

THE CHILEAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1970
IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

by

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INTRODUCTION

Following a long and sometimes tense campaign, Eduardo Frei was elected President of Chile in 1964. There were many factors indicating that the new president, supported by the young and dynamic Christian Democratic Party, would lead this nation of the south along a moderate, democratic and peaceful path to modernization. The Christian Democrats won an astounding victory over the far left while symbolizing a growing movement for political and economic independence. Beyond the ecstasy which greeted its rise to power, Latin America's first Christian Democratic government faced many problems which would be difficult to resolve because of certain factors rooted deeply in Chilean history.

Early in the nineteenth century, the old Chilean aristocracy implanted a conservative stabilizing structure within the nation's political system. The system remained basically unchanged until early in the 20th century when the emerging middle sectors opened the system to broader democratic tendencies and to limited social reforms. It was the Radical Party which became the spokesman for those who wished to break from the old conservatism and gradually liberalize the nation's traditional political structure.¹

¹For a discussion of this period, see K. H. Silvert, Chile Yesterday and Today (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), pp. 71-84.

Originally, the Radical Party drew support from commercial leaders who resented domination by conservative elements located in Santiago. They were joined by elements of the urban middle sectors and the intellectuals and slowly benefited from an enlarging electorate. Though the Radical Party was mildly reformist, its main concern was to provide protection for the middle class businessmen who made up the core of the movement. As the party broadened its base to include urban and rural, middle class and lower class sectors, an inherent incompatibility appeared within the membership. While catering to the middle sectors and staking an early claim to labor support, the Radicals tried to identify with disparate and sometimes antagonistic elements. At the same time, the old oligarchy determined to assimilate the Radical businessmen into the traditional elite and hence converted them to upper class values though not always upper class status. This process became apparent when the Radical presidents began to neglect lower classes and leftist parties which supported them in favor of cooperation with the oligarchs. One major result of this evolution on the part of the Radical Party leaders was the perennial crumbling of electoral coalitions and the assumption of the leadership of reformist forces by leaders of parties to the left.

By 1952, it was clear that the Radical Party would never satisfy the aspirations of the lower classes and it fell into measurable decline. In 1958, the leftist leaders united against the candidacy of Jorge Alessandri but found that their support was not sufficient to challenge the coalition of conservative and moderate groups, so Chile passed through

another six years of conservative rule. Though Alessandri was conservative and aristocratic, he was tolerant toward the left and permitted it to organize and campaign unchecked. As Alessandri approached the end of his term, the movement for reform was stronger than in any period of previous history.

The central issue on which the 1964 presidential campaign was based was not the necessity of reform but rather the manner in which that reform should be effected. The Communists and Socialists, led by Salvador Allende, offered a radical program of nationalization and economic reconstruction which would eventually result in the establishment of socialism.

Though the leftist coalition (Frente Revolucionario de Acción Popular--FRAP) developed a large following because of its program, there was another grouping which offered a new and dynamic approach to reform. The background of this grouping was briefly as follows: In 1938, a group of young Conservatives bolted the Conservative Party and founded a movement which they called the Falange Nacional. Led by Radomiro Tomic, Eduardo Frei and Rafael Agustín Gumucio, the group based its ideology on liberal papal encyclicals and the practical experience of European Christian Democracy. As part of its evolution into a dynamic national party, in 1957 the Falange increased its following and changed its name to the Christian Democratic Party.²

²Ernst Halperin, Nationalism and Communism in Chile (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1965), pp. 182-195.

In the years preceding the 1964 election, the party developed a sweeping ideology which included Christian humanism, nationalism, and the abolition of paternalism. The party envisioned a new communitarian society which would be based neither on capitalism nor socialism. For a nation that was calling for reform but was unsure of what kind of reform it wanted, the Christian Democrats seemed to have a winning formula.³

In 1964 the Christian Democratic Party faced the task of attempting to resolve the nation's social and economic problems while maintaining the principles of Chilean democracy against authoritarian movements of the far right and the far left. The situation appeared even more crucial in light of the possibility that a failure of the Frei administration could lead to an electoral victory of the far left or a military solution supported by the far right.

To meet the challenge, Eduardo Frei proclaimed the "revolution in liberty" through which he proposed an economic, social, and political reconstruction of the nation. The "revolution" included a massive agrarian reform that would result in the creation of 100,000 new peasant homesteads, a greatly enlarged system of education and a reform of wage distribution. The plan further called for expanded unionization of workers and peasants, and partial nationalization of Chile's foreign-owned enterprises and domestic monopolies.⁴

³Halperin, Nationalism and Communism in Chile, p. 196.

⁴Ibid., p. 213.

The "revolution in liberty" therefore was to be a "third way" between capitalism and socialism. It was an ambitious program appealing to many of the leftist and reformist sectors of Chilean society though not so radical as to alienate the economically powerful oligarchy and equally important foreign business interests. The ideals were high but the stakes were equally high and the Christian Democrats would find that implementing their program would be infinitely more difficult than proposing it.⁵

The Chilean political system, because its roots were in the conservative past, retained an inherent mechanism to prevent any party in office from advancing its program beyond certain limits. Not only were the powers of the executive limited, but tactics designed to avoid compromise by the opposition parties had become institutionalized. Such dysfunctions within the Chilean political system have been described by Frederick Nunn as "legislative obstructionism, traditionally uncompromising extremist opposition and political baroquism."⁶ These institutions, which date from the parliamentary period, prevented even the moderate programs of the Radical governments from ever being completely realized.

Because the astounding electoral victory of the apparently monolithic Christian Democrats was achieved independently of any coalition,

⁵James Becket, "Chile's Mini-Revolution," Commonweal, LXXXVII, No. 13 (Dec. 29, 1967), 406-408.

⁶Frederick Nunn, "Chile's Government in Perspective: Political Change or More of the Same?" Inter-American Economic Affairs, XX, No. 4 (Spring, 1967), 73-89.

many believed that they were witnessing the birth of a new political age. If only the Christian Democrats could remove the chains which had bound all of the previous reform governments, there was a chance that the "revolution in liberty" might become a reality.

In a rapidly changing or revolutionary society, the middle of the road, the compromise, or as in the case of the Christian Democrats, the "third way," is never an easy one. The compromise party must meet not only the requirements of the nation's evolution while satisfying or undercutting the aspirations of more radical elements but must guard against moving too rapidly against the traditional entrenched conservative sectors. If these requirements are not met, the compromise party may find itself alone and isolated, incapable of satisfying either faction. Should this occur, authoritarian elements from the right and from the left may struggle for power.⁷

It was exactly this dilemma which struck the government of Eduardo Frei during his six years as President and from this dilemma were born the conflicts which tore at the unity of the Christian Democratic government and almost threatened to destroy it. In the excitement and rocketing expectations that greeted the rise of Christian Democracy, it was easy to overlook minute differences in ideology within the party which, in victory, were of minor importance but in the face of political realities and Parliamentary opposition became increasingly more distinct and even more difficult to reconcile.

⁷For a pertinent discussion of revolutionary theory, see Crane Brinton, The Anatomy of Revolution (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1938).

According to James Petras, membership of the Christian Democratic Party in 1964 was divided into two vague ideological categories. The first sector, which he defined as "corporatist" was composed of interest groups led by an elite which arbitrated disputes between the various groups. The role of the elite was to make policies for the subordinates and to direct their activities. The "corporatists," having their ideological roots in medieval Catholic doctrine, stressed the role of the citizen as that of a participant in the political community rather than as an independent individual.⁸

The second group has been defined as the "populist" sector. Individuals identifying with the "populists" called for participation by the individual in party decisions, a high degree of egalitarianism and elimination of the party's hierarchy. The strength of the messianic "populist" grouping lay within the labor and peasant unions and favored autonomy with respect to the party's elite in Santiago. For these reasons, the "populists" held certain advantages over the "corporatists." The powers of the "corporatists" were confined to the passing of statutes which the subordinates might or might not obey. On the other hand, the "populists" could make their demands felt by strikes and other union activities.⁹

From these minor ideological differences were born the deeper political divisions which prevented the party from presenting a unified

⁸ James Petras, Politics and Social Forces in Chilean Development (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 200-201.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 203, 213-215.

front against opposition parties that were eager to exploit conflicts within the government. After two years in office, disagreements concerning the speed and method of the "revolution in liberty" resulted in the formation of three well-defined factions within the Christian Democratic Party. Moreover, these factions reflected the same conflicting viewpoints that were being expressed in the nation as a whole. From the "corporatists" were born the officialists who supported the aspirations of President Frei. Led by former party president Patricio Aylwin and Edmundo Pérez Zujovic, this sector represented the older, devoutly Catholic, and traditional leadership of the party.¹⁰

In party controversies, the officialist policy tended to be opposed by the more leftist and messianic rebel sector, which drew its support from the "populist" groups within the party. Under the leadership of Rafael Agustín Gumucio, Alberto Jérez and the ideologist Julio Silva Solar, the rebels found their greatest strength in the unions and among the Christian Democratic Youth. The rebels opposed the officialist tendency to cooperate with the right and favored closer association with the Communist and Socialist Parties.¹¹

A third group known as the terceristas formed as a compromise between the left and right wings of the party. Led by the agrarian reform expert, Jacques Chonchol, and Senator Renán Fuentealba, the terceristas

¹⁰George M. Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party: Power, Factions, and Ideology," The Review of Politics, XXXI, No. 2 (April, 1969), 150.

¹¹Ibid., 151.

included the party's intellectuals and technicians and small factions of the Christian Democratic Youth. In most party debates, the terceristas allied with the rebels in attempting to force the government further to the left and to refrain from parliamentary association with the conservative National Party.¹²

As the government of Eduardo Frei tackled the difficult problems of reform in a potentially revolutionary society, its internal divisions became ever more marked. When the time came for the government to formulate its program for the 1970 presidential election--an event destined to be its most serious crisis--the conflicts within the Christian Democratic Party could no longer be reconciled.

¹²Ibid., 151-152.

CHAPTER I

EARLY SIGNS OF DISCONTENT

The first major tasks undertaken by the Christian Democrats upon assuming power were the resolving of conflicts surrounding the moderate agrarian reform program which was begun under the previous administration and fulfilling the campaign pledge to partially nationalize Chile's important copper industry. Within two years new legislation was passed by Parliament aimed at remodeling the agrarian reform laws and establishing cooperative ownership of the copper concerns. In both cases, progressive legislation was submitted to Parliament but in neither case did the final product resolve the conflicts which had prompted government action.

The problems concerning the copper mines were debated heavily by both rightist and leftist elements in the nation with each faction conducting its own investigations and arriving at its own conclusions. The right, always mindful of property rights and economic stability, was wary of government intervention into the ownership and operation of the mines, while the left, consistent with its ideology, attempted to expose "the injustice of United States imperialism." These opposing viewpoints were expressed not only for public consumption by the various political parties, but to some extent within the membership of the Christian Democratic Party.

The rightist viewpoint held that the United States copper companies were a contribution to the Chilean economy because of the increasing

investment, technological development and the influx of capital. Reports were cited such as that of William Benton who toured Chile in the early 1960's and made the following report:

Top ranking Chilean officials told us that approximately 60% of the gross earnings of the U.S. mining companies in Chile goes to the Chilean government in taxes, adding more than \$100 million annually to the Chilean budget. That is, of course, over and above salaries and wages, transportation costs and other payments that go back into the Chilean economy.¹

The report further explained that of the remaining forty per cent, the largest amount went to cover operating costs, with the remainder being reinvested and a small dividend being paid to the investors.²

The left, including the Socialist and Communist Parties, presented a less favorable analysis. The Communists, while calling for complete nationalization, blatantly stated that "Chile is being robbed by the U.S. monopolies to the tune of more than \$500 million a year."³ Socialist Salvador Allende, in an interview with visiting North Americans, explained that exploitation of Chile's copper was a necessary activity of the United States economic policy which was dictated by its capitalistic, and hence, exploitative structure.⁴ Socialist Senator Carlos Altamirano

¹William Benton, as quoted in Leonard Gross, The Last, Best Hope: Eduardo Frei and Chilean Democracy (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 194.

²Ibid.

³José Dickman, "For an Anti-Imperialist Popular Unity Government," World Marxist Review, XIII, No. 2 (February, 1970), 89.

⁴Elizabeth C. Duran, "An Interview with Senator Allende," Inter-American Economic Affairs, XXI, No. 3 (Winter, 1967), 81.

carried the point somewhat further stating that the "U. S. wished to prolong the war in Vietnam to keep the price of copper high and provide extraordinary profits for the United States companies."⁵

Thus the copper controversy was a burning issue that Eduardo Frei had pledged to resolve during his presidency. Even before the 1964 election, Frei's economic advisors had been formulating a plan to "Chileanize" the United States companies by a program in which the government would enter into part ownership of the foreign corporations.⁶ While the right reluctantly agreed to support the plan, the left charged that the pre-election agreements had been made with the United States companies. These agreements provided that the companies would partially finance Frei's campaign in return for favorable "Chileanization" contracts.⁷

Following more than a year of parliamentary debate, the first "Chileanization" law won approval on April 1, 1966, when the National Party agreed to support the bill with certain private property guarantees added. Though the bill was approved in April of 1966, the first agreement with a United States corporation was not signed until March, 1967.⁸

⁵ Carlos Altamirano, quoted in the New York Times, Feb. 6, 1968, p. 8.

⁶ Hubert Herring, A History of Latin America from the Beginnings to the Present (3rd ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 678.

⁷ James Petras, Politics and Social Forces in Chilean Development (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 239.

⁸ Gross, The Last, Best Hope, p. 150.

The bill, as it finally passed through Parliament, stated that the copper companies, through new investments, would agree to raise production to a projected figure of one million metric tons a year by 1970 and increase the amount of copper refined in Chile from the figure of 270,000 metric tons in 1964 to 700,000 metric tons in 1970. The first agreement provided that the Chilean government would purchase 51 per cent of the stock in Kennecott's El Teniente mine and would receive 25 per cent of the stock in two new organizations, Cerro Exploration, and Exotica, and 33 per cent of any new companies organized by Anaconda.⁹ The effective tax rate would be lowered from 85 per cent to 45 per cent, and Kennecott would retain management of its operations for eleven years.¹⁰ Anaconda's large Chuquicamata mine would not be tampered with.¹¹

The "Chileanization" agreements did not resolve the copper controversy and while marking a defeat for the proponents of nationalization, they seriously increased tensions within the party. While President Frei was pushing for passage of the "Chileanization" bill, the leftist faction of the party, led by Alberto Jérez and Julio Silva S. circulated a document urging complete nationalization of the copper companies. Later, this same leftist faction secured the removal from office of Javier Lagarrigue, the architect of the "Chileanization" bill.¹²

⁹Petras, Politics and Social Forces, p. 238.

