allende, stayed with Valjalo during her visit to Los Angeles, and he made her available to appear in the film. When some exiled Chileans arrived in southern California LAGLAS members tried to provide them with

some support. It was to speak to them that former Chilean Ambassador Orlando Letelier came to Los Angeles shortly before he was assassinated in Washington, D.C.

A notable activity of LAGLAS was the sponsorship and organization of well attended concerts by the exiled Chilean folk music ensembles Inti Illimani, Quilapayún, *Los Parra*, (Isabel, Angel and Tita Parra, the children and granddaughter of famed folksinger Violeta Parra) and Patricio Mans. LAGLAS co-sponsored a second Quilapayún concert at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium that featured its *Cantata Escuela Santa Maria de Iquique*, with a live narration by Jane Fonda. LAGLAS later sponsored other concerts, sometimes in conjunction with events such as conferences organized through the Latin American Studies Program at CSULA, including *Los Folkloristas* from Mexico, Mercedes Sosa from Argentina, and Jackson Browne. In the 1980s solidarity concerts were organized with Luis and Carlos Mejia Godoy from Nicaragua and musicians from Cuba.

One of LAGLAS' most significant involvements was the bringing together, and initial \$500 funding, of the group that made *Chile: With Poems and Guns*. "Teach-ins" were gatherings on college and university campuses, where faculty dismissed their classes for students to attend campus-wide presentations about issues of immediate concern; they had been developed to educate students about the then rampant vibrant student movement and the related anti-Vietnam War and civil rights struggles. They had begun to be held on Chile. Fred's argument was that a "film pamphlet" could reach far more people than could a teach-in. It would be like a mimeographed pamphlet that was produced as simply as possible because of the urgency to get information out quickly. Time pressure led to our rough aesthetic.

Getting Started

The group that coalesced to create the film ultimately included Fred Kuretski, his brother Phil, William (Bill) Bollinger, Donald W. Bray, myself, Nancy Caro Hollander, David Kunzle, poet Deena Metzger, and, most importantly, Walter Locke who had been producing a documentary film on Chile when the coup occurred.[2] Walter had come to Los Angeles before the coup with footage to be processed. His film crew included Charles Horman. As depicted in the 1982 motion picture "*Missing*" with Jack Lemmon and Sissy Spacek, Horman was a victim of the coup, murdered by the military Junta that had taken power. Some of the rest of his production crew also perished. Walter generously let us copy any of the footage he had brought from Chile that we wanted to use.[3]

Although the credits list Fredrick (sic) Kuretski as "organizer/cinematographer," which he was, at his instigation we were committed to working as a collective and we did. Although not every one was involved in each part of the process, the approach, content and technical aspects were the result of collective decision-making, and we always worked in small groups or pairs. Fred gave us a crash course in filmmaking. We learned how the camera works, about focus and circles of confusion, the importance of camera angles and how not to confuse the audience by shifting the point of view. We read the work of John Howard Lawson (1967), theorist of progressive movie making and member of the Hollywood 10. There was no director, no screenwriter. The plan was we would all become adept at all elements of the process: camera, sound, editing.

For people steeped in individualistic scholarly research, this was very liberating; it fit with our political ideals of equality and cooperation and the "New Left" philosophy of the time. It also empowered us with the courage to state controversial facts and opinions we might have been reluctant to voice on our own. Ideas that informed the group came from dependency theory, Marxist art history and class analysis, and progressive filmmaking. Also, film is art; for those of us used to presenting information and analysis in a linear, objective and matter of fact manner, the challenge and opportunity to think about conveying knowledge aesthetically, juxtaposing visuals, music and sound effects with words, and cutting them together in a way that would emotionally move as well as intellectually engage an audience, was extremely satisfying.

Security was a concern. It was a time of heightened political contention and fear, not too unlike the anti-terrorist atmosphere of the early 21st century. We believed our opposition to the conduct

of the U.S. government would probably make us subject to surveillance, or even more direct jeopardy. Some of us had already been sensitized to the risks of opposing U.S. policies in Latin America through our support of the Cuban Revolution (see Bray and Bray, 2009). We knew the Chilean DINA (secret police) had agents in Los Angeles and might well be aware of our activities. Chilean political scientist Jorge Nef, one of our collaborators, thought he had been followed by DINA agents on a street in Los Angeles, because he looked back and saw men in pointed shoes (a Chilean, not a U.S. style). We did not discuss what we were doing with others until we finished the film, and we did not keep written records.

In the first stages of our work together we met in the homes of members of the group, Deena's in the San Fernando Valley and Nancy's in Santa Monica. The editing was done clandestinely at the UCLA film school. Makers of documentary films in the late 20th and early 21st centuries have no idea how difficult, time consuming and expensive filmmaking was before the digital age. The reels on the editing table were operated manually. Each piece of celluloid had to be physically cut and attached to the one that would follow. Sound that was recorded in the camera was not on the film strip in the same place as the picture and had to be separated and then synched up in the editing process.

