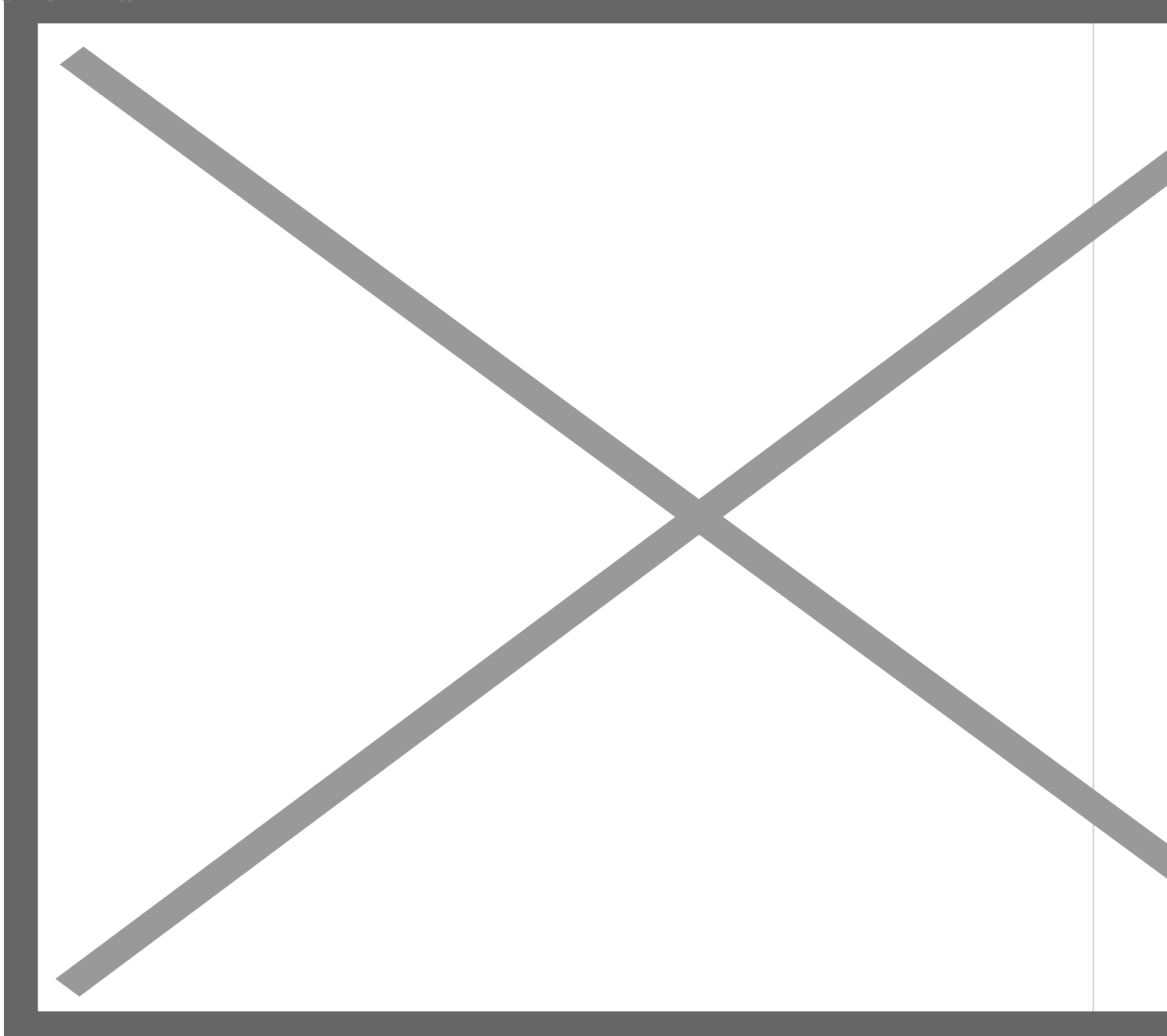


Chile: Embraces and combat

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By Guillermo Alvarado

The Communist Party of Chile and, in general, the progressive world of this South American nation, celebrated over the weekend the traditional Fiesta de los Abrazos, a meeting point to share and reflect on the most urgent issues at the local and international level.

Communists usually celebrated on January 2, in memory of that day in 1922 when the leader Luis Emilio Recabarren changed the name of the Socialist Workers Party and registered the new political formation in the III International.

After the coup d'état of September 11, 1973, the repression of the dictatorship headed by Augusto Pinochet was directed against communist militants, who were one of the pillars of President Salvador Allende and hundreds were kidnapped, tortured and murdered.

The party then went strictly underground and its main leaders, who remained in Chile, organized resistance in the midst of fierce persecution.

It became common that when two or more militants met, often in the middle of a task, they embraced each other, happy to know they were alive and in the struggle.

In 1988, still under the Pinochet dictatorship, the first version was held and hundreds of communists, many already returned from exile, gathered under the façade of an artistic and cultural event.

During that time a meeting and a farewell could be the last and everyone was well aware of that and therefore the most common gesture among the attendees were the intense and strong hugs, which perhaps could only be repeated in eternity.

In 1991 another symbolic event took place, when the event began to be held in the capital's Parque O'Higgins, an extensive green lung that in hiding witnessed many secret contacts in the shelter of its groves and large fields where families usually stroll on weekends.

Lautaro Carmona, president of the Communist Party of Chile, assured in this edition that the fundamental objective of the left and progressive forces must be unity to avoid the advance of the extreme right, anxious to take power as it has already happened in other countries of the region.

The intense solidarity with Cuba and Palestine, the fraternity and warmth in all the looks and gestures and the presence of different generations committed to change, made that when leaving the venue a fixed idea flooded the heart and the head: "You know what? Let's give each other a big hug and keep fighting!"

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