¹⁰James Becket, "Chile's Mini-Revolution," Commonweal, LXXXVII, No. 13 (Dec. 29, 1967), 406-407.

¹¹Alan Angell, "The Christian Democrats at Mid-Term," The World Today, XXIII, No. 10 (Oct., 1967), 439.

¹²George W. Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party: Power, Factions, and Ideology," The Review of Politics, XXXI, No. 2 (April, 1969), 155.

From the economic viewpoint, the first "Chileanization" agreement proved to be of questionable value. Stocks in Kennecott's El Teniente mine were purchased at the rather high price of nearly three times the book value.¹³ Furthermore, the U. S. Department of Commerce reported that under the new agreement the Chilean Government would receive a steady increase in gross receipts from the increased production of copper but because of tax reductions would suffer a 16 per cent drop in earnings per ton of copper produced, resulting in higher profit remittances to the foreign-owned companies.¹⁴ Unstable copper prices did not improve the situation. Though the world price of copper reached an unprecedented high in 1966 when the bill was passed, by April of 1967, the price had fallen from 54 cents a pound to a low of 42 cents. Frei had figured his budget on a minimum of 48 cents a pound.¹⁵

Discontent among the mine workers, encouraged by Communist and Socialist opposition to the "Chileanization" plan, further contributed to the government's dilemma. In March, 1966, the miners at El Teniente struck over wage increases which they believed to be inadequate in comparison to the high profits achieved by the company. The strike spread to the northern mine of El Salvador where on March 11 troupes acting under the internal security law battled with the striking workers, killing six

¹³Alan Angell, "Chile: From Christian Democracy to Marxism?" The World Today, XXVI, No. 11 (Nov., 1970), 490.

¹⁴Petras, Politics and Social Forces, p. 238.

¹⁵Herring, A History of Latin America, p. 679.

of the workers and two women. Frei defended the action of the military, describing the troops as having "fulfilled their duty."¹⁶ While a number of pro-Frei demonstrations were organized in support of the action of the government, the President was denounced by Fidel Castro who said that "Frei has promised revolution without blood and he has given blood without revolution."¹⁷

The attempt by the Christian Democrats to resolve the copper dilemma provides an insight to the conflicts and divisions which were taking shape in Chile in 1967. The authoritarian fashion in which the striking copper miners were handled was dictated by Frei's development program. The "Chileanization" of copper was to be a model agreement after which it was hoped that an influx of new capital would occur to finance the government's development program. It was the viewpoint of the government, in the case of the striking miners, that a "strong-arm" tactic was necessary to convince potential investors of the stability and the strength of the ruling party in order that Chile might remain "competitive" with the business-oriented authoritarian regimes of Brazil and Argentina. The ultimate consequences were to polarize Chilean politics between the left and the right, and to further ally the Christian Democratic Party with the conservative groups, thus alienating the leftist factions of the party.¹⁸

¹⁶ Petras, Politics and Social Forces, quoting Eduardo Frei, p. 239.

¹⁷ Ibid., quoting Fidel Castro, p. 240.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 248-249.

Such cleavages within the party were only deepened by the government's inclination to utilize the mass media and pro-government sympathy demonstrations in an attempt to present the opposition as enemies of the nation. Furthermore, Frei's reluctance to negotiate with the opposing parties forced the left to resort to extreme inflexibility while personal rivalries and ideological differences among the government's parliamentary members resulted in the inefficient processing of government proposals.¹⁹

The Christian Democrats' attempt to deal with agrarian reform, while resulting in the resettlement of large numbers of peasant families, eventually led to the sharpening of political divisions within the party and within the nation. In order to win parliamentary approval, Frei permitted the right to amend the agrarian reform bill to the extent that it no longer contained the necessary provisions to restructure the agricultural sector.²⁰

The President, in his third annual message to Parliament, revealed that of the total 260,000 estates in Chile, only two per cent would be affected by the new law. As the bill had been drawn up originally, animals and machinery were liable to expropriation along with the estate. As the bill became law, these articles would be retained by the landowner. Bonds given initially in compensation for expropriated land were to be adjustable

¹⁹ Arpad Von Lazar and Luis Quiros Varela, "Chilean Christian Democracy: Lessons in the Politics of Reform Management," Inter-American Economic Affairs, XXI, No. 4 (Spring, 1968).

²⁰ Angell, "The Christian Democrats at Mid-Term," The World Today, 440.

for inflation at amounts ranging from 80 per cent on small estates to 20 per cent on large ones. As amended, all bonds would be adjustable to a limit of 70 per cent. These bonds might be used to acquire shares in joint stock companies or submitted to the Chilean Development Corporation (CORFO) as credit guarantees for investment in industry. Vineyards would not be touched.²¹

The parties of the left were not pleased by the new agrarian reform law. They were particularly opposed to the clause which allowed bonds of compensation to be tied to business and industrial stock as this provision would retain a concentration of capital in the upper classes. Moreover, they predicted that when enacted, the reform would provide land for only about one-third of Chile's 350,000 landless peasant families.²²

The reform law, though capable of redistributing land, did not contain provisions to break the power of the wealthy land owners who were tied to the urban business and industrial elites. As of 1967, almost one-half of the large businessmen in Chile either owned large farms or were closely related to families who did. The connections between these two groupings meant that if an agrarian reform were to be effective, it also would have to deal with urban economic elites and provide for a redistribution of income.²³ Jacques Chonchol, the chief of the agrarian reform institute, was aware of this relationship and for

²¹Ibid., 439-440.

²²Ibid.

²³Petras, Politics and Social Forces, p. 53.

these reasons later stated that the agrarian reform of the Christian Democrats could be "neither drastic, nor rapid, nor massive."²⁴

As in the case of the copper industry controversy, the issue was complicated by violence in the provinces. The organized invasion of large estates by landless peasants was beginning on a large scale with the support of the Socialist Party. In dealing with these invasions, the Christian Democrats faced serious difficulties. If the government failed to support the laws and failed to evict the invaders, it lost the vital parliamentary support from the conservative National Party. On the other hand, if the peasants were forcibly removed from the estates, the alliance of the left retaliated with strikes, parliamentary opposition, and threats of violence. For lack of a suitable solution, the usual procedure adopted by Frei's administration was to allow the invaders to remain on the land while a final, legal settlement became lost in government bureaucracy.²⁵

The year of 1967 was a decisive period for the Christian Democrats beyond the issues which surrounded the copper and agrarian reform controversies. It was in this year that the parties of the left launched a vicious attack against the program of the government. Moreover, internal divisions within the Christian Democratic Party were deepened by the opposition's unceasing attempts to embarrass the President while exploiting discontent that arose from the copper agreements and the agrarian reform issues.

²⁴El Tiempo, Bogota, Colombia, quoting Jacques Chonchol, Nov. 22, 1970, pp. 1, 6. Trans. by the writer.

²⁵For a study, see "The Seizure of Los Cristales--A Case Study of the Marxist Left in Chile," by Terry McCoy, in Inter-American Economic Affairs, XXI, No. 1 (Summer, 1967).

The policy of the left in this period was complex and ambiguous but very effective. Unlike its position during the Popular Front era, the left in the 1960's developed what the Communist Party has defined as the "unarmed path."²⁶ This policy included electoral and parliamentary opposition to the Frei administration while at the same time giving clandestine support to illegal union activities, land invasions, and violent student unrest. The intent was to delay or to destroy the government's parliamentary proposals while reinforcing discontent over the administration's inability to advance its program.²⁷

Though the "unarmed path" proved to be a very effective doctrine, this opposition to the Christian Democrats provided the only facade of unity that existed among the parties of the left. While the Socialists were in complete opposition to the administration, the Communists were willing to support the President when given the opportunity to amend his proposals to their liking. Leftist unity, already faltering, was greatly weakened in June when the Socialist Party suffered a division resulting in the expulsion of the powerful Socialist leader, Raúl Ampuero, and fifteen provincial secretaries of the party. The division was said to have occurred over opposition to Salvador Allende's presidential aspirations.²⁸ Senator Ampuero stated that the disagreement was complicated by personal attacks levied against him by Allende.²⁹

²⁶Dickman, "For an Anti-Imperialist Popular Government," 92.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Angell, "The Christian Democrats," 442.

²⁹Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1749 (Dec. 25-31, 1968), 10.

In Parliament, on many issues, the left found the National Party an ally which placed the Christian Democrats in a helpless minority in the Senate. It was this alliance of the left and the right which prevented President Frei from making a long-planned trip to Washington for special conferences with Lyndon Johnson in January of 1967. The United States press was astounded that Frei had been embarrassed in this manner by his own Parliament. In reporting the event, Newsweek wrote that "led by Senate President Salvador Allende . . . the opposition tried to blackmail the President."³⁰ Frei was enraged not only because the Senate had torpedoed his good will trip to Washington but because he believed that the parliamentary alliance of left and right had formed against him only to further partisan interests. For this reason, on January 19, Frei announced that he would send a bill to Parliament which would enable the President to dissolve that body once during a presidential term and call for new elections.³¹

In the face of strong Senate opposition, there was little chance of such a proposal winning parliamentary approval. Therefore Frei decided to label the municipal elections of April as a "plebiscite" on his program. The President expected his party to receive at least 50 per cent of the vote, believing that a vote of confidence from the Chilean people would force the Senate to pass his reforms.³² Perhaps if Eduardo Frei had not

³⁰"The President Regrets," Newsweek, LXIX, No. 5 (Jan. 30, 1967), 53.

³¹New York Times, Jan. 20, 1967, p. 15.

³²Michael Francis and Eldon Lanning, "Chile's 1967 Municipal Elections," Inter-American Economic Affairs, XXI, No. 2 (Autumn, 1967), 23.

publicly placed his entire program on trial in this municipal election, the results would not have caused such a serious setback for the government. When the results were calculated, the Christian Democrats only received 36.5 per cent of the vote while both the left and the right made significant gains.³³

Exactly from what groups the Christian Democrats lost support is not clear. El Mercurio explained that the government lost support because it had forgotten the middle class.³⁴ Officialist Bernardo Leighton held the opinion that it was only because the Christian Democrats were the party in office that they had lost support since the 1964 victory.³⁵ Regardless of personal opinions, the trends which were to plague the Christian Democratic Party throughout its six years in office were now apparent. The right was becoming alienated by the party's reformist activities while the left was benefiting from the Christian Democrats' inability to satisfy popular demands or to undercut the leftist's power among the lower classes in the nation. Though the callampas surrounding Santiago had supported Frei heavily in 1964, they were among the first to desert the government in this election.³⁶ The unfortunate results of the 1967 "plebiscite" confirmed an observation made in that year of yet another danger:

³³ Ibid., 32.

³⁴ Ibid., 33.

³⁵ Ibid., 35.

³⁶ Angell, "Chile: The Difficulties of Democratic Reform," 523.

The party's apparent commitment to develop a popular base among the "marginated" parts of the population involves high risks. After politicizing these people and convincing them of the necessity for "revolution," a failure of the PDC to achieve its reforms could tilt the Chilean electorate still further to the left.³⁷

Regardless of whatever explanation might be offered for the defeat of Frei's "plebiscite," the effect in terms of unity within the Christian Democratic Party was disastrous. While the left, particularly the Socialist Party, floundered in petty controversies and disunity, a revolution broke out within the governing party. In July, the party's Political-Technical Committee led by Jacques Chonchol published an article entitled, "A Non-Capitalist Path of Development." The document blamed the "plebiscite" defeat upon the "capitalist" activities of the Frei administration and urged the President to speed the nationalization of Chile's electric, coal, nitrate, steel, and telephone companies. The plan also called for a more rapid and drastic agrarian reform.³⁸ Speaking on behalf of the officialist sector of the party, Patricio Aylwin described the document as "illusory, utopian, contradictory, and even chaotic."³⁹

To make matters worse, in the same month, the rebels united with the terceristas to gain control of the leadership of the party's National Council. Rafael Agustín Gumucio, Juan Bosco Parra, Julio Silva Solar,

³⁷Francis and Lanning, "Chile's Municipal Elections," 35.

³⁸Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party," 155.

³⁹Ibid., quoting Aylwin.

and Alberto Jérez became the new officers.⁴⁰ In his first discussion with the new leaders, Frei reportedly said to the new officers, "Your election signifies the worst defeat for my government."⁴¹

The rebel leadership had more serious "defeats" in store for President Frei. Much to his disapproval, the party endorsed the activities of the Cuban-based Latin American Solidarity Organization with the Chilean branch under the leadership of Salvador Allende.⁴² The right was outraged by this proclamation from the Christian Democrats. Conservative Senator Francisco Bulnés expressed his opinion thus: "I frankly fail to see how we can demand respect for the laws by the common citizen, or even from the Armed Forces if the President of the Senate is pointing the way to sedition."⁴³ Then the party published the following document which greatly embarrassed the President:

The Christian Democratic Party sustains the democratic path as the best means of development for peoples who struggle against imperialism of all kinds and as the best means to overcome backwardness, exploitation and misery. It admits, however, in conformity with its principles that in the case of governments which ignore the fundamental rights of individuals and society, without permitting elections, it is legitimate to defend those rights through armed insurrection.⁴⁴

In the remaining months of 1967, the government of Eduardo Frei was almost paralyzed by attacks from the left, from the right, and from the President's own party. A forced savings plan in which revenue for

⁴⁰ Ibid., 163.

⁴¹ Ibid., quoting Frei.

⁴² New York Times, July 27, 1967, p. 10.

⁴³ Ibid., quoting Bulnes.

⁴⁴ Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party," 161.

public development projects would be raised by deductions from workers and employees salaries failed to win party support, resulting in a resignation threat from ten important cabinet members.⁴⁵ Then, in November, a general strike, backed by the Communist-Socialist (FRAP) alliance broke out in opposition to the forced savings proposal. Five were killed, twenty were injured and over one hundred individuals were arrested.⁴⁶

An election defeat in December marked a further setback for the Frei administration. The leftist directorate of the party gave only token support to the party's candidate in a bi-election to fill a seat left vacant by the death of a Christian Democratic Senator. In the election, for the provinces of Bío-Bío, Cautín, and Malleco, the party's candidate, Jorge Lavandero, was defeated by the left-leaning leader of the Radical Party, Alberto Baltra.⁴⁷

By the end of 1967, Chilean politics had fallen into ideological shambles. The President was abandoned by his own party and the Socialist Party, consistent with much of its history, was weakened by a major split. The Communist Party retained a strong and well disciplined organization but only through a coalition with other groups could it present a threat. If there were one organization that retained any unity and confidence, it was the National Party. Though the election was still two years away, there were repeated rumors that the popular but aging former President, Jorge Alessandri, was planning to run for re-election.

⁴⁵New York Times, Nov. 15, 1967, p. 11.

⁴⁶New York Times, Nov. 24, 1967, p. 5.

⁴⁷Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party," 163.