What We Were Trying to Accomplish

The making of films by politically committed activists had been pioneered in Latin America (in Chile it was continued after the coup by Patricio Guzman). Those of us already engaged in teaching used such films about Latin America in the classroom, a pedagogical practice pioneered by Professor E. Bradford Burns at UCLA (see Burns, 1975). In 1971 the group Ukamau led by Jorge Sanjines[4] recreated a massacre of Bolivian miners, using miners themselves to portray the events in "*El coraje del pueblo*" (The Courage of the People or The Night of San Juan). In the 1970 monumental classic "*La hora de los hornos*" (The Hour of the Furnaces), filmmakers of the Cine Liberación collective led by Fernando E. Solanas and Octavio Getino had sought to arouse Argentines with their groundbreaking effort to involve audiences in discussing the ideas in the film and thus galvanize them into action (see Burton, 1978). We were well aware of the historic significance of these films and sympathetic with their aspirations. Our film was definitely not in the observational tradition of Frederick Wiseman of editing together sequences of "reality," nor did we seek to be "objective," showing "both sides," and we meant to be transparent in the attempt. Like Solanas and Getino we did not regard our efforts to be directed toward making a dispassionate, balanced documentary film. On one level the film was designed to convey to a U.S. public, saturated with propaganda that Allende headed a communist government allied with the Soviet Union in the Cold War, that it was a democratically elected government trying to overcome poverty and inequality caused by centuries of exploitation begun by Spain and continued by British and U.S. governments and corporations and Chile's own upper class that had benefited from its natural resources and prevented its balanced economic development. We did this by filming narration, interviews, and visual information that conveyed the facts of this history in an authoritative way. There was also language that implied a more radical analysis of the situation, using concepts such as working class, bourgeoisie, and imperialism that would allow more politically aware members of the audience to gain a deeper understanding of the historical dynamics at play.

Although the information presented in the film was factual, it was marshaled in a way designed to arouse the viewer's outrage at the dire consequences of this history for the people of Chile, the assault on the well-being of ordinary men, women and children, and the wanton destruction of a historic effort to create socialism by democratic means. We wanted to show the direct involvement of the U.S. government and corporations, as well as the Chilean elite, in undermining that effort. Since the film was produced in 3 months and screened less than five months after the coup, much now known about U.S. involvement was not yet public (not all is known to this day), but scholars and commentators familiar with U.S. policy and activities knew a lot and, as noted in the film, Washington, D.C., columnist Jack Anderson had already

unearthed office memos that revealed collusion and conspiracy by the CIA and the ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph Company). We wanted to evoke in viewers the desire to do something to change the situation—to demand that the U.S. government alter its policy by condemning the Junta and denying it support. (That was what had been done to undermine the UP government.) To encourage such a proactive response, we created a 15-page “Organizer’s Guide” for people showing the film that included additional information on Chilean history, background of the UP, events that had transpired since the film was completed, a bibliography, and early reviews, as well as suggestions for specific actions viewers might undertake to express their concerns (“Organizers Guide,” n.d.).

Making the Film

Chile: With Poems and Guns is a compilation of Walter’s footage with segments produced by us. (The newsreel footage at the end of the film of the uprising at Hunter’s Point in San Francisco was copied from footage in the film library of KNBC TV.) The Chilean footage included interviews Walter’s crew had produced and events they had filmed as well as archival documentary film that Chilean filmmakers had given them. (The only special effect was the brief animated black and white map sequence toward the end of the film that depicted the domino effect of South American countries going from democracy to dictatorships created by Claudia Kobey, a film student housemate of Nancy Hollander.)

The interviews and sequences of demonstrations from Chile were essential for the film’s credibility, because they showed popular support for the UP government. The interviews were given voiceover translations with answers by Ecuadoran accented Susana Castillo, an instructor of Spanish at the Claremont Colleges, and her husband, Eddy Castillo, who had brought her to the recording sessions and was drafted to provide the male voices. We produced interviews with people who had been in Chile during the coup, people who had conducted research on U.S. covert activities and an exiled Chilean political scientist, as well as several sequences that were filmed slide shows narrated by members of the group or others. Some of these sequences of stills conveyed the coup, with sound laid on and cut together rapidly to give the impression of motion. There are no fades in and out, just cuts. That’s what being a “film pamphlet meant. To save time and money, the film was assembled on one reel, cutting together copies of Walter’s footage and the original footage we had shot. A mistake could damage or destroy the segment being edited. It was risky business to use our raw material without making copies.

The camera was a 16 millimeter Auricon newsreel sound camera “borrowed” (without their knowledge) from the UCLA film school. (It was not always reliable.) Editing was done during Christmas vacation. One night some of us, myself included, were apprehended by the UCLA campus police, who said if they found us again we would be taken to the Westwood police station. We were back the next night, sneaking through the parking structure. It was almost literally an underground film.