After the setbacks of 1967, it was clear to most factions of the Christian Democratic Party that unless unified support was given to the government, the fate of the party could only darken. Therefore, at the urging of Frei, the National Council met again early in January, 1968. The purpose of the special convocation was to reconcile the hostilities which had broken out between the President and certain elements within the party.⁴⁸

After 18 hours of debates, a vote of confidence was given to President Frei by 278 against 202. At this point, the leftists in control of the party's leadership resigned their positions on the National Council in order that new officers might be elected.⁴⁹ It was hoped that returning party control to the officialists would quiet the squabbling which in recent months had severely stained the image of the government. As events turned out, this was only partially successful. When Jaime Castillo's name was announced as the new party president, sixty members of the Christian Democratic Youth led by Rodrigo Ambrosio stormed out of the session.⁵⁰

Apart from this one incident, returning the officialists to the leadership of the National Council was a temporary victory for Eduardo Frei because he now had the necessary party support for his economic programs. The Council immediately voted to back the controversial forced-savings proposal although it rejected a proposal made by the President

⁴⁸Ibid., 167.

⁴⁹Hispano Americano, LII, No. 1341 (Mexico City, Jan. 15, 1968), 25.

⁵⁰Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party," 167.

that all labor strikes be banned for up to one year.⁵¹

The President's economic program for 1968 was an intricate proposal from which the left became the greatest benefactor. Chile was plagued by serious inflation which the Frei administration had been capable of reducing only temporarily in 1966. It was customary, therefore, for the government, with the consent of Parliament, to re-adjust wages equal to the inflation rate of the previous year. This year, rather than proposing a simple wage increase, Frei attached the forced savings plan to the wage adjustment bill which he then sent to Parliament.⁵² The bill would have meant a 20 per cent wage increase for the workers, a fourth of which would be set aside in bonds with an equal mandatory contribution from employers. In the face of overwhelming Senate opposition, especially from the left, Frei was forced to withdraw the bill.⁵³

Then, on the night of February 14, all of the members of the President's Cabinet turned in their resignations, with the exception of the Minister of the Interior, Bernardo Leighton. This move allowed the President to totally re-align his cabinet and to design a completely new economic program more acceptable to Parliament.⁵⁴ The next day, a new Cabinet was selected. The Minister of the Treasury was a liberal administrator named Raúl Saez who described himself as "an admirer of

⁵¹New York Times, Jan. 8, 1968, p. 1.

⁵²New York Times, Feb. 6, 1968, p. 8.

⁵³New York Times, Jan. 31, 1968, p. 12.

⁵⁴New York Times, Feb. 15, 1968, p. 49.

nature and therefore, like the human heart, slightly left of center."⁵⁵
Because he was an able and respected economist, great hopes were placed on his ability to design a suitable economic program.⁵⁶

On March 8, a new plan was drawn up by Saez and submitted to Parliament. It proposed higher taxes on the U. S. copper companies and a straight 21.9 per cent wage increase for all workers. In cases where individuals might receive a higher wage increase because of union agreements, any amount above 21.9 per cent would be invested in a government savings plan. This money could be withdrawn for home improvements, mortgage payoffs, or other housing projects.⁵⁷

The Senate again found the proposal unacceptable. The Communist and Socialist Parties objected that the new proposal was no more than a restatement of the forced savings plan which they believed to be an unnecessary burden upon the lower classes. Then there came a threat from the Central Labor Union (CUT) that a general strike would be called if the proposal became law. The National Party reported that it would not support the bill because of the new taxes on the copper companies.⁵⁸ In disappointment and frustration, the new Minister of the Treasury, Raúl Saez, resigned after only one month in office.⁵⁹

⁵⁵New York Times, March 9, 1968, p. 11, quoting Saez.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹New York Times, April 5, 1968, p. 7.

The wage adjustment controversy was now in its third month and Frei was becoming desperate. The President finally consented to allow the Communist Party to freely amend the bill in order that it might finally pass. Neither the Socialist Party nor the Central Labor Union was convinced that a suitable agreement could be reached and warned of a 48-hour strike if sufficient amendments were not included.⁶⁰

After another month of debates, the President's economic plan of 1968 finally passed through the Senate with 21 votes in favor, 17 opposing, and 6 abstaining. Thus the government's proposal fell under the design of the Communist Party which, after sufficiently amending the bill and criticizing the government's tardiness, was able to claim credit for the bill's final passage in mid-April.⁶¹

⁶⁰ New York Times, March 28, 1968, p. 19.

⁶¹ New York Times, April 5, 1968, p. 7.

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CHAPTER II

THE IRRECONCILABLE CONFLICT

The winter of 1968 was a difficult period for the Christian Democrats. The government's "revolution in liberty," though making genuine transformations within the nation, was not meeting popular expectations as indicated by growing discontent. Party unity had not been maintained and the embarrassing public squabbling had not been quieted. In July, the newly-elected president of the Christian Democratic Youth, Enrique Correa, circulated a document which accused the government of having "sold out" to the United States. The document urged the rapid nationalization of the copper industry, the expropriation of the nation's private lands, and a non-capitalist program of development for the future.¹

While verbal attacks and name-calling within the party dragged on, Chile was struck by the worst drought in 102 years. Farms dried up, cattle died, and power shortages set in as a result of the shrinking water supplies. The President was forced to spend millions of dollars creating secondary sources of electricity in order that the vital copper industries not shut down. The drought became more serious by the day until Frei was forced to pronounce it a "national catastrophe."²

¹George W. Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party: Power, Factions and Ideology," The Review of Politics, XXXI, No. 2 (April, 1969), 168.

²New York Times, July 21, 1968, p. 10.

As predicted, Fuentealba proved to be a capable leader who was reluctant to express his own opinions for the sake of unity within the party. Moreover, with parliamentary elections less than one year away, it was mandatory for the conflicts within the party to be resolved if an impressive election victory were to be achieved. Even under the leadership of Fuentealba, this achievement could not be an easy one. In August of 1968, Ercilla presented a revealing description of the party:

In the Christian Democratic Party there are various "parties" within the same collectivity. Between Deputy-Agricultural expert Fernando Sotomayor and Deputy-Lawyer Julio Silva Solar there exists no unity other than that of the party. What ideological relationship can exist between Arturo Valde's Phillips and Rodrigo Ambrosio or Jorge Diaz? None. In the Christian Democratic Party of today, there is repeated the same divorce of doctrine that was reflected in the Radical Party when it governed.⁶

The divisions within the party, originally over the speed and style of the "revolution in liberty," were now beginning to center around the path the party might take in terms of the 1970 presidential election. The rebels and terceristas favored a coalition with the left, believing that the government's record was not strong enough to lead the party to a second victory. The Secretary-General of the Communist Party, Luis Corvalán, had repeatedly spoken of such a coalition and many of the Christian Democrats seemed willing to negotiate. Serious discussions could not begin, however, because the officialists maintained that any electoral coalition would be against the principals of the party.⁷

⁶Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1731 (August 21-27, 1968), p. 11. Trans. by the writer.

⁷New York Times, Sept. 2, 1968, p. 11.

The emergency caused by the drought may have temporarily enhanced the popularity of President Frei as the nation abandoned politics in the fight against failing electricity and dwindling meat supplies, but by spring a series of national events restored politics to its former position of prominence. In August, the government announced that it had discovered a plot to terrorize the country on a national level. Minister of the Interior Edmundo Pérez placed the 25,000-man national police force on alert while more than 100 individuals were arrested. The government blamed leftist terror organizations for the alleged disorders.³

It was also in August that the National Council of the Christian Democratic Party met again with the intention of quieting party disagreements in anticipation of the March parliamentary election. Jaime Castillo offered to succeed himself as president of the party, but the leftists, who were numerically superior, threatened to oppose him by nominating their candidate, Jacques Chonchol. To avoid a serious conflict, a compromise slate of Renán Fuentealba and Bernardo Leighton was finally selected.⁴ The feeling was widespread that this had been a wise choice which at last could lead to unity within the governing party. Concerning the selection of Fuentealba, Ercilla made the following comments:

The Christian Democrats found in Renán Fuentealba the leader they needed. Being neither rebel, nor officialist, nor unconditionally pro-Frei, the lean Senator guarantees respect, tolerance, and cohesion to all sectors.⁵

³New York Times, August 4, 1968, p. 3.

⁴Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party," 164.

⁵Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1740, Oct. 23-29, 1968, p. 8. Trans. by the writer.

These issues became the center of discussion at a plenary session of the Christian Democratic Party held in October. At this conference, a cautious invitation for discussion was extended to the left.

A document was approved which said in part:

The Christian Democratic Party does not shun, and on the contrary is prepared to stimulate, a union of all the social and political forces that favor the substitution of the prevailing capitalist structures in order that the working forces may unite in a new stage of government.⁸

The desire for a leftist coalition was strong among the rebels and the terceristas and was even expressed by Renán Fuentealba who rarely stated his personal views.⁹ The strain on party consensus became severe when Frei expressed his position at a November news conference:

My opinion is now formulated. I do not believe in alliances or coalitions of the Christian Democratic Party with the Communist Party. Neither party can sincerely believe in it, and it would not be possible to sustain it either as an electoral formula or as a formula of government. These are two opposing philosophies and two distinct concepts of man. The country will not understand this alliance and the variables of the real world would make it inoperative. . . . Because of this my definitive thought concerning an eventual alliance of this order is "no."¹⁰

Though the issues were changing, the Christian Democrats near the end of 1968 were no closer to unity than they had been during the period of the 1967 rebel directorate. Rebel Senator Rafael Augustín Gumucio held the opinion that unity was never achieved because all important decisions emanated from Frei rather than from the party's wishes. As an example he

⁸Hispano Americano, LIV, No. 1383, Nov. 4, 1968, p. 29. Trans. by the writer.

⁹Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1740, Oct. 23-29, 1968, p. 9.

¹⁰Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1742, Nov. 6-12, 1968, p. 8. Trans. by the writer.

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pointed to the fact that the President selected Andrés Donoso to be Minister of Housing instead of the candidate endorsed by the party. Because of the constant quarreling between the President and the party, Gumucio was of the opinion that the Christian Democrats had been in decline from the moment that they took office.¹¹

While the rebels and the terceristas pressured the government to move to the left and to accelerate the reforms, Eduardo Frei seemed completely satisfied that his program was being achieved:

Given the advances made in these four years, at the end of my mandate, the government will have practically completed the program proposed to the country and in some sectors, it will have exceeded the proposals.¹²

During the month of November, the Christian Democrats faced their most serious crisis to date. After a lengthy feud with the Minister of the Interior, Edmundo Pérez, and a 30 per cent cut in funds for agrarian reform, Jacques Chonchol resigned as director of one of the nation's agrarian reform institutes (INDAP-Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario).¹³ The complete explanation for his separation from the government is unclear. Certainly Chonchol felt strongly about a coalition with the left. Only one month after leaving office, he remarked that "unless there is constructed a unity of the popular forces, the triumph of Jorge Alessandri will be inevitable in 1970."¹⁴ In a television interview, Chonchol charged that

¹¹Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party," 158.

¹²Visión Revista Internacional, XXXV, Nov. 8, 1968, p. 30. Trans. by the writer.

¹³Grayson, op. cit., 158.

¹⁴Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1747, Dec. 11-17, 1968, p. 8. Trans. by the writer.

the government had not given sufficient support to the agrarian reform institute. He explained that this neglect would result in increasing violence in the country side.¹⁵

The issue is further clouded by a question concerning the accomplishments of the agrarian reform up to that time. While Frei was reporting that 20,000 peasant families had been resettled by his government, U.S. AID reported to Congress that as of mid-1968, only 9,000 peasant families had been resettled. When Congress asked the AID representatives to account for the discrepancy, the agents replied that they had no reason to doubt the accuracy of their own figures.¹⁶

Chonchol's resignation from the government marked the beginning of a process wherein the facade of Christian Democratic Party unity progressively diminished. The party had been enduring criticism and disputes within its structure throughout the previous four years but in every case a temporary peace had been established. The task of determining the future path of the party was a dilemma infinitely more difficult to deal with. It is therefore no wonder that the divisions which previously had troubled the Christian Democrats now threatened to tear them asunder.

¹⁵Hispano Americano, LIII, No. 1386, Nov. 25, 1968, p. 41.

¹⁶U.S., Congress, House, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Related Agencies, Otto E. Passman, Chairman, Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1970; hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations. 91st Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 1556.

As the Christian Democrats entered their last two years in office, there was still a number of major proposals that the President wished to get through Parliament. Frei again proposed the constitutional amendment bill which would allow the President to dissolve Parliament once during a presidential term and call for new elections. The bill included provisions for national plebiscites and the creation of a "Constitutional Tribunal" to settle disputes between the Executive and Parliament. Unlike the bill submitted by the President two years earlier, the new proposal would not go into effect until after Frei's term.¹⁷

The last provision allowed the bill to be more warmly received than when originally proposed and serious parliamentary debate was undertaken. Among the parties of the opposition, there was still very little receptivity. Luis Corvalán, speaking for the Communist Party, described the bill as being "essentially reactionary" because it would strengthen the power of the President. He said that the Communists could support the bill only if an amendment were included that would allow Parliament to call for a new election of the President.¹⁸ The National Party stated that the reform would be acceptable only if the President were "a man like Alessandri."¹⁹ Speaking on behalf of the Socialist Party, Senator Carlos Altamirano explained that although the reform had many strong points, his party could not support the bill simply because it was part of the program of the Christian Democrats.²⁰

¹⁷ Latin America, III, No. 4, Jan. 24, 1969, p. 28.

¹⁸ Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1753, Jan. 22-28, 1969, p. 9.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

The fact that President Frei proposed the reform shortly before the important parliamentary election of March is significant. He may have believed that the reform would be generally acceptable to the nation and that their approval would be reflected in the party's percentage of the vote. There was support for this reasoning among the officialists as Bernardo Leighton explained:

I am totally in accord with the initiative of the government and I believe it is opportune to propose the reform on the eve of an election so that the people may clearly make an expression about the constitutional reform.²¹

To place the important reform "on trial," reminiscent of the 1967 "plebiscite," was a dangerous move. It was especially dangerous considering that the party's popularity, as indicated by voting percentages, had steadily declined since the 1964 victory.²²

Under the keen leadership of Renán Fuentealba, the Christian Democratic Party achieved an uneasy unity that enabled it to launch an effective nation-wide campaign for its candidates in the approaching election. Frei traveled the length of the nation, speaking of agrarian reform, inspecting schools and inaugurating new dams and factories. He stressed the previous accomplishments of the government and pleaded that the voters elect a Parliament that would enable him to continue the "revolution."²³ In the campaign, Frei made a genuine attempt to revive the reformist image

²¹Ibid., quoting Leighton; trans. by the writer.

²²George W. Grayson, "The Frei Administration and the 1969 Parliamentary Elections," Inter-American Economic Affairs, XXIII, No. 2 (Autumn, 1969), 57.

²³Ibid., 59.

of the party, but he could not please everyone. Just before the election Gonzalo Eguiguren of the National Party proclaimed that the Christian Democratic Party has "decided to reveal itself publicly for what it is, an ally of the Communist Party."²⁴

Shortly before election day, Ercilla published a prediction by José Arevalo, the director of the party's Electoral Department, that the Christian Democrats would win 36 per cent of the vote. The prediction also stated that the party would win 12 new Senators and 65 Deputies.²⁵ When the results of the election were known, it was clear that the government had received another setback. While the parties of the opposition made significant gains, the percentage received by the Christian Democrats fell to 31.05 per cent. The Party won 12 new seats in the Senate but only 55 in the Chamber of Deputies. The biggest winner was the National Party which received 20.82 per cent of the vote.²⁶ The government's most serious losses were in the major cities that had supported Frei heavily in 1964. In Valparaíso, Santiago, and Concepción, the party's support fell from 47.1 per cent in 1964 to 30.6 per cent in 1969. A high percentage of 26.8 per cent did not vote.²⁷

The 1969 parliamentary election indicated that the polarization within the nation was growing. The Christian Democrats had been unable

²⁴Latin America, III, No. 9 (Feb. 28, 1969), 68, quoting Eguiguren.

²⁵Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1754 (Jan. 29-Feb. 4, 1969), 8.

²⁶Visión Revista Internacional, XXXVI, No. 7 (March 28, 1969),

²⁷Grayson, "The Frei Administration," 63.

to undercut the power of the radical left among the discontented elements of the intellectuals and the lower classes. At the same time, the moderates and conservatives who supported Frei in 1964 were now returning to the National Party because of the growing possibility that the popular Jorge Alessandri might run independently, but with the unofficial support of that party in 1970. In 1969, the Chilean voters were faced with deciding whether the "revolution in liberty" was providing solutions for the national problems. Apparently, less than one third of them believed that it was.

The parliamentary election of 1969 marked the beginning of a series of events which led the government almost to self-destruction. Only one week after the election, a newly-elected Socialist Deputy, Luis Espinoza, led a major land invasion near Puerto Montt in southern Chile. Under orders from Interior Minister Edmundo Pérez, the carabineros fired 300 rounds of ammunition into the new squatter settlement. Moments later, ten lay dying and many more were wounded.²⁸

As news of the incident spread, violent reaction broke out within the nation and within the Christian Democratic Party. The leadership of the Christian Democratic Youth drafted a document strongly condemning the Interior Minister for his orders to fire on the settlement. When Frei suspended the Youth leaders from office, the rebels and terceristas sided with the suspended officers against the President. Then Renán Fuentealba telephoned President Frei warning him that if he did not disavow

²⁸ Latin America, III, No. 11 (March 14, 1969), 88.

the unpopular minister, the party would. Immediately, R. A. Gumucio and Jacques Chonchol called for convocation of the National Council to investigate the government's actions.²⁹

Frei gave no sign that a spirit of negotiation or discussion might be in order. When the leftist newspaper, Punto Final, appeared with an article critical of the government's action in the Puerto Montt affair, Frei ordered all the copies confiscated by the police.³⁰ The authoritarian fashion in which Frei handled the crisis further alienated the critical sectors. The deposed president of the Christian Democratic Youth, Enrique Correa, sent a message to that organization which contained the following comments about the Frei administration:

The truth is, the government is in favor of neocapitalism and thereby has limited its capacity for progress just to that point to which capitalism and its variants can advance; and the lesson is that unless the working class injects it with its dynamism and its fighting capacity, there will be no sweeping away of the capitalist regime.³¹

After 17 hours of debate and presentation of speeches such as the preceding, the rebels retained control of the Christian Democratic Youth by electing Juan Enrique Vega president by a vote of 154 against 108.³²

On April 2, the most serious product of the Puerto Montt disaster was revealed. Radomiro Tomic was the Christian Democrat's most likely choice as a candidate for the 1970 presidential election. Though he stood

²⁹ Latin America, III, No. 13 (March 28, 1969), 100-101.

³⁰ Latin America, III, No. 14 (April 4, 1969), 111.

³¹ Latin America, III, No. 17 (April 25, 1969), 135.

³² Ibid.

somewhat to the left of Frei, he was a founder of the party and was well known nationally and internationally as an intellectual and as a prolific writer. He had not stated publicly that he would seek the party's nomination but it was no secret that Tomic would represent the party, especially if a coalition with the left were established. It was Tomic's view that the record of the government was insufficient for an independent victory in 1970. He therefore became the spokesman for the rebels and the terceristas in seeking an agreement with the parties of the left. In a letter to Renan Fuentealba, dated April 2, 1969, Tomic revealed that his plans could no longer be carried out.³³

In the letter Tomic announced that he was withdrawing his name from the presidential race. He explained that during the course of the previous years, he had unceasingly attempted to unite the forces of the left in order to destroy the injustices of the capitalist system. It had been a fruitless battle because there existed little genuine desire for such a coalition among the parties concerned. He therefore had placed his hopes on the 1969 parliamentary election, believing that after this event, the imperativeness of a coalition would be revealed. He explained that the dramatic resurgence of the National Party had proved his analysis correct but then in reference to the unexpected tragedy of Puerto Montt, he stated:

Disgracefully, the shoot-out at Puerto Montt and the blood shed there has destroyed for many months and years all possibility of common legislative and social actions between the government and

³³For the complete text of the letter, see Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1765, April 16-22, 1969, 9-10.

FRAP with the objective of facilitating a common program and candidate for 1970. It would be to lose all realism or all political and moral responsibility to believe the contrary.³⁴

Tomic's announcement was a severe blow to the left wing of the Christian Democratic Party. Among the officialists there was not one individual to whom they could give their support. It was also unlikely that the officialists would back any rebel or even any candidate from the terceristas. The party therefore was in serious trouble. It had neither a program nor a candidate capable of satisfying all of the sectors. Even if a compromise candidate could be found, he would have to possess the stature and popularity necessary to win a presidential race.

As debate within the party continued, the discontent spread to the government's representatives in Parliament. In mid-April, discussion resumed of the President's constitutional reform amendment but even the lukewarm receptivity which greeted the bill three months before was gone. Not only did the parties of the left reject the proposal but 32 of the government's 65 Deputies reported that they would abstain if a vote were taken on the bill.³⁵ The crisis within the governing party did not go unnoticed by Ercilla which labeled the dilemma a "tragedy."³⁶

The one individual who seemed to be unmoved by the crisis within the Christian Democratic Party was Eduardo Frei. He appeared to be almost

³⁴ Ibid., 10. Trans. by the writer.

³⁵ Latin America, III, No. 17 (April 25, 1969), 134.

³⁶ Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1769 (May 14-20, 1969), 9.

oblivious to the criticism of his government and of his Interior Minister. During the height of the debates, the President presented his own analysis of the situation:

There have not been differences of an ideological or programmatic nature. There are only differences in the manner of arriving at the goal . . . as Gabriel Valdes has noted. But that which distinguishes a party, which permits it to remain as a body, alive and intact, is its ideology and its program. These elements give it personality, perspective, value and solidarity. Because of this, the Christian Democratic Party emerges strengthened, not weakened, as our adversaries are saying.³⁷

Early in May, the National Council met with the responsibility of designing the party's program for the 1970 presidential election. It was obvious that reconciling the conflicts which had augmented since the Puerto Montt affair would be difficult if not impossible. In a heroic effort to restore party unity, Renán Fuentealba announced that he would offer a compromise proposal. It was Fuentealba's position that a coalition with the left should be constructed on the condition that the presidential candidate be a Christian Democrat. The eventual coalition would be called Popular Unity. With this proposal, the party president hoped to satisfy the rebels and terceristas who desired a coalition with the left while meeting the demands of the officialists who preferred an independent stand.³⁸

Fuentealba's proposal of Popular Unity was countered by a folio entitled Camino Propio by Senator Patricio Aylwin. If Camino Propio were

³⁷ Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1768 (May 7-13, 1969), 8. Trans. by the writer.

³⁸ Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1767 (May 6, 1969), 8.

adopted as the party's platform, the Christian Democrats would participate in the election independently of any coalition. This viewpoint was supported by most of the older members of the party and by President Frei.³⁹

In two days of heated debates, both sides presented their proposals including Radomiro Tomic who made lengthy pleas for the adoption of Popular Unity. A stirring speech was delivered by Renán Fuentealba who warned against the danger of Camino Propio:

In 1964, the reactionary right had no alternative but to vote for the Christian Democratic Party, which was the only force able to confront the Socialist-Communist coalition. The fear of Allende made them vote for the Christian Democrats. And in 1964, the Christian Democratic Party was a youthful, original, and uncorrupted party. Today there is a right reactionaryism in ascendance. The Christian Democratic Party is no longer the youthful party of 1964. To run in the Presidential election of September, 1970, independently of any coalition will lead us to death.⁴⁰

When the debates were closed and a vote was taken, Camino Propio defeated Popular Unity by a vote of 233 against 215. Jaime Castillo, who had previously served as president of the party was re-elected to replace Renán Fuentealba. The decision to reject Popular Unity formalized Tomic's self-imposed withdrawal and he departed for Europe.⁴¹

The selection of Camino Propio by the National Council apparently was a decision that the left wing of the party could not accept. Immediately following the convention, one of the party's founders, Senator Rafael

³⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁰ Atlas, A Window to the World, XVIII, No. 1 (July, 1969), 52.

⁴¹ Latin America, III, No. 19 (May 9, 1969), 145.

Augustín Gumucio disclosed in an emotional letter that he was leaving the party:

In the course of 35 years of political activity, I never thought, before now, that the moment could arrive when for motives of political honesty, I should have to leave the party. That moment, the saddest in my life, has arrived and I must not hide it. No one in the country is ignorant of the fact that the internal divergencies of the party have become more acute in the last few years. The experience of government had the effect, in my judgment, of radicalizing political positions, some to the right, others to the left. This brought about a series of clashes and grave disagreements impossible to hide. The ideal which always united us was the struggle against the injustice of capitalistic structure. . . . Now things are different. The advanced currents of Christian thought are no longer taken up by us and in fact we are less an instrument for the revolutionary changing of society than one of social status, a force administering the system, guaranteeing the established order.⁴²

Gumucio's departure was followed by Jacques Chonchol, Alberto Jérez, Julio Silva Solar and Vicente Sota. A large portion of the Christian Democratic Youth, led by Juan Enrique Vega and Enrique Correa elected also to break with the Christian Democrats.⁴³ Exactly how this division affected the party's rank and file is unclear. It is known that the rebels and terceristas were close to the party's followers in the peasant group and labor unions. When the leaders of the rebels and terceristas elected to break with the party, the result must have been confusion if not deep disenchantment.⁴⁴

During the month that the Christian Democrats were torn from within, Chile's worst drought in history ended and the rains came to

⁴²Ibid., 145-146.

⁴³Latin America, III, No. 20 (May 16, 1969), 154.

⁴⁴Visión Revista Internacional, XXXVI, No. 11 (May 23, 1969),

green the lands, turn the generators, and cover the mountains with snow. It was most unfortunate that the return of the rains could not cool the fiery tempers that dealt the final blow to unity of the Christian Democratic Party.

The division suffered by the ruling party so shocked the nation that Eduardo Frei was forced to assume a more leftist path. The criticism of the President's "Chileanization" program had been unrelenting, especially because the holdings of Anaconda were still untouched. To appease the critical sectors, Frei announced in July that the government had decided to purchase 51 per cent of Anaconda's holdings at book value. The company would then be forced to sell its remaining shares over a period of 24 years beginning in 1972.⁴⁵ The statement was well received by most of the party as was the announcement that the controversial Edmundo Pérez would be relieved of his duties as Minister of the Interior. To take his place was Patricio Rojas, an individual who was more acceptable to the rank and file of the party.⁴⁶

The President's concessions to the left were well received by nearly all of the Christian Democrats but there was one individual who remained distressed. Radomiro Tomic returned from Europe in mid-July and denounced the new agreement with Anaconda as being far too weak.⁴⁷ Moreover, he appeared to renew the campaign for a leftist coalition even

⁴⁵New York Times, August 17, 1969, p. 4.

⁴⁶Latin America, III, No. 28 (July 11, 1969), 222.

⁴⁷Latin America, III, No. 29 (July 18, 1969), 225.

though the party had voted against that possibility at the National Council of May. In a press conference, he made the following remarks:

If the capitalist and neo-capitalist regime in Chile has exhausted all possibility of giving Chile an active sense of national unity and solidarity, social stability and economic development, if a popular democratic revolution is indispensable, if that revolution calls for the people to assume the beautiful and hard task of multiplying available riches, changing work into capital and opening a new historic horizon to the country, it is evident that a change of such great importance cannot be brought about by one isolated party. Christian Democracy must be the motor of a vast coalition of social forces and political parties, Marxist and non-Marxist, committed to a definite program of limited duration, and with successive development targets within the supreme objective of substituting minority capitalist structures so as to pull Chile out of underdevelopment and end forever internal poverty and external dependence.⁴⁸

In spite of the strong rhetoric, it seems that Tomic's real position concerning a coalition with the Marxist parties had greatly mellowed since the heated debates on Puerto Montt and the stirring orations at the National Council of May. It was also true that within the Christian Democratic Party, there was no other potential candidate with the popularity and national stature that Tomic commanded. Considering that the parties of the left had remained cool to his overtures for Popular Unity, Tomic finally announced in August that he would represent the party in the approaching presidential campaign. When the National Council convened in that month, Tomic was unanimously confirmed as the party's presidential candidate.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Ibid., 226.

⁴⁹Visión Revista Internacional, XXXVII, No. 6 (Sept. 12, 1969), 12-13.

When Tomic was asked about his decision to represent the party independently of a coalition with the left, he replied that ideologically, his position had not changed. He explained that a coalition with the Marxist left would be the most satisfactory solution to Chile's problems but this coalition had been impossible to construct. He therefore had elected to run not only with the support of the Christian Democrats but also with support from a broad base of "peasants, youth, workers and poor people."⁵⁰

As of August, 1969, there were few political observers who were able to make optimistic predictions about the future of Chile's Christian Democratic Party. The government was plagued by discontent from the right and the left and the party had suffered a major division. Contributing to the climate of pessimism were the results of the latest public opinion poll conducted by the Centro de Opinión Pública. The poll suggested that in a three-way presidential race, Tomic would receive only 23 per cent of the vote against 46 per cent for Alessandri and 18 per cent for Salvador Allende.⁵¹ Though the outlook was not bright, the Christian Democrats were still the largest single party in Chile and the presidential election was still one year away.