We did not want a film of talking heads, so the interviews we produced were shot in places that would make them visually interesting, provide the interviewees with credibility, or convey a sense of the circumstances being described. UCLA grad student, Jeffrey Bortz, who had been picked up by police during the coup, did not want to have his face shown. To convey his fear, he was filmed backlit in front of a brick wall in the basement of the old house where Nancy Hollander lived. Exile Nef was filmed in his office at UC Santa Barbara in front of a map of Latin America; journalist Elizabeth Farnsworth, who had researched the U.S. public and private economic efforts to undermine Allende, was shown in the plaza of the Bank of America headquarters in San Francisco; Ruth Needleman, who had conducted research in Chile on U.S. activities there, was seated at a desk surrounded by Chilean posters; Charon D’Aiello, a politically active staff member at CSULA whose brother had been killed in Vietnam,[5] was filmed in a cubicle in a Cal State office. The first segment with Tito Nolasco, an aspiring medical student from the Dominican Republic who following the coup had been held as a prisoner in the

National Soccer Stadium, was filmed at his workplace with Walter in the background, taking over his tasks (at Nolasco's request; his work needed to be done).

The second interview with Nolasco was conducted in the Los Angeles Coliseum as a stand-in for the Chilean soccer stadium. We called the Coliseum management for permission to shoot there; they said "fine, that will be \$1,000." Our initial \$500 had already run out. Our then UCLA graduate student got on the phone and said, "this is William Bollinger of UCLA, don't you know we play all of our home games there?" Someone came back on the line and asked for \$5.00. We never paid even that.

Sometimes failure of the camera led to serendipitous results. There was nothing on the film the first time we went to the Coliseum, so the sequence had to be shot again. During this shoot a helicopter was flying around the stadium; its menacing whirr came through as wild sound on the sound track and contributed to the ominous atmosphere of the scene. Originally Farnsworth had come to Westwood to stand in front of the Bank of America branch there. It was a challenging shoot. The camera battery gave out after we arrived at the bank. We scoured the area to buy yards of extension cords, and received permission to plug them in at a nearby dress shop; it was reluctantly given, with a request (unfulfilled) to be in the movie. Back at the lab it was discovered that there was nothing on the film. When Farnsworth was re-interviewed in San Francisco, she was posed before a visually arresting large black diagonal structure in front of the Bank of America's national headquarters; the camera cut to a list in the lobby of other corporations also housed in the building. This was better than Westwood.

All of the filmmaking wiles at our disposal—shocking sound effects, brutal visuals, narration to induce outrage, beautiful music, chanting crowds and rousing public events, evidence of equalizing social policies to create sympathy—were employed. Plaintive lyrical Andean instrumental music by Inti Illimani is heard throughout the film. On the sound track of a sequence describing the 1907 massacre of supporters of nitrate workers in the city of Iquique is a dramatic segment of Quilapayun's *Cantata Escuela Santa María de Iquique*. In a sequence that depicts the cultural invasion of U.S. advertising images and cartoons, famed Chilean folk artist Victor Jara (murdered by the Junta) sings "*Las Casitas del Barrio Alto*," his version of Malvina Reynolds's song "Little Boxes" (at the time a popular critique of U.S. cookie cutter culture). A sequence of still photos showing painters from the Ramona Parra Brigade, a collective of artists from the Communist Party, out to paint murals on the walls is accompanied by a woman singing a lyric, "*los domingos solidarios del trabajo voluntario*" (the solidarity Sundays of volunteer work). In some sequences a percussion passage from a piece by the Mexican composer Carlos Chavez provides a sense of tension and drama. Some archival black and white film and still photos were tinted red for emotional effect or sepia for a sense of authenticity.

The editing style was very important. Fred was a skillful editor, always conscious of the pace that was being established. Sections depicting the coup were cut together with sections extolling the achievements of the Allende period. Still shots were utilized to recreate the coup. In cutting together many of the stills or live action shots, either from the film from Chile or our original material, the sequences were often short, with a quick rhythmic beat established that was intended to induce tension in members of the audience

We found the title of the film in Pablo Neruda's *Canto General* (1950) from a 1948 poem written to a Colombian friend: "Because we walk out in the streets with poems and guns, they don't know what to do with us. What can they do but kill us?" It was not easy to find such a militant passage, and later in the poem the use of weapons is discouraged. The audience learns the source of the title during the dénouement of the film; the narration recounts Neruda's death shortly after the coup and the atrocities committed by the military at his home, and then the warm and inviting voice of the Nobel Prize-winning poet is heard welcoming the listener to his home.

Structure of the Film

The complexity of the editing is apparent in the first 17 minutes of the film. It opens with color footage of Chilean miners descending on a gondola into a very dark mine, accompanied by

railroad sounds and clanging bells followed by plaintive Andean flute music. Then molten copper being processed by a worker into ingots to the sounds of simple percussion instruments is accompanied by a voice-over passage from *Canto General* listing what copper means to Chileans: “the fatherland, the pampas, the people,...the school, home, the resurrection, the fist, order,...parade, attack,...struggle, grandeur, the resistance” (from the homage to Emilio Recabarren, father of the Chilean Communist Party, originally written in 1921). The film cuts to a crowd of UP supporters and then an interview with a smiling a resident of a shanty town, a mechanic (with no shirt on), sitting with a child on his lap and two children next to him, saying things have gotten better for him. Next is another shot of a crowd and then a sequence attesting to Allende’s support of workers and of women, starting with a shot outside a factory and then three women workers sitting at a table in a factory, as one of them describes that before women did not have a voice in union assemblies, but “now we participate, women understand politics, children are privileged beings, this is part of socialism;” she adds, a woman became Minister of Labor and Allende had for a time governed from a factory.