⁵⁰Visión Revista Internacional, quoting Tomic, XXXVII, No. 6 (Sept. 12, 1969), 15. Trans. by the writer.

⁵¹Ercilla, XXXVI, No. 1837 (Sept. 2-8, 1970), 13.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF THE LEFT

In the later years of the Frei administration, the restless sectors of Chilean society came to realize that the "revolution in liberty" might not fulfill the rising expectations that it had created. There existed, therefore, an opening through which the parties of the opposition might once again surge in the quest for power. The right, now alienated by the government's reforms, believed that the aging Jorge Alessandri might return the nation to the honor and dignity of Chile's past. The left, though equally alienated, was not sure what it believed.

The Chilean left was still officially united in an electoral coalition but in reality there remained only a facade of unity. The Communist Party, under the leadership of Luis Corvalán, retained a legalistic outlook and was willing to support the government on some issues. The policy of the Socialist Party was less easily defined. Officially, the Socialists maintained an image of legitimacy and legality but behind the scenes, the individual Socialist leaders seized every opportunity to undermine the government through illegal land invasions and crippling union activities.

The Radical Party, consistent with its history, was guided by the ideology of opportunism. It was with Radical support that Salvador

Allende became President of the Senate in 1967.¹ The leftist tendency of the party was enhanced when the Radicals expelled a number of conservatives from their ranks in July.² The parties of the left responded by supporting the left-leaning Radical leader, Alberto Baltra, in a December Senate bi-election.³

Under the leadership of Senate President Salvador Allende, the parties of the left began an unrelenting attack against the program of the government. In parliamentary disputes, the left found an ally in the conservative National Party which, for opposite reasons, was equally eager for the Christian Democrats to fail. Furthermore, the failure of the ruling party to mend its internal divisions provided a perfect atmosphere for the left to vie for power.

In 1968, the parties of the left succeeded in creating widespread discontent within the nation by delaying the government's wage adjustment bill for over four months. This delay caused wages to be out of line with prices at an amount equal to the preceding year's inflation rate of 20 per cent.⁴ Then, in March, Allende used his authority as President of the Senate to personally escort five Bolivian guerrillas through Chile to safety.⁵ The event so shocked the Bolivian government of René Barrientos,

¹James Petras, Politics and Social Forces in Chilean Development (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 196.

²Alan Angell, "The Christian Democrats at Mid-term," The World Today, XXIII, No. 10 (Oct., 1967), 442.

³George W. Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party: Power, Factions, and Ideology," The Review of Politics, XXXI, No. 2 (April, 1969), 163.

⁴New York Times, Feb. 6, 1968, p. 8.

⁵New York Times, March 11, 1968, p. 11.

that it delivered a proposal to the OAS asking other Latin American countries "to share Bolivia's preoccupation" that an armed guerrilla band had been so warmly welcomed by a neighboring republic.⁶

In the period that Radomiro Tomic began to intensify his plans for a coalition with the left, the government of Eduardo Frei lashed out against the unceasing attempts by the Communists and Socialists to embarrass the President. When Senator Carlos Altamirano delivered a speech in which he implied that the armed forces were loyal to Frei only because of handsome salaries, he was prosecuted under the nation's internal security law and sentenced to two months in jail. Speaking from the Santiago jail, the Senator announced that henceforth the Socialist Party would not support the government on any of its proposals.⁷

Under the initiative of Luis Corvalán, the parties of the left began a slow and cautious attempt to create an electoral coalition for the 1970 presidential campaign. Though they gave only token recognition to the aspirations of Tomic, the desire to form a coalition to include the Communist and Socialist Parties and possibly the Radical Party was widespread. Political unity, as the Christian Democrats had discovered, was not an easy accomplishment, and it was even more difficult considering that the Socialist Party had suffered a serious division during 1967.⁸

The construction of an electoral coalition was made even more difficult by ideological differences between the Communist and the Socialist Parties. While the Communists remained intimately united with Moscow,

⁶New York Times, March 19, 1968, p. 14.

⁷New York Times, April 2, 1968, p. 2.

⁸Ibid.

the Socialist Party represented only itself. Though it was the Communist Party which eventually coined and adopted the terminology and the implications of the "unarmed path," it was the Socialist Party which most completely effected that method of achievement.⁹

Because of the ideological differences which separated the Communist, Socialist, and Radical Parties, the slow and difficult task of creating an electoral coalition assumed the characteristics of a national, political debate. In July of 1968, the Communist Party sent a letter to the dissident Socialist, Raúl Ampuero, asking for his opinion concerning the inclusion of the Radical Party in a Communist-Socialist coalition. Ampuero replied that an alliance which included only the Communist and Socialist forces would be insufficient for an electoral victory.¹⁰ He counseled that if a winning electoral percentage were to be achieved, it would be necessary to include the Radical Party but warned that there were other considerations beyond simply achieving an impressive electoral percentage:

But within this concept, the alliance of the popular revolutionary parties with the Radical Party constitutes an aberration because it is an alliance of diverging forces, capable of reaching an agreement on small immediate reforms, but absolutely impeding the undertaking in concert of the indispensable structural reforms. Alone the sum of the heterogeneous forces usually weakens all the elements that participate in a hybrid coalition.¹¹

⁹Hispano Americano, LXIV, No. 1383 (Nov. 4, 1968), 29.

¹⁰Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1725 (July 10-16, 1968), 13.

¹¹Ibid. Trans. by the writer.

The Socialists were themselves divided and hardly in a position to speak of political unity. In December of 1968, Senator Ampuero, through the pages of Ercilla, directed a hostile accusation against Salvador Allende. Ampuero charged that Allende had been conducting a candid campaign of "aggressive illussions" against his person. He said he was angered by the fact that Allende's charges were always made in "small meetings or in more or less personal assemblies" which were hidden from the public eye. He therefore demanded that Allende henceforth state his opinions in a public manner such that he would be "responsible for his expressions."¹² Because Ampuero and his followers were a barrier to leftist solidarity, the Communist and Socialist Parties worked continuously to isolate them and they were eventually forced into the background.¹³

Though the Socialists were reluctant to join a coalition with more moderate parties, Luis Corvalán intensified his efforts to create a coalition of the left. Late in 1968, the Communist Party approved a document which defined the goals of such a coalition and named the political elements that might be invited to join. The "manifesto" proclaimed the working class as the principal revolutionary force along with various forces of peasants, students, intellectuals and professionals of leftist inclination. The document concluded:

These forces are recognized by membership in the Communist, Socialist, Popular Socialist Union and Social Democratic Parties

¹²Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1749 (Dec. 25-31, 1968), 10.

¹³Thomas G. Sanders, "A Note on Chilean Politics," American Universities Field Staff Reports, West Coast South America Series, XV, no. 4 (Nov. 1968), p. 18.

or among those who adhere to their principles. But they also exist in other political camps. They constitute the majority of the Radical Party and are a significant part of the Christian Democratic Party. To unite all these forces in a common objective is the great task of today.¹⁴

To this warm invitation from the Communist Party, the Socialist Party leader, Aniceto Rodríguez, replied that the social and political situation in Chile had greatly changed since the days of the Popular Front. Though he wished to work closely with the Communist Party, he counseled that it would be almost impossible to construct a leftist electoral coalition.¹⁵ His opinion of Tomic's aspirations was equally cool: "If those sectors of the Christian Democrats want to be consistent with their attitude, they must move without sectarianism to unite with the Communists and Socialists as they appear as the sole alternative."¹⁶

As the political parties of Chile prepared for the 1969 parliamentary election, a dispute broke out between the Communist and Socialist Parties which threatened to destroy any further dialogues between the two groups. In an open letter to the Communist Party, a Socialist Deputy named Mario Palestro charged that his campaign was being undermined by the Communists who were actively supporting one of their own prominent Deputies, Orlando Millas. In the letter, Palestro stated that he was displeased by the unrelenting attempts by the Communists "to impose your ideas and your political line by any means."¹⁷ Not only did the letter

¹⁴Hispano Americano, LIV, No. 1393 (Jan. 13, 1969), 28. Trans. by the writer.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Latin America, III, No. 9 (Feb. 28, 1969), 68.

criticize the Millas campaign but continued to reveal a deep ideological difference between the Communist and Socialist Parties:

In brief we do not believe that our task is to form a government, but to conquer power. And power is not, in fact, in the Presidency or in Parliament. Power is held by those who hold in their hands the country's economy, by the owners of wealth, of big business and the banks. So we think it is not a question of piling up votes in an effort to win the Presidency, but of organizing the people, giving them the necessary political and ideological instruments to destroy the apparatus of bourgeois power.¹⁸

Thus the differences separating the parties of the left were real. Perhaps if these groups had not made impressive electoral scores in the 1969 parliamentary election, there would have been little reason to strive for an electoral coalition for 1970. Election results revealed that this would not be the case. While the percentage received by the Christian Democrats again declined, the Communist Party raised its total to 16.6 per cent. The two Socialist factions received 15.01 per cent of the vote and the Radical Party declined to 13.59 per cent. The declining popularity of the Radicals made it almost imperative that they unite in a coalition. Moreover, the impressive 20.82 per cent scored by the National Party increased the incentive of all the leftist parties to unite in order to challenge the possibility of an Alessandri victory in 1970. It was also a great relief to the Socialist Party when the dissident socialist,

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Thomas Sanders, "Chile - The Elections and After," American Universities Field Staff Reports, West Coast South America Series, XVII, No. 10 (Sept., 1970), 4.

Raúl Ampuero, was clearly defeated in his bid for reelection to the Senate. This event effectively removed him and his followers from the political arena preceding the 1970 presidential election.²⁰

Following the parliamentary election, Luis Corvalán resumed the campaign to form a coalition. Though the Radicals were willing to unite with the Communists, the Socialist Party gave little indication that it would renounce its independent position. Then an unexpected event modified greatly the political climate. The disaster at Puerto Montt provided another indication that the Christian Democrats would be greatly weakened by 1970. Senator Aniceto Rodríguez expressed the opinion that "the massacre of Puerto Montt not only resulted in the death of ten innocent poor people but also signified the death of Christian Democratic power in 1970."²¹

By mid-1969, there were indications that the right would be a stronger contender in the 1970 presidential election than the Christian Democrats. As the National Party continuously increased its percentages in national elections, the percentage received by the ruling party continuously dropped. Adding to this evidence was a poll conducted by Santiago's Centro de Opinión Pública in February of 1969 which indicated that Jorge Alessandri was retaining as much as 43 per cent in a projected three-way presidential race.²² Therefore in the face of a growing

²⁰Visión Revista Internacional, XXXVI, No. 7 (March 28, 1969), 13.

²¹Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1765 (April 16-22, 1969), 11. Trans. by the writer.

²²Ercilla, XXXVI, No. 1837 (Sept. 2-8, 1970), 12.

challenge from the right, the parties of the left were forced to give serious consideration to an electoral coalition.

Beginning in May of 1969, a series of events cleared the way for this accomplishment which the Communists were now calling Popular Unity. The dissident Christian Democrats who had broken with the party because of its failure to seek a coalition with the left met with 450 followers to establish a movement which they named Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria (MAPU). The group was led by R. A. Gumucio, Alberto Jerez, Julio Silva Solar and included the former Youth leaders, Juan Enrique Vega, Enrique Correa and Rodrigo Ambrosio. The first formal act of the new movement was to formulate a general call for the creation of Popular Unity.²³ In a speech before the delegates, Jacques Chonchol proclaimed that "Popular Unity is the revolutionary instrument which will build in Chile a socialist and communitarian society."²⁴

Now with MAPU and the Communist and Radical Parties calling for Popular Unity, only the Socialist Party still held out believing that the Radicals contained too many conservative elements for a homogeneous coalition to be achieved. In July, this conflict was partially resolved. The Radical Party, under the leadership of Alberto Baltra, expelled a number of conservative elements from its ranks. These individuals formed the Democratic Radical Party and included Pedro Enrique Alfonso and Julio Durán, the party's 1964 presidential candidate.²⁵ The question of participation by the Christian Democrats was also resolved when Tomic returned

²³ Latin America, III, No. 21 (May 23, 1969), 166.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Hispano Americano, LV, No. 1421 (July 28, 1969), 34.

from Europe in July and consented to represent the Christian Democrats independently of the Marxist forces.

The path leading to Popular Unity was now almost cleared. Only the Socialist Party remained hesitant to openly endorse the possibility of a leftist coalition although there remained little doubt that the party would join if a workable program were designed by the other parties concerned. Before serious negotiations could begin, it was necessary for each of the parties to formalize a candidate of their own to negotiate with the other parties and to be offered as a possible candidate to represent the proposed coalition.

The Communist Party selected the Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda, to be its presidential representative though it was never believed by anyone that he would actually launch a serious campaign to become President of the nation. MAPU was represented by Jacques Chonchol who had become well known for his achievements in agrarian reform. The Radical Party selected Alberto Baltra as its representative. Though unpopular with the Socialist Party and with MAPU, Baltra was one of the few figures who expressed a genuine desire to represent the coalition in the approaching presidential race.²⁶ A fourth group calling itself Acción Popular Independiente (API) asked to join in the deliberations under the leadership of Rafael Tarud who had announced that he was entering the presidential race with the backing of various "independents and catholics."²⁷ An extremely small group

²⁶Latin America, III, No. 35 (August 29, 1969), 279.

²⁷Hispano Americano, LIII, No. 1380 (Oct. 14, 1968), 38.

known as the Social Democratic Party also elected to join.²⁸

The Socialist Party, which had not yet committed itself to participation in the coalition, was equally uncertain in its selection of a presidential candidate. Within the party's Central Committee, the feeling ran high that the Socialists should be represented by Aniceto Rodríguez or Carlos Altamirano though neither had the popularity and influence with the masses that Salvador Allende commanded.²⁹ As the deliberations began, the Central Committee first nominated Altamirano who turned the offer down on the basis that a presidential campaign was too bourgeois to be consistent with his personal ideology. Aniceto Rodríguez was then offered the nomination but declined, saying that he simply did not want to be President. Finally, Salvador Allende was chosen on the second ballot by a vote of 13 in favor, against 11 abstentions and several absences.³⁰ Because Allende was known to be in favor of a coalition, his selection as the party's presidential candidate marked the entry of the Socialist Party into the Popular Unity deliberations.³¹

If there was one national incident which finally solidified the parties of the left, it was a military uprising on October 21 led by General Roberto Viaux. Only two regiments were involved, but the nation

²⁸El Espectador, October 4, 1970, p. 17.

²⁹Ercilla, XXXIV, No. 1767 (May 6, 1969), 8.

³⁰Alan Angell, "Christian Democracy in Chile," Current History, LVIII, No. 342 (Feb., 1970), 84.

³¹Latin America, III, No. 36 (Sept. 5, 1969), 282.

was plunged into a state of siege and the parties of the left were confronted with the stark reality that Chile might actually be ruled under a military dictatorship. Though the disorders were quickly put down, rumors continued that the military might again seek power and no one was certain that the Christian Democrats were still strong enough to withstand continued pressure from the Armed Forces.³²

When the Communist Party held its 14th National Congress on November 23, 1969, there remained little question of the necessity for a leftist electoral coalition. The Congress received delegations from all of the participating parties and a coordinating committee was formed to begin discussions on a common platform. It was decided that once a common program was agreed upon and ratified by all of the parties concerned, deliberations would begin to select a candidate to represent the coalition.³³

As discussions began, the Communist Party adjusted its own policy to be consistent with the more militant programs of the other sectors. The Communists formally revised the former concept of the peaceful path to socialism and adopted the more militant "unarmed path" that the Socialist Party had followed for several years.

For what we have in Chile is violent seizure of the land by the peasants as part of the agrarian reform, also seizure of the land for home building, militant strikes, a militant youth and student movement. In short, these are all violent

³²Latin America, III, No. 43 (Oct. 24, 1969), 337.

³³Jose' Dickman, "For an Anti-Imperialist Popular Unity Government," World Marxist Review, XIII, No. 2 (Feb., 1970), 92.

actions of the unarmed masses opposed to the reactionaries and their policy of violence and repression.³⁴

It may be that adoption of the "unarmed path" resulted in a closer union of the Communists and Socialists than in any period of previous history. It was understood that this common agreement would be of great significance if the coalition succeeded in its bid for power.

On December 17, 1969, a common platform for Popular Unity was ratified by the leftist coalition. The document was a long treatise which stated the background and present condition of the Chilean situation and offered a detailed program through which the parties of Popular Unity might strive for power.³⁵ The document stated in part:

In our country there are more than three million workers, whose productive force and enormous constructive capacity cannot be realized within the existing system, which can only exploit them.

These forces together with all the people, mobilizing all those not compromised by the power of reactionary interest, national or foreign, that is to say, by means of the united militant action of the immense majority of Chileans, can overthrow the existing institutions and proceed with the task of their liberation.³⁶

With a platform for Popular Unity now ratified, there remained only the task of selecting a candidate to represent the coalition in the 1970 presidential election. This was achieved by a series of compromises and by very careful diplomacy. The deliberations almost broke down at

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵"A Basic Program for People's Unity," Trans. by Patricia Bell, Part I of document published in Political Affairs, XLIX, No. 5 (May, 1970), 58-63.

³⁶Ibid., 62-63.

one point when the Socialists charged that the Communists had offered Pablo Neruda, knowing that he would be unacceptable. A successful coalition would then be blocked and the Communists would be free to withdraw and support the Christian Democrats.³⁷

Though the discussions continued throughout December, the coordinating committee still was not able to agree upon a candidate. Salvador Allende was not popular because of his three previous losses. Alberto Baltra and Rafael Tarud were unacceptable to the Socialists and to MAPU. R. A. Gumucio's name was submitted by MAPU but he was rejected by the Socialists who believed that his influence was weak with the masses. Then Jacques Chonchol suggested that Aniceto Rodríguez be selected as a compromise but he too was rejected because he lacked popular appeal. Pablo Neruda was never seriously considered by any of the parties. Late in December, the deliberations were postponed until the following year when one of the delegates suffered a heart attack.³⁸

Finally in January of 1970, all of the representatives withdrew their names with the exception of Tarud and Allende. Then, after heated debates, Tarud withdrew his name leaving Salvador Allende to represent the coalition in the presidential race.³⁹ Allende's selection was not greeted with enthusiasm and was even met with hostility in some sectors. A provincial committee of Tarud's API reported that it would neither work

³⁷ Latin America, III, No. 45 (Nov. 7, 1969), 349-350.

³⁸ Latin America, IV, No. 3 (Jan. 16, 1970), 21.

³⁹ Hispano Americano, LVI, No. 1449 (Feb. 9, 1970), 68.

nor vote for the Socialist candidate. Moreover, two Radical Senators, Raul Morales Adriazula and Americo Acuña, and nine Radical Deputies, said that they could support Allende only with permission from provincial officials.⁴⁰

{ The creation of Popular Unity, therefore, was not a simple ✓
uniting of homogeneous forces but rather a slow and delicate series
of events through which the parties and movements of the left dis-
covered that they held some points in common. Encouraged by the
decline of the Christian Democrats and stimulated by the rise of the
right, the parties of the left eventually united in a weak, hetero-
geneous coalition under the leadership of Salvador Allende. The
historical conflicts between the Communists and Socialists and the
lack of enthusiasm which greeted Allende's selection did not and
could not create optimism about the group's future. } ✓

⁴⁰Latin America, IV, No. 3 (Jan. 30, 1970), 36.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Chile is a nation where politics permeates every sector of society, especially in the period preceding an important election. It was in an atmosphere mixed with hope and uncertainty that three candidates, Radomiro Tomic, Jorge Alessandri, and Salvador Allende began a desperate and emotional race for the presidency. The program of Alessandri was clearly a simple but moderate expression from the nation's traditional and powerful oligarchy. The platform of Popular Unity represented a precise challenge to this viewpoint and therefore was the guidepost for those who wished to break decisively from the surviving elements of the conservative past. The Christian Democrats under Radomiro Tomic did not represent a party of the center but rather a party of the moderate left with a platform only slightly distinguishable from that of Popular Unity. In the political spectrum, the programs of Alessandri and Allende were clearly defined. In a nation where political polarization increased with the passing of each day, it was not as easy for a second candidate of the left to find a role.¹

The platform of the Christian Democrats was a detailed document which placed greater stress on plans for the future than on accomplishments of the past. It stated that the nation was passing through a

¹The platforms of Tomic, Alessandri and Allende may be found in Ercilla, XXXVI, No. 1836 (August 26-Sept. 1, 1970), 45-58. It is from that publication that the following discussion and quotations are taken.

severe crisis and explained that "its origin can be found in the incapacity of the system to respond, by the readaption of its mechanisms, to the new urgent necessities of social, economic and political development of the country." The solution to the crises would be a new state transformed by the unity of the organized people who would be capable of assuming the responsibilities of directing the state and the national economy. The new state would guarantee the complete range of democratic freedoms and would facilitate national plebiscites in order that the people might freely express their will.

To create the new state, a dramatic reform of the constitution would be necessary. Included would be provisions allowing the president to dissolve Parliament once during a presidential term. The parliamentary election of presidential candidates in a runoff would be abolished in favor of a direct election by the people. The judicial system would be reformed and parliamentary and municipal elections would be held on the same date.

The platform proposed a complete reconstruction of the economy which would raise the per capita income to \$1,000 per year by 1980. To accomplish this, all important monopolies, including the copper industries, would be nationalized with compensation while government bureaucracy would be greatly streamlined. Under the leadership of the organized working class, the economy would be restructured into two major divisions. The first would be an alliance of the state and the workers which would own the nation's major resources. The second division would remain as the independent private sector. In order that the people more effectively

might direct the national economy, they would be given advisory positions in national, regional and local planning organizations.

Though the platform listed agrarian reform as the greatest achievement of the Frei administration, it proclaimed that the process would be greatly accelerated during which time the peasants were to be educated and further unionized. To raise the cultural standards of the nation, great importance would be placed on health, education and standards of living.

The platform of Alessandri opened with a dark and pessimistic analysis of the Chilean situation. In part, it stated that "the country lives in a state of moral, political, social and economic disintegration. All principles and values have been rejected. . . . Nothing is respected; neither laws nor institutions." The document explained that in a crisis of this nature, history had shown that only a leader with a strong and moral character would be capable of saving the nation. Because Jorge Alessandri possessed "the same heart as the people," he alone would be capable of meeting this great demand.

After describing the seriousness of the situation, the conservative platform proposed a significant reform of the constitution which would greatly strengthen the power of the executive. Under the new system, the President would have almost complete control of the economy. All parliamentary activity in labor and student affairs would be abolished. In accordance with the proposals of the Christian Democrats, the President would have the power to dissolve Parliament once during a presidential term and could reserve the right to call a plebiscite on national issues.

A government under Alessandri would initiate a general rural and urban program to integrate the workers, the youth, and the women into the economic and political life of the nation with great emphasis being placed on health and education. To improve the status of the workers, the new government would encourage expanded communication between the business elite and the work force. Unionization would be encouraged along with a national program of economic, industrial and administrative decentralization. To maintain public order and national sovereignty, the Armed Forces would be reinforced with modern equipment and increased recruitment. The Cuerpo de Carabineros would be strengthened as the best protection against growing urban delinquency.

To improve the economy, the state would initiate a "gran impulso" to enterprise with the final results being long term economic planning, elimination of poverty, reduction of state intervention into the economy, modernization of industrial technology and the elimination of privileges of the elite. The state would also encourage foreign investment and accelerate Chile's integration into the regional Latin American economic organizations.

Alessandri was of the opinion that agrarian reform was an irreversible process and it would be necessary to continue the program under the existing laws. The platform pointed out that Alessandri had been the author of the first agrarian reform law which made him the initiator of the process. Though the reform would continue, a conscious effort would be made to remove the agrarian reform from the political arena.

In a manner similar to the platforms of Alessandri and Tomic, the document drafted by the parties of Popular Unity opened with a pessimistic analysis of the Chilean situation and placed the origin of the crisis with a political system which was no longer capable of meeting the demands of the modern age. The platform denounced the United States, the Alliance for Progress and the administration of Eduardo Frei as elements which had retarded the progress of the nation. Included was a statement that, from 1952 to 1970, North Americans had invested in Latin America \$7,473,000,000 while reaping a profit of \$16 billion.

Though the platform was unquestionably a statement from the radical left, it contained a long series of democratic guarantees including freedom of conscience, speech, press, inviolability of the home, and the right to freely assemble and unionize. A new socialist society would be created "by means of the united militant action of the immense majority of Chileans" who would "overthrow the existing institutions and proceed with the task of their liberation."

The economic program of Popular Unity proposed a new structure with three divisions. The first sector would be that of the state and would include all nationalized industries and all enterprises to be nationalized in the future such as minerals, banks, and all monopolies. The nationalization would be carried out "with full regard for the interests of the small share holder." The second sector would be a mixed area in which the state would participate as a part owner. The third sector, that of private property, would represent the largest number of enterprises and could include all industries not maintaining

a monopoly control over the market. Through a system of national planning on all levels, every effort would be made to retard inflation and provide employment for the entire work force.

The agrarian reform proposed by Popular Unity was not radically different from that of Tomic though it would be more rapid and contained fewer property guarantees. In most cases, expropriated land would be organized in the form of cooperatives which eventually would be developed as state farms. In some cases, peasants would be given title to land which they might own and work privately. A system of education and technological training would aid the new peasant farmers in making their production economically profitable.

Throughout the nation, health and education facilities would be extended to integrate the poor into the national culture. To unite the people more closely with the government, the parliamentary system would be abolished and replaced by a People's Assembly having only one house. Suffrage would be extended to include illiterates and individuals 18 years of age and older.

To maintain the national sovereignty, the Armed Forces would be supplied with modern equipment and given adequate salaries. Though the national sovereignty would be staunchly defended, the government would strive to maintain good relations with all the countries of the world including the Communist and Socialist powers.

Though the programs of the various parties were clearly displayed before the nation, the active campaigns of the respective presidential candidates played only a small role in shaping the history of Chile in 1970. In the year preceding the presidential election, the nation

passed through a period of violence and conspiracies which affected the mentality of the Chilean voters and left the government of Eduardo Frei vacillating between advancing its program and simply maintaining order within the nation. Chilean democracy was subjected to a vicious attack from authoritarian elements of the far right and the far left. This attack ultimately determined the course of the presidential race and almost succeeded in pushing the government of the Christian Democrats into the political background.

The era of conspiracies began when Parliament announced that it was opening an investigation into the activities of Paul Bell, director of the Chilean Peace Corps. The inquiry was initiated by Communist Deputy Luis Figueroa who charged that Bell was using Peace Corpsmen as agents for the CIA. To substantiate his charges, the Deputy displayed two documents. The first was a circular memorandum dated August 12, 1966, to all Peace Corps offices in Latin America from William E. Moffett, the regional director of the Latin American Peace Corps. It authorized payment of amounts from \$25 to \$60 for informants who submitted information on leftist students and on persons hostile to the United States. The second document was a letter which named Dr. Jorge Vargas Ramón as a CIA agent in Concepcion. Though Bell quickly denounced the documents as forgeries, it was a fact that leftist terrorists had sacked the Peace Corps files in March of 1967 making off with several classified documents. Though nothing substantial was ever proven by the parliamentary investigation, the left exploited the controversy with a wave of propaganda and a movement began to expel the Peace Corps from the nation.²

²New York Times, August 18, 1969, p. 15.

Just as discussion on the Peace Corps investigation was beginning to wane, the nation was shocked by the first military disloyalty in more than 30 years. The October uprising under the leadership of General Roberto Viaux was said to have been initiated only to reveal military discontent over insufficient salaries but Frei denounced the disturbance as an attempted coup and placed the country under a state of siege. A lengthy parliamentary investigation resulted in which Renan Fuentealba charged that the uprising had been aided by the CIA.³

As in the case of the Peace Corps investigation, the event resulted in a propaganda victory for the left. It was the proclamation of the Communist Party that the CIA initiated the military revolt to prevent an electoral victory of the left in the September election.⁴ The uprising also greatly discredited the image of the right because several conservative newspapers had been consistently sympathetic to military grievances for higher pay.⁵ Even though President Frei remained firm and confident during the uprising, rumors persisted throughout November and December that a military coup was imminent and the President was forced to repeatedly place the Province of Santiago under a state of siege.⁶

³New York Times, Oct. 22, 1969, p. 10.

⁴Jose' Dickman, "For an Anti-Imperialist Popular Unity Government," World Marxist Review, XIII, No. 2 (Feb., 1970), 90.

⁵Latin America, III, No. 43 (Oct. 24, 1969), 337.

⁶Latin America, III, No. 50 (Dec. 12, 1969), 393.