The final interview preceding the film title is with workers in a factory who say workers chose the socialist road because wages in the socialist countries were better. The introductory sequence concludes with a street marcher of supporters with Chilean flags that ends with a freeze frame of a man shaking his uplifted fist; on the sound track are crowd sounds and the chant “*El Pueblo Unido Jamas Sera Vencido,*” (the people united will never be defeated) a slogan which captured the world, and whose rhythm has been adopted for other assertions of resistance. (The cadence of this chant would be repeated in Arabic on the streets of Cairo in February 2011.)

The film’s title appears over the face of a miner in black and white. Following are credits that name the filmmakers and acknowledge the footage donated by Locke and that the film used some of the script by Horman; the film is dedicated to the Chilean *compañeras* and *compañeros* who were carrying on the struggle. Some of the titles are screened over a still shot of agricultural workers with tall farm implements that mirror the vertical poles of the marchers’ flags.[6]

There follows a recreation of the coup, using still news photos cut together in rapid sequence of the bombing of La Moneda (the presidential office building) and police and soldiers and tanks and murder victims, a defaced poster of the martyred President, people being arrested, blood in the street—the sound of explosions and the firing of guns and automatic weapons make it seem like it is happening. David’s British-accented voice comes on saying, “Attention all Chileans”—in a recreation of the announcements that had been made ordering Chileans to turn in suspected UP sympathizers, and to pay special attention to people with names known to be Jewish.[7] Photos of the four members of the junta are shown, concluding with one of General Augusto Pinochet alone; a swastika appears imposed upon his cheek.

Silence follows and over a picture of a politician being hustled out of office, Don says “The *coup d’etat* in Latin America has usually been a kind of gentlemen’s disagreement, presidents change, the oppressive structure remains;” archival photos show historic scenes of exploited people and poverty. The recreation of the coup comes back on the screen. Then as pictures of actions by the military continue, including a shot of a poster of men in military boots striding onto a map of elongated Chile, inter-cut with pictures of crowds and flags from previous demonstrations. Don’s narration continues “For three years Chile had real social progress. For the first time outside of Cuba the working people of an American country had won a place in the centers of power.” He continues in on an outraged voice, “On September 11, the Chilean military set out to silence the workers’ voice. This was not a coup; it was barbarous all out warfare against the working class struggling for social justice, a counterrevolution, a war of the army against the people, an outrage against working people everywhere.”

The next section is a recounting of Chilean history, illustrated by an archival historical map and photos and narrated in the first person (as if being spoken by a Chilean) by Susana Castillo. It emphasizes the exploitation of Chilean natural resources, nitrates and then copper, by foreign companies, abetted by elite Chilean families (depicted by still photos), that left ordinary citizens

impoverished to the point that many children (illustrated by moving footage of shanty town children) suffered from such intense malnutrition that they were brain damaged. After noting that Anaconda Copper Company had taken out profits from the copper “worth more than the entire net worth of Chile and left us with the empty holes” (backed by archival footage of copper mining operations), Susana’s Ecuadorian accented narrative concludes with the bitter statement, “They say they developed Chile—that’s *bullsheet*. We don’t call that development, we call it imperialism,” as an urchin throws a rock toward empty space and the film cuts to the ITT logo as if it had been the target.

To bring the audience back to what has been lost, in the next sequence, the film cuts to another of Walter’s interviews at a rally in a crowded stadium; an articulate supporter points out that he is in a stadium full of socialists. He says Chile recovered copper under Allende despite the aggressions of the CIA and ITT conspiracy against the people of Chile. When asked what if the peaceful road is impossible, he replies that it was the U.S. interests and the privileged classes that that promoted confrontation. He refers to the failed truckers strike of October 1972 and electoral gains in March 1973 (these are explained more fully later in the film) and says approval of the government is getting stronger; “We won in March and we won in October, we can win in any kind of confrontation, you’ll see.”

The sections that follow utilize interviews and testimonies from researchers and experts and witnesses to the coup whom we recruited. Needleman recounts economic accomplishments such as nationalization of factories and land redistribution as statistics (typed and turned into slides) appear on the screen. (Filmed during a brief visit to Los Angeles, Needleman was ill and running a fever, which gave her delivery added intensity.) Also, reflecting our didactic intent to emphasize the importance of the information being conveyed, the somewhat heavy-handed word “LISTEN” is twice flashed onto the screen. Farnsworth describes her investigations that exposed how the U.S. undermined the Allende regime by imposing an economic blockade and having Chile declared a credit risk, acts designed to deny import of essential consumer products and industrial inputs. But she reminds the audience that the United States did not stop providing military aid; pointing to the Bank of America above, she says “They’re sitting in there right now, *right now*, making policies that affect the destinies of millions of people; that means you and that means the Chileans. Think about it a minute, those men aren’t killers, (pause), or are they?”