As the Christian Democrats approached the end of their term, the campaigns of Tomic, Alessandri and Allende were often overshadowed by political and governmental uncertainty. Though the President wished to maintain an independent and reformist position, he was often forced to negotiate with the right to achieve parliamentary approval of his proposals. Against leftist opposition, the favor of the National Party allowed passage of the government's long-awaited Constitutional reform bill, though by December of 1969 the proposal had been amended almost beyond recognition. The new law provided for plebiscites on issues of national importance and lowered the voting age to 18 after November of 1970. The reform also gave the President stronger control over public expenditure and taxation. The proposal to dissolve Parliament once during a presidential term was never approved.⁷

Amid fears of an imminent military coup, a sector of the left began to assert another form of authoritarian terror. A group calling itself the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), composed mostly of students, initiated a series of bank robberies and urban riots which contributed to the uncertainty of the period and more than once plunged the country into a state of siege. The exact relationship between the MIR and the legal electoral activities of Popular Unity is difficult to determine. Though the parties of the left, especially the Communist Party, gave no official recognition to the activities of the MIR, it appears that this independent and semi-clandestine organization

⁷New York Times, Dec. 31, 1969, p. 6.

was in reality another manifestation of the "unarmed path." As Salvador Allende opened his campaign for the presidency, his nephew was being sought by the police for alleged leadership of the MIR. Moreover, Allende was known personally to admire the activities of the organization.⁸

The ideology of the MIR is important because it deviates from the traditional, anti-imperialistic propaganda of the left. The group shuns the democratic path to socialism while pointing out that although Chile has had 100 years of almost unspoiled democracy, the nation is little better off than its politically chaotic neighbors. When MIR leader, Miguel Enriquez, was asked why the propaganda of his movement was not aimed against the United States, he replied that this was not relevant to the Chilean reality. "Campeños and workers do not experience, as Cubans did, the presence of the American exploiters--banks, for example, employ few people."⁹ Enriquez explained that the ultimate goal of the MIR was to effect a change in the character of the Chilean people which would permit the country to take its place among the progressive nations of the world. The administration of Eduardo Frei had no sympathy for such viewpoints and announced that any publication reporting with approval the activities of the MIR would be closed by the police.¹⁰

⁸ José Yglesias, "The Report from Chile: The Left Prepares for an Election," New York Times, Jan. 11, 1970, Section 6, pp. 90-98.

⁹ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 95.

As the date of the presidential election moved closer, a wave of speculation concerning the outcome appeared. Luis Hernandez Parker, political analyst for Ercilla, observed that "if in 1964 the right voted for Frei in fear of Allende, in 1970, the left will vote for the Christian Democrats in fear of Alessandri."¹¹ Even Salvador Allende was not confident of his own support. Remembering his three previous failures, the socialist candidate jokingly remarked, "I'm going to ask that they put on my tombstone, 'Here lies Salvador Allende, future President of Chile.'"¹² Graham Hovey, from the editorial board of the New York Times, held the opinion that a victory of the right was almost assured. He observed that Tomic was straying far to the left of his own party which would leave a wide following for Jorge Alessandri.¹³ Dr. Eduardo Hamuy of the Centro de Opinión Pública also held the opinion that Alessandri was in a position to win the presidential election but his analysis was based on a different rationale. Hamuy explained that Chilean women tend to vote irrationally and conservatively. This is especially true of women in the lower economic groups. Women in the upper classes are more sophisticated politically and tend to vote more the way their husbands do. Hamuy further explained that women in the middle and lower classes will elect the most conservative and seemingly solid candidate. "Women whose political education is limited or non-existent, vote charismatically and in Chile, this explains why they will vote once again for Alessandri."¹⁴

¹¹Vision Revista Internacional, XXXVII, No. 6 (Sept. 12, 1969), 13.

¹²Time, XCVI, No. 16, Oct. 19, 1970, 31.

¹³New York Times, Feb. 2, 1970, p. 32.

¹⁴New York Times, Feb. 16, 1970, p. 14.

Just as it seemed that the conservatives would have an easy victory in September, another national crisis intervened. On March 25, the government announced that it had defeated an attempted military coup. General Horacio Gamboa, the Minister of Defense under Carlos Ibañez, was jailed along with 11 others for plotting to overthrow the government.¹⁵ Because General Gamboa was a writer for the conservative newspaper, Diario Ilustrado, the prestige of the right was seriously lowered.¹⁶ When the latest results from the Centro de Opinión Pública were unveiled, the effect was clear. Alessandri's popularity had fallen from 46 per cent in August of 1969 to only 38.1 per cent following the arrest of General Gamboa. While the popularity of the right had definitely declined, the percentage favoring Tomic rose from 23 per cent to 30.1 per cent and Allende raised his following from 18 per cent to 22.6 per cent.¹⁷

Though General Gamboa's arrest temporarily relieved the fears of military intervention, an uncertain atmosphere hung over the presidential campaign as the nation remembered an eerie warning from General Roberto Viaux that "sooner than anyone thinks, the right of force will surge up against the rule of law in Chile."¹⁸

Late in April, the campaign of the right received another blow. As agrarian reform (CORA) agent, Hernán Mery Fuenzalida, was directing

¹⁵New York Times, March 26, 1970, p. 13.

¹⁶Latin America, IV, No. 14 (April 3, 1970), p. 105.

¹⁷Ercilla, XXXVI, No. 1837 (Sept. 2-8, 1970), p. 12.

¹⁸Latin America, IV, No. 25 (June 19, 1970), p. 197.

the expropriation of an estate known as La Piedad in the Province of Linares, a fight broke out in which the agrarian reform agent was killed. In a radio and television speech, Interior Minister Patricio Rojas explained that the decision to expropriate the estate had been made only after a long legal battle in which the Supreme Court ruled against the landowner. Because the individual charged in the murder, Gabriel Benavente Palma, was a militant conservative and because Linares was considered to be a conservative stronghold, the effect upon the image of the landed elite was disastrous.¹⁹

Alessandri's cause was damaged still further when violence erupted in Parliament as the event was being discussed. A National Party Deputy, Victor Carmine, announced that he would not express any condolence to the family of the dead government agent and then shouted, "He was the first dead man, comrades. There will be many others." Immediately a fist fight broke out in which desks and chairs were smashed and government Deputy Eduardo Sepúlveda was thrown to the floor. Though Alessandri's followers expelled Carmine from the party, the stain upon the conservative cause could hardly be erased.²⁰

Though Radomiro Tomic employed every weapon at his disposal to present the Christian Democrats as a party of the revolutionary left, it became increasingly difficult for the government of Eduardo Frei to maintain that image as the radical elements of left and the right repeatedly

¹⁹ Latin America, IV, No. 21 (May 22, 1970), p. 167.

²⁰ Ibid.

succeeded in forcing the administration to employ the tactics of repression. Early in June, a large guerrilla encampment was discovered near Cerro Mirador in southern Chile which appeared to be a training facility for leftist terror activities. Though a few individuals were captured and jailed, the majority of the guerrilla band escaped.²¹ Governmental suspicion of MIR activity was proven correct when on June 26 a large student demonstration in the Santiago suburb of Puente Alto ended in violence and the death of two students. As street fighting broke out in Puente Alto, violence spread to Chillan and Concepción, resulting in the arrest of more than 100 individuals. One of the dead students was identified as 18 year old Claudio Pavez Hidalgo. Though a government investigation reported that he had been killed by a ricocheting bullet, a medical report stated that his death had been caused by a bullet fired directly at him. The government denounced the disorders as a plot by the MIR to disrupt the presidential election and responded by plunging the country into a state of siege which it announced might last as long as six months.²²

The dilemma of Tomic in the months preceding the presidential election was almost a political tragedy. He could not campaign on the accomplishments of Frei because his personal ideology placed him far to the left of the President and most of the party. He energetically attempted to create a new image for the Christian Democrats by campaigning more actively than either of his two competitors and by traveling

²¹The Times of the Americas, June 10, 1970, p. 1.

²²New York Times, June 28, 1970, p. 22.

the length of the country, hoping to spread his vision of a new communitarian state. Because the radical elements of both the left and the right forced the Christian Democratic President to continuously govern the country under a state of siege, this vision was all but destroyed.²³

As the election date drew near, the campaigns of Allende and Tomic began to accelerate while the situation of Alessandri worsened. An open letter to the peasantry appeared from José Manuel Santos who was the bishop of Valdivia and the chairman of the National Episcopal Council. The letter harshly condemned the Chilean situation and added that "we Chilean bishops feel that Christ is looking at our social and economic structure and this judgment is severe given that he cannot bless a capitalist structure which goes against the dignity of man."²⁴

Alessandri's cause was further damaged by his television appearances. During the course of the campaign, Allende and Tomic each completed 24 television programs in which they brilliantly and confidently displayed their programs before the nation. Alessandri, who appeared only three times, gave the general impression that the stormy campaign had taken a severe toll of his health. He stood before the television viewers with shaking hands and was not able to speak without constantly referring to his notes.²⁵

²³Thomas G. Sanders, "Chile - The Elections and After," American Universities Field Staff Reports, West Coast South America Series, XVII, No. 10 (Sept., 1970), 5-6.

²⁴Latin America, IV, No. 25 (June 19, 1970), p. 197.

²⁵Ercilla, XXXVI, No. 1837 (Sept. 2-8, 1970), p. 12.

Because several of the Santiago television stations were affiliated with the universities and were therefore often Marxist-controlled, they tended to favor the campaign of Allende. This tendency was increased in June when Chile opened trade relations with Cuba including a weekly exchange of television programs between the two countries. On August 1, Fidel Castro appeared on Santiago television and presented an analysis of the leftist movement in Latin America. In his discussion, Castro endorsed the campaign of Salvador Allende and explained that he did not favor the violent path to socialism in a nation such as Chile where genuine democracy allowed the people to assume power by way of the ballot box. His declaration may have eased the fears of many who felt that a victory of Allende would result in the same bloodshed that accompanied the establishment of socialism in Cuba.²⁶

As the electoral campaign grew more intense, the fences and buildings of Santiago became plastered with slogans and political posters of the various parties. The right attempted to discredit the campaign of Popular Unity by displaying posters of La Moneda guarded by a Russian tank and the caption, "In Czechoslovakia they didn't think it could happen either." Another display caricatured Allende dancing on a rope held by a Russian bear.²⁷ The Christian Democrats responded by hinting that Alessandri was plagued by a lack of machismo because he was single and had no children, whereas Tomic was married and had nine children. To make the point, posters resembling a soccer scoreboard appeared with the score, Tomic--9, Alessandri--0.²⁸

²⁶New York Times, August 23, 1970, p. 16.

²⁷Latin America, IV, No. 27 (July 3, 1970), p. 213.

²⁸Newsweek, LXXVI, No. 6 (August 10, 1970), p. 37.

In the last week of the campaign, the three candidates concentrated their efforts on the nation's three major urban areas of Santiago, Valparaíso, and Concepción. Together these districts would account for 57 per cent of the vote. Only Alessandri did not journey to Concepcion where it was estimated that his support would be minimal. According to the carabineros, Alessandri succeeded in gathering a crowd of 125,000 in Santiago and 38,000 in Valparaíso while Allende addressed a mass of 65,000 in Valparaíso and 28,000 in Concepción. Though Concepción was known to be leftist stronghold, Tomic rallied a crowd of 45,000 in that city to hear his oration.²⁹

Though Allende was active, aggressive, and legal in his campaign for Popular Unity, the "unarmed path" was not neglected. In the last week of August, approximately 1,200 families crept through the darkness of night onto a large unoccupied field in the outskirts of Santiago and quietly constructed a small village. Led by the MIR and a well known Socialist Deputy, the invaders set up a general assembly to govern the community and posted armed guards to protect the village from intervention by the police.³⁰

Ironically, the leader and organizer of the village, Che Guevara Encampment, was Socialist Deputy Laura Allende, the sister of the Popular Unity presidential candidate. The Deputy explained her position thus:

I'm the only real protection this camp has. The police or outside terrorists would come right in if they could, but it would be politically dangerous for them to do so with me here.

²⁹ Ercilla, XXXVI, No. 1837 (Sept. 2-8, 1970), p. 13.

³⁰ New York Times, August 31, 1970, p. 2.

There's a magnificent comradeship here. The people here are not all Socialists but all have a common interest in the survival of the camp and a will to help each other. There's even a little nun here who came with the 40 children in her care.³¹

The creation of Che Guevara Encampment on the eve of the election forced the government of Eduardo Frei into a dangerous corner. If the invaders were not evicted by force, the law and order campaign of Jorge Alessandri would be greatly stimulated. On the other hand, police action against a settlement of 1,000 families could only result in bloodshed and death which would have an adverse effect on the Christian Democrats' presidential campaign. Given the complexity of the dilemma and knowing that the campaign of Radomiro Tomic was at stake, Frei's decision--the only decision possible--was to do nothing.³²

The last public poll before the election was conducted in August and included only the area of Greater Santiago where Alessandri's support was known to be strong. The findings, as analyzed by the Centro de Opinión Pública, indicated that the election results would be very close. The poll indicated that 36.8 per cent of the Santiago electorate would favor Alessandri while Allende and Tomic would receive 31.5 per cent and 30.9 per cent respectively. Considering that Allende would receive wide support from his traditional strongholds in the provinces and the mining areas, no one was prepared to predict who the next president of Chile might be.³³

On September 4, 1970, 14,000 voting centers were opened to allow the people of Chile to select the next leader of the nation.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ercilla, XXXVI, No. 1838 (Sept. 9-15, 1970), p. 19.

Approximately one hundred thousand soldiers and police officers were mobilized to prevent possible violence and to insure that the election would be free of irregularities. Though the government announced that no rallies or demonstrations would be permitted while the ballots were being counted, the first election returns incited such ecstasy in the allendistas that the declaration could not be enforced. By 11:00 P.M., with two-thirds of the votes counted, Allende had received 871,287 votes against 842,843 for Alessandri and 661,435 for Tomic who at that time admitted his defeat. Upon hearing the announcement, the followers of Allende swarmed into the streets to dance, sing and shout the cries of victory.³⁴

On the morning of September 5, Salvador Allende proclaimed a "glorious victory" for the parties of Popular Unity and warned that the people would resist by force "any attempt to rob us of our victory." Though the followers of Alessandri were not ready to admit defeat, the conservative's campaign director, Cesar Sepulveda, announced that "we do not have a following as great as we had hoped." When El Mercurio appeared, it contained the headline: "Narrow Triumph of Allende."³⁵

When the final results of the election were calculated, Allende's total reached 1,075,616 or 36.3 per cent of the vote. Alessandri had received 1,036,278 (34.98 per cent), while 824,849 (27.84 per cent) individuals favored Tomic.³⁶ Though it is true that the percentage favoring Allende over Alessandri was extremely small, an analysis of the

³⁴La Nacion, San José, Costa Rica, Sept. 5, 1970, p. 19.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶El Sur, Concepcion, Chile, Sept. 6, 1970, p. 9.

election by province indicates a general trend to the left in the Chilean electorate. In 1964, Allende was clearly defeated in the traditionally conservative central Provinces of Coquimbo, O'Higgins, Curicó, Valdivia, Talca, Linares, Santiago, Valparaiso, Aconcagua, Colchagua, Bio-Bio, Malleco, Cautín, Maule, Nuble, Osorno, Llanquihue Aysé and Chiloé.³⁷ In 1970, Allende was again defeated in all of these provinces except Talca, Curico, Coquimbo, and O'Higgins which he carried. In those provinces that he did not carry, he won the male vote in all but Linares, Cautin, Osorno and Llanquihue.³⁸

In 1964, Allende carried the northern mining provinces of Tarapacá, Antofagasta and Atacama and the southern and industrial provinces of Concepción, Arauco and Magallanes although he won both the male and female vote only in the coal mining province of Arauco.³⁹ In 1970 he carried both the male and female vote in all of these provinces plus the province of Talca. Alessandri carried the provinces of Aconcagua, Santiago, Colchagua, Linares, Maule, Ñuble, Bío-Bío, Malleco, Cautín, Valdivia, Osorno, Llanquihue and Chiloé though Allende won the male vote in all of these provinces except Linares, Cautín, Osorno, and Llanquihue. Tomic carried only Valparaíso and Aysé with Allende winning the male vote in both of these provinces.⁴⁰

³⁷ Orville G. Cope, "The Chilean Presidential Election of 1964," in Political Power in Latin America: Seven Confrontations, ed. by R. R. Fagen and W. A. Cornelius, Jr. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 26.