The camera pans up to a window in the bank and the film cuts to a CSULA office cubicle which Charon D’Aiello describes the historic struggle of workers to organize that finally brought the UP government into being and the efforts by previous governments to suppress it, with illustration from Chilean archival film. Nolasco describes the failed coup effort that took place in June 1973, and the defensive organizing by workers in their plants and working-class people in their neighborhoods that was the response, and says that after the abortive coup attempt, the military had systematically confiscated people’s weapons. He notes that in recent local elections, support for UP candidates increased and that in the next presidential election they were expected to win again. He refers to the coup, and then says “I will tell you about that later,” so the audience knows they will be seeing him again.

Needleman describes the October 1972 truckers’ strike in which independent operators of trucks stopped making deliveries, paralyzing the economy; at the same time a flood of U.S. currency appeared on the black market, making it clear how the truckers were being financed.[8] Upper and middle class women banging on kitchen utensils in the “March of the Empty Pots” to protest the shortages and a militant demonstration by the right-wing militia organization, “*Patria y Libertad*” (Fatherland and Liberty), are shown. Needleman tells of her research that revealed the coordinated activities of the U.S. Institute for Free Labor Development (AFILD—now known to have been an asset of the CIA) and the meetings of U.S. agents with members of the Chilean opposition at an exclusive social club. She emphasizes that there was a three pronged U.S. strategy of support for the military, economic blockade, and training of civilians.

Bortz brings the audience back to the coup telling how 15 or 20 *carabineros* (police) came to his apartment at the time of the coup and beat him and a friend for about 15 minutes, asked for their passports, then took them into the hallway and stomped and beat them with rifle butts and machine guns for about 2 hours, shot up and stole things from the apartment and took them to a bus with other prisoners. After a while they were released. (We learned later that another U.S. student, Frank Terruggi, was not so fortunate; he was murdered during the coup.) Asked why he thought the coup had occurred Bortz replies “the propertied classes will kill whenever threatened, whether by legal or illegal means, just kill.”

Andean folk music returns and a still photo of an empty National Soccer Stadium appears on the screen. Deena asserts, “They turned Santiago’s National Stadium into a concentration camp. This was a symbolic act. When the military finishes cleansing Chile of creativity and socialism all that will remain of the national culture will be soccer.” Pictures of prisoners sitting in the bleachers being guarded by the military are projected on the screen.

The visual and emotional highpoint of the film conveys the social accomplishments and the flowering of popular culture under the UP government, primarily illustrated by the remarkable posters created in this time of cultural explosion.. It starts with the image of the miner seen under the film’s title, now shown to be a poster depicting UP unity with faces of two cultural workers, one a woman, on either side of his. This section includes a slide show sequence of some 45 posters, projected by two slide projectors, so there could be fades in and out, onto a screen that was set on Deena’s dining room table. Fred was at the camera in the adjacent kitchen; his voice can inadvertently be heard saying, softly, “action.” The posters came from art historian David’s Chilean political poster collection. It was written and is narrated in luminous prose by poet Deena; music of Chilean folk artists enhances the words and visuals.

The 1960s and 70s were a period in the development of political poster art that reached its apogee in UP Chile. Brilliant images in primary colors depict achievements in education, recognition of disenfranchised groups, the indigenous and peasants, rights of children, housing, film, as well as international solidarity with Cuba and Vietnam and posters of Che Guevara and of Allende and Fidel Castro together. Deena narrates, “Film, art, literature, music became truly Chilean. The focus changed; there were created new images of people who had never before been at the center” (posters of migrant workers, other peasants, fishermen). “The political goals were not for the privileged, but for the people.” The nationalization of copper is celebrated in a poster that says “Chile puts on long pants” with an image of a young boy in long pants standing tall raising a Chilean flag. The images include the artist work brigade going out to paint murals. The murals and posters were efforts to overcome the effects of U.S. cultural imperialism, shown through images of U.S. products and cartoons depicted in advertisements of U.S. films and cartoons, such as Donald Duck’s Uncle Scrooge shoveling money and Red Ryder clad in gun holsters (see Dorfman and Mattelart, 1971, 1990; Kunzle, 1991).

The tone shifts as the story returns to the coup. The sound track that had been rhythmic percussion music becomes intense and loud. The audience sees and is told the murals were being painted over and books and posters burned. One iconic poster, *America Despierta* (America Awakened) by Patricia Israel and Alberto Pérez (self-identified as “geographers”), is shown in a still shot being burned. It was a depiction of the South American continent covered with colorful images that characterized the region and Chile such as bananas, a langostino, a copihue (the national flower of Chile), Brazilian generals, butterflies, the face of Che Guevara over Bolivia where he died, and the island of Cuba encased in a crocodile above it. (It became the cover of the book *Latin America: The Struggle with Dependency and Beyond* [Chilcote and Edelstein, 1974], as well as the model for the original cover of *Latin American Perspectives*.) Our slide of the poster is filmed turning the projector off and on to simulate the burning. As stills are shown of the military engaging in destruction, the narration notes that within the first hours of the coup, universities, art schools, and museums were burned. UNESCO condemned the coup by a vote of 32 to two, the United States and Taiwan.

The next shot is a still photo of the National Soccer Stadium, and Deena describes how it became the prison for the hundreds of people detained by the military. The camera pans around the Los Angeles Coliseum to the accompaniment of the helicopter overhead, and then Nolasco standing in the bleachers describes in his own words how, after the U.S. Consulate failed to help him regularize the status of himself and his young daughter, he was held in the stadium; accused, because of his dark complexion, of coming to Chile “to spoil the race.” Next, at his suggestion, he is shown seated hunched over covered by a gray cotton blanket with rows of number seats stretching behind him. He recounts the horror of the torture and murders that he saw, including the effects of the torture on other prisoners and the execution of a youth who had dared to yell “down with fascism;” after the authorities threatened to kill many others he confessed he had done it.

Deena’s narration then concludes with the names of leaders detained with photos of some of them being picked up on the streets by police or the army, a description of the murder of folksinger Victor Jara, and Pablo Neruda’s death a few days later.

The film then shifts to a black-and-white 1966 newsreel report of African Americans responding to police violence after the shooting of a teenager at Hunter’s Point in San Francisco. A line of police with guns raised advances on the protestors. This conveys a sort of visual linkage; it mirrors the black and white poster image of Chilean troops advancing across a map of Chile from the beginning of the film, a fortuitous resemblance; that part of the film had been completed when the Hunters Point footage was selected. The camera focuses on a man who rips off his shirt to take on the police authorities (in the next shot he was captured, but we deliberately did not show that). Then Governor Edmund G. “Pat” Brown comes before the camera to intone to “anyone with the sound of my voice,...we can’t have revolution in this country.” This event had occurred at a time when there was considerable unrest in the United States, both as a result of protest against the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement. With this reference, we were trying to bring the relevance of events in a far away nation closer to home. We considered using the shooting of students at Kent State University in May 1970 to make this point, but we chose something with which the audience would be less familiar.

The end of the film sought to inspire viewers to action. Hortensia Allende, widow of the deceased President, praises the actions of members of the U.S. Longshoremen’s Union who had refused to unload ships coming to U.S. ports with Chilean products. Then Don describes over archive pictures of army repression and color shots of Chilean cemeteries the repressive conditions in Chile at the time, including that Chilean workers had to dress in coats and ties were not even allowed to say the word “worker” any more. A blank map of South America is shown; as he counts off the countries that had U.S.-supported fascist dictatorships, “Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, and now Chile,” on the screen their shapes (as well as that of Paraguay) pop into the continent.

The film ends with visuals of three powerful anti-imperialist Cuban posters; the third one shows Nixon with his brain exposed to show the body of a young man in a field of rubble, above lurid images of warfare in black and red. The voiceover is Don’s angry denunciation of leaders who had aided and abetted the overthrow of the Unidad Popular government, “Know this Mr. Edwards [publisher of the major Chilean newspaper], Mr. Matte, Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Villarrin, General Pinochet, Mr. Kissinger, Mr. Frei [the previous President who had not expressed any opposition to the coup], you cannot stop the people’s revolution.”

Finally, there is a montage of previous scenes from the film: Jeffrey Bortz saying “the ruling class will just kill, whether by legal or illegal means, just kill,” Elizabeth Farnsworth saying “Those men aren’t killers, or are they?,” the man in the stadium saying “we will win in any confrontation, you’ll see,” and the freeze-framed man with the upraised fist comes back in the marching flag waving crowd that is chanting “*El pueblo unido jamas sera vencido.*” The audience hears “The ally of Chileans is you. Organize!” as that word appears in white on a black screen and then the film cuts to black. In the original version a loud voice was heard saying “*El*

pugno del pueblo los castigara—the fist of the people will smite them. This was not included in the inter-negative from which future versions were made.

We Show the Movie

“*Chile: With Poems and Guns*,” a 55 minute film, was first screened in January 1974 at the theater of the School of Business at the University of Southern California, arranged by LAGLAS member, Michael Fleet, who taught Political Science there. Editing had been completed during the previous Christmas vacation, just four months after the coup and less than three months after we started working together. The auditorium had been reserved. The audience invited. However, time had run out and the sound track had not been laid on the film. They were run separately, and it worked. Most of us had never made a film before. We had never seen our finished product. As it unfolded on the screen we were overwhelmed by the power of what we saw. So were the rest of the viewers, who gave it an ovation. Although we did not know what later came out about the involvement of the United States, what we put together in a few months remains valid as an indictment of U.S. foreign policy.