³⁸ El Sur, loc. cit.

³⁹ Cope, op. cit.

⁴⁰ El Sur, loc. cit.

From the available data, it can be generalized that Allende maintained and increased his strength in the traditionally leftist strongholds while Alessandri's support in the conservative areas slightly waned. And though O'Higgins, Cautín, and Valdivia were traditionally centers of conservatism, Allende carried O'Higgins and succeeded in winning the male vote of Valdivia. In the important Province of Santiago where Allende had never been strong, Alessandri won by 460,146 against Allende's 416,854. Allende carried the male vote in this province by 232,982 against Alessandri's 195,098 and Tomic's 143,257. Alessandri suffered a serious defeat in the Province of Valparaíso by finishing in third place. In this province, which contained about 10 per cent of the electorate, Tomic recorded 102,865 votes against Allende's 101,750 and Alessandri's 100,968. Alessandri also finished third in the Province of Concepción which accounted for approximately seven per cent of the votes.⁴¹

To further substantiate the thesis that the Chilean electorate moved to the left in 1970, it may be observed that the total percentage favoring Tomic and Allende amounted to 64.1 per cent. As Time magazine observed, the programs of Tomic and Allende were "all but indistinguishable" by the end of the campaign.⁴² After the election, Tomic noted that "the greatest risk is not that the government of President Salvador Allende will go too far, but that it will stop too short." Tomic added that "the great majority of Christian Democrats and the 825,000 Chileans who voted

⁴¹El Sur, loc. cit.

⁴²Time, XCVI, No. 16 (Oct. 19, 1970), p. 30.

for me would have chosen Allende and not Alessandri."⁴³ It cannot be known what the results might have been in a two-way presidential race between Alessandri and Allende, but the implication is that Allende would have won by a greater percentage than he received in the three-way contest.

There are also indications that the feminine vote moved more to the left in this election. In 1958, Alessandri received approximately 148,000 votes from the feminine electorate against Allende's 97,000.⁴⁴ In 1970, Alessandri's total reached 557,174 against Allende's 443,753 and Tomic's 432,113.⁴⁵

An interesting observation of the election can be made if the results are compared with the outcome of the 1969 parliamentary election. In 1969, the Communist, Socialist and Radical Parties accounted for 45.19 per cent of the vote. The Christian Democrats received 31.05 per cent while the National Party was supported by 20.82 per cent of the electorate.⁴⁶ It may be assumed that the division of the Radical Party, the authoritarian activities of the MIR and the lack of enthusiasm which surrounded Allende's selection as a presidential candidate damaged the potential of Popular Unity to a considerable degree. The inclusion of MAPU and API into the electoral coalition was not sufficient to compensate for this loss. The dramatic increase of the right may be accounted

⁴³The Times of the Americas, XIV, No. 47 (Dec. 2, 1970), p. 1.

⁴⁴Ercilla, XXXVI, No. 1838 (Sept. 9-15, 1970), p. 21.

⁴⁵El Sur, loc. cit.

⁴⁶Sanders, "Chile - The Elections and After," p. 4.

for by the division of the Radicals, the personal charisma of Alessandri, and the general incapacity of the Christian Democrats to retain their popularity and position in the political spectrum.

The serious loss suffered by the Christian Democrats was a direct result of Tomic's inability to find a purpose and direction for his party in the highly polarized nation. Concerning this dilemma, the following observation has been made:

For months he conducted his campaign with scarcely a reference to what the Christian Democrats had done from 1964 to 1970. Even when his strategists finally persuaded him to change, he still seemed at times to be running against his own party's failures. In his final rally in Santiago, a few nights before the election, the several hundred thousand hearers applauded enthusiastically the two times Tomic referred to Frei, but shuffled in boredom amid his rhetoric about replacing "capitalism and neo-capitalism" with a new society. Though his party's strongest candidate, Tomic could not bring his intellectual convictions about the road Chile should follow in the future into correlation with the popular awareness that Eduardo Frei had given Chile a more-than-ordinary government and brought world-wide attention to their small country of less than 10 million people.⁴⁷

The Christian Democrats, therefore, were in a difficult situation from which there seemed to be no escape. The electorate was almost equally divided on whether the nation should return to conservative rule or surge into an experiment in socialism. Because the parties of Popular Unity succeeded in retaining a monopoly of the revolutionary sectors, Tomic's vain attempt to move his party to a position near the radical left only resulted in impotence and isolation of the Christian Democratic Party.

⁴⁷Ibid.

EPILOGUE

The events of September 4, 1970 did not pass without strong national and international reaction. Costa Rica's major newspaper, La Nación, described the election as "astonishing" and warned that it "placed a very serious challenge before all the people of Latin America."¹ Time magazine counseled that "Chile may not have another free election for a long, long time."² Santiago's El Mercurio, which favored the campaign of Alessandri, presented the following analysis:

The narrow and hazardous outcome of this election is principally the result of the indefinite program of the Christian Democrats whose converging views of Marxism gave to the candidacy of Allende a push capable of defeating³ the election of the independent candidate step by step.

The New York Times stated its opposition to interference by the United States but warned that direct military intervention would be justified if a government led by Allende violated Chile's democratic traditions.⁴ The statement from Colombia's La República was less tolerant:

Mr. Allende, winning candidate of the Chilean election, has always operated with the support of the Communist Party which was the major force in the electoral coalition. Now he promises to respect the right of liberty and democracy. These declarations have the immediate objective of brain-washing⁵ his followers and the rest of the Americans.

¹La Nación, Sept. 6, 1970, p. 14.

²Time, XCVI, No. 16 (Oct. 19, 1970), p. 23.

³El Mercurio, in Visión Revista Internacional (Sept. 25, 1970), p. 15.

⁴New York Times, Sept. 19, 1970, p. 28.

⁵La Republica, in La Nación, Sept. 8, 1970, p. 22.

While there were those who were distressed by the success of Popular Unity, there were also those who greeted the election results with ecstasy. The Cuban newspaper, Gramma, appeared with the headline, "Imperialist Defeat In Chile."⁶ The Latin American version of the Russian Enfoque Internacional noted that "the election victory has been celebrated in moments when there can be noted a clear spread of the anti-imperialist struggle on the American Continent."⁷ Not the least to send a message of congratulations to the election winner was the aging ex-dictator of Colombia, Rojas Pinilla. General Rojas explained how fortunate it was that Allende's election had been unmarred by any deception "in contrast with the one conducted by President Carlos Lleras Restrepo who organized and affected a major electoral fraud."⁸

As the allendistas rejoiced over the electoral victory of Popular Unity, there were individuals in Chile who did not celebrate. Prices fell sharply on the Chilean stock market and the escudo, normally valued at 14.35 per cent to the United States dollar, fell to as low as fifty escudos to the dollar on the black market as well-to-do Chileans began to take their money out of the country. Because of the strain on the economy, the Frei administration was forced to adopt strong measures to stop the flight of capital.⁹ Within the enterprises of the wealthy Augustín Edwards,

⁶Gramma, Havana, Cuba, Sept. 13, 1970, p. 1.

⁷Enfoque Internacional, Bogotá, Colombia, IV, No. 10 (Oct., 1970), p. 7.

⁸Alerta, Bogotá, Colombia, November, 1970, quoting a letter from Rojas Pinilla to Salvador Allende, pp. 8-9.

⁹Time, XCVI, No. 16 (Oct. 19, 1970), p. 24.

there was genuine despair as an employee of the Banco de Edwards relates:

Today we lament political happenings in Chile that . . . threaten to blacken the future of 10 million persons. It is a fact that Dr. Salvador Allende will assume the Presidency of the Republic the next 4th of November. Also it is equally sure that he is a Marxist friend and admirer of Fidel Castro and that he is supported by a group of six political parties among which the Communist Party actuates and decides almost everything in a really hegemonious form.

I am certain that in a few months time, there will be established in Chile a communist dictatorship. My opinion is based on logic, on knowledge of the Marxist dialectic and in analysis of the historical experiences of all the countries that in the last 50 years have preceded Chile down similar roads.

Several judge me as being too pessimistic, arguing that Chile has 150 years of democratic tradition and a series of other qualities that will serve as a magic talisman to impede the totalitarian excesses of communism. Those who argue in this way are romantic but unrealistic persons. They don't understand that 100,000 militant communists are provided with an organization and a discipline so effective that it can only be compared with a good army and can oppress a population 100 times larger regardless of their love of freedom and the nobility of their historical background. Besides that, they can do this without violating any legality or constitutional norm. It is enough to crookedly employ certain administrative measures with neither scruples nor limits imposed by the bourgeois ethic.

Chile is in the throes of the most grave economic crisis in all of its history. These are the circumstances that the Marxists-Leninists of the future government will use to crush their democratic opposers, blaming them as the cause of the chaos. The banks in particular, especially the Edwards bank, will be the first victims and scapegoats of the new regime.¹⁰

The crisis in Chile therefore was real and the anxiety was enhanced by the narrow electoral margin which separated Allende and Alessandri. Because Popular Unity failed to win 51 per cent of the electorate, it was necessary for Parliament to select the next President from the two candidates who received the largest number of votes. While it was

¹⁰Patricio Leníz Cerda in a letter to Fernando Londoño H., dated October 14, 1970, Santiago, Chile.

traditional though not mandatory that Parliament select the winning candidate, the conservatives were not willing to accept Allende's confirmation without a struggle.

On September 9, Jorge Alessandri made the following public proclamation: "In case I am elected by Parliament, I would resign, which would mean a new election. I state now in categorical terms that I would not participate in it for any reason."¹¹ The objective of the announcement was to swing the 75 Christian Democratic representatives into the conservative camp thus blocking Allende's confirmation. Alessandri, as President, would then resign in favor of a new election in which Eduardo Frei could participate and on the basis of his popularity possibly be re-elected. In what may be remembered as his most honorable hour, Eduardo Frei turned his back on the conservative plea.¹²

Denouncing the conservative's proposal to thwart the constitutional process, the Christian Democrats elected to support Allende on the condition that he agree in writing to preserve Chile's democratic traditions. The government presented Allende's coalition with a list of demands for democratic guarantees including the survival of opposing political parties, freedom of press, speech and assembly, and autonomy of the nation's unions and universities. The government also demanded that Allende relinquish his power to name chiefs of the armed forces. After 16 hours of discussion, the parties of Popular Unity agreed to incorporate all of these guarantees into a constitutional amendment

¹¹New York Times, Sept. 10, 1970, p. 2.

¹²Panama America, Panama City, Panama, Sept. 11, 1970, p. 10.

except the power of the President to make military appointments. The Christian Democrats agreed to accept this one concession and committed their support to Allende in the parliamentary confirmation.¹³

The Christian Democrats, throughout the entire period of discussion, retained a highly respectable attitude when it is remembered that they were offering their vital support to an individual who had led the parties of the opposition in a constant and vicious attack upon their six years of government. When the final decision to support Allende was made, officialist Bernardo Leighton was quoted as saying, "God grant that Allende will do better than we did."¹⁴

Now that it was assured that Allende would become the next President of Chile, a message of caution from Fidel Castro appeared. The Cuban dictator counseled Allende to retain as many technicians in the copper industry as possible and to keep the copper exports within the area of the United States dollar. Castro further warned Allende to maintain good relations with the Chilean military and with the United States while softening any revolutionary rhetoric that might result in a serious conservative backlash.¹⁵

In the weeks preceding his confirmation, Allende made every attempt to quiet the fears of national and international sectors which distrusted the Marxist President-elect. Speaking from Valparaíso, he

¹³El Espectador, Bogotá, Colombia, Oct. 9, 1970, p. 8.

¹⁴New York Times, Oct. 11, 1970, p. 2.

¹⁵Time, XCVI, No. 16 (Oct. 19, 1970), p. 30.

announced that 98 per cent of Chile's businessmen would have nothing to fear from the new government. At the same speaking engagement, Luis Corvalán added that "those who were not with us, but are with Chile, will share our responsibilities in the new situation."¹⁶

On October 19, there came an unexpected blessing from the conservative camp. Jorge Alessandri withdrew his name as a presidential candidate and added: "My best wishes for success go to the next President of Chile, whose long and proven democratic convictions, reflected in attitudes of constant respect for the constitution and the laws, are well known."¹⁷ Because of the previous attempt to thwart the constitutional process, it is not known whether this announcement was intended as a genuine endorsement of the President-elect or whether it was only an attempt by the defeated candidate to restore the image of the right as a just and moral force in the political spectrum. Whatever the case, an uneasy calm settled over the nation in anticipation of Allende's parliamentary confirmation.

On the morning of October 22, the authoritarian forces of the right made a final attempt to stop Allende from taking office. The Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, General René Schneider, was shot while driving to his office in the Ministry of Defense. It is believed that the intent was to kidnap the general and then make some bargain with the government to prevent Allende's selection. The plan failed when the general tried to defend himself with his personal revolver and was mortally wounded.¹⁸

¹⁶New York Times, Oct. 19, 1970, p. 8.

¹⁷New York Times, Oct. 20, 1970, p. 13.

¹⁸El Tiempo, Bogotá Colombia, Oct. 26, 1970, pp. 1, 14.

The Christian Democrats were shocked and denounced the attack as "fascistic." Lt. Col. Fernando Mansilla of the Chilean Air Force announced that "this is the first time this has happened in Chile, shooting a military commander for political reasons. It's against our principles and our history."¹⁹ An immediate investigation was launched resulting in the arrest of more than 100 individuals including the dissident retired General Roberto Viaux who had led the military uprising of October, 1969, and had periodically spoken out regarding political developments in the nation.²⁰ If the death of General Schneider had any effect on the country, it was to cast Allende as a symbol of legality and democracy against unceasing attempts by the radical right to force its will upon the nation by any means. Allende's confirmation therefore virtually was assured.²¹

On October 2, Parliament confirmed the election of Salvador Allende by a vote of 153 against 35 in a 55-minute session