Upon its initial showing, Kevin Thomas (1974), the reviewer for *The Los Angeles Times*, judged the film favorably; although he said there was a “bombardment of data too heavy to absorb fully” he judged it a “fervent (*and persuasive*) protest against the military coup” (*italics mine*). A review in the Cal Arts student newspaper, where the screening was followed by a discussion led by Deena Metzger, reported that the response to the final message, “Organize,” was silence; the audience did not know what to do, but then “there was vigorous applause” (Feeney, 1974).

The East Coast premiere was at Harvard on February 9, 1974 (*Boston Phoenix*, 1974), and according to a flyer it was shown in other venues in the Boston area the same weekend (MIT, Northeastern University and Redbook [sic]). The *Harvard Crimson* review commented that although it lacked the production values of a commercial film, “In a way the film’s roughness even enhances its politics; it seems unafraid to show itself the product of labor, a commitment to content over gloss” (Shane, 1974). It was screened shortly thereafter in London, England, under the auspices of the Chilean Solidarity organization, led by adherents of the Communist party; it was well received by the audience, but when David asked the leader of the group if he wished to have a copy to circulate, he demurred because it was too critical of the United States, a reflection of the conciliatory Soviet strategy of the period.

Chile: With Poems and Guns was distributed by Third World Films, which became Unifilms. They were the owners of the inter-negative—the master copy. The film was not picked up by any other distributor when Unifilms went out of business. They were never able to pay royalties, so we never knew for sure how many people used it, but hundreds if not thousands must have seen it. It was shown on many U.S. college campuses, on an independent public television station in Los Angeles, on network TV in Australia, and translated into Greek. One of our daughters saw it years later at Alameda Community College. As an indication of its significance, Allan Francovich, maker of the groundbreaking CIA expose, *On Company Business* (1980), asked us for feedback on his rough cut.

Lucha Carries On

After the completion of “*Chile: With Poems and Guns*” most of the group remained together to produce other films and added other members. We adopted the name Lucha Film Collective (or Lucha Films). In 1975 the Lucha film collective wrote a short article entitled “Report on a Filmmaking Experience: ‘Chile with Poems and Guns’” that was published in the summer issue of the *Latin American Research Review*.

Lucha completed one more film, *Comunicué from Argentina*,^[9] an exploration of the complex politics of that troubled nation completed shortly after the 1976 coup, based on the life of an Argentine woman, Lili Masafarro, who had become the head of the women’s organization of the *Montoneros* (the Peronist guerilla organization) after her son was murdered during the struggle there. Nancy interviewed her in Argentina in 1974 as part of gathering material for the film. Intertwining the life of Masafarro and the career of Evita Perón, it provided a feminist view

of Peron's role in Argentine politics based upon Nancy's PhD dissertation (1974; see also Hollander, 2010).

Communique was a kinestasis film, using only still photos, except for a few live newsreel sequences of Evita Peron and a back shot of me representing the protagonist writing a letter to a friend; there was a Spanish as well as an English voiceover narration; it was edited with A and B rolls, for smooth cuts. Many of the stills came from Masafarro's personal collection of family photos given to Nancy for safekeeping and use in illustrating her life. Importantly, the film also conserved material from the archives of Argentine newspapers that were destroyed by the Argentine military government after the coup there; there were also pictures from books and magazines that Nancy collected. The soundtrack included Argentine tango music of Carlos Gardel and songs by Atahualpa Yupanqui.

Masafarro, who had become an exile in Spain, did not learn the film had been made until Nancy, on her way to a screening in Bilbao, showed it to her in Madrid. We knew, based upon her 1974 conversations, that Masafarro's views at the time would not have agreed with the interpretation we gave to her life, but the political events that led to her exile prepared her to embrace both the Marxist and feminist interpretations of her experiences and Argentine history elaborated in the film. *Communique from Argentina* was awarded the Gold Medal at the 1978 Bilbao International Festival of Short and Documentary Film and in 1979 won First Prize at the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival. It was picked up by a distributor in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey; that organization also ceased to exist, and there is no known copy of the film itself in English or in Spanish in existence today. A videotaped copy of the English version was shown on the Cal State LA campus, at the time Madonna's 1996 film "*Evita*," based on the musical of the same name, in order to convey another view of the often misrepresented Argentine figure. Lucha, which had been joined by Jack Michon and Mary Fredrichs[10] during the making of the film on Argentina, began cooperating with striking rubber union workers in the San Fernando Valley to make a film about their cause, but the plan was abandoned as the strike petered out.[11] The group also began a film on the labor history of Peru that would have become part of Bill's PhD dissertation. He received an AFI (American Film Institute) grant that financed filming in Peru. For this production Becca Wilson and Gerardo Horischnik[12] were added to the group. Bill had collected a large amount of archival moving film and stills, and he, Nancy, Fred, and Becca went to Peru to shoot original footage. Their filming included two factory locations: women workers in a simulated strike march outside the textile plant from which they had been expelled and a garment factory, a cooperative owned and operated by its female workforce. At the former site they were threatened by security forces. A rough cut assembly of the footage for film, that put together the various sections in sequence for the final editing, was completed.

Lucha Dissolves; Final Thoughts

Unfortunately the assembly for the Peru film was lost. The price of silver made the price of film stock impossibly high, time demands on busy people who lived relatively far from each other became too burdensome,[13] the frustration over the loss of the Peru film took its toll, and finally Lucha disbanded. This happened without rancor, and though the group drifted apart several of the participants remain close friends; contacts among us have been resumed with the writing of this memoir.

On November 13, 2011, Don, I, Fred, Phil, David, Deena, Deena's husband Michael Ortiz Hill, Nancy, Nancy's husband Steve Portugues, Becca, and Gerardo gathered at Nancy and Steve's home in Santa Monica for a gathering of Lucha veterans. (Later we contacted Walter in the Boston area, and another reunion with him included is planned for summer 2012.) Over food brought by each we shared memories and current activities and concerns. In some ways it felt like we had never been apart, even though some of us had not seen each other for over 30 years. We had formed bonds that had not been broken.

We called *Chile: With Poems and Guns* “a film pamphlet,” because with its low production values we thought that in time it would be tossed aside. But its educational value did not diminish, since unfortunately the issues it addressed have not gone away. It continued to be shown in my classes at Cal State Los Angeles until spring, 2010, and David’s at UCLA as well. And for this participant in the venture at least, the beginning of understanding of an aesthetic of struggle and the experience of working together clandestinely and collectively on this endeavor had a lifelong impact that informs my comprehension and my practice to this day. I shared this memoir with others who made the Chile film (Don, Bill, Fred, Nancy, David, Deena and Walter). Each had fond memories of the experience stirred by the reminiscences. Deena, as usual, said it best.

It feels very important to say... that we enjoyed each other and respected each other greatly and that lasted throughout the making of the film. ... [There were] ideological reasons for the ways we structured the Lucha collective – but for me, at least, it was not ideological, but intrinsic to the work. It was important to me that there be great integrity between the ideas we were putting out and the ways we were living and working together.

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[2] Phil, then a film student at UCLA, is now an instructor of English at Chatsworth High School; Bill, then a history graduate student at UCLA, is now part of the Latin American Studies Program at Cal State, Los Angeles (CSULA); Don, now emeritus, was a member of the CSULA Political Science Department; I was a graduate student at the Claremont Graduate School and became Director of the CSULA Latin American Studies Program; Nancy, then of the History faculty of Cal State, Dominguez Hills, is now a psychoanalyst; David, then of the California Institute of the Arts, is Professor Emeritus of Art History at UCLA; Deena, then on the Cal Arts faculty, has become a renowned counselor and healer, Walter, at the time a southern California Harvard student taking classes at CSULA, is a community access TV staffer, film festival organizer, actor, and emcee in the Boston area. Bollinger and the Brays were founding editors of *Latin American Perspectives* which, as the film was being produced, was putting together its second issue "Chile: Blood on the Peaceful Road" (1974) on the Allende government and the coup; co-edited by Bollinger; the article on the Chilean military, was by Jorge Nef, one of people interviewed in the film.

[3] His director was a Peruvian socialist, Jorge Reyes, who now owns a film production company in Paris and still makes political films as well as being a judge at the San Sebastian Film Festival in Spain. In 1977 Walter completed "Avenue of the Americas," using much more of the footage he had brought back than we did (Seidman, 1977).

[4] His brother was a student in Latin American Studies at CSULA.

[5] Bortz is now Professor of History, Appalachian State University; Nef, a Professor at the University of Guelph; Farnsworth, a member of Pacific News Service, had conducted research by interviewing bankers, other business people and U.S. and World Bank officials in New York and Washington D.C. and later became a PBS News Hour reporter and anchor and recently co-directed and produced "The Judge and the General," a film that revealed the atrocities committed by Pinochet; Needleman, an activist scholar and labor researcher retired June 2010 as Professor of Labor Studies, University of Indiana, Northwest; D'Aiello later became the campus Affirmative Action Officer; we lost touch with Tito Nolasco.

[6] In the original version, at the start of the film there were acknowledgements of supporters and credits for some of the participants, which were not included in copies that circulated later.

[7] We said "names ending in "berg and stein;" in Spanish it would have been different names. This might have confused our audience, but we wanted to convey that the rhetoric of the Junta was anti-Semitic—once in power the military government had good relations with Israel.

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[10] Jack, now deceased, was a film editor at TV station KNBC who later directed segments of the TV show *Taxi*. Mary who was studying to become a TV sound technician later earned a MSW and practiced privately and in university settings in Colorado, and still does consulting..

[11] Members of the group on the faculty at Cal State Northridge, Los Angeles and Dominguez Hills received a joint grant from the State University Chancellor to teach filmmaking about Latin America; Fred's students provided the technical expertise and learned about Latin America; Nancy, Bill and Don's students learned about film making.

[12] Becca, daughter of blacklisted Hollywood screenwriter Michael Wilson, was studying film at UCLA. She is presently a free-lance editor and writer; bringing our saga full circle, she participates in monthly spiritual meetings organized by Deena; Gerardo was a student exile from Argentina; he is now a psychotherapist in private practice.

[13] Don and I lived about 40 miles from the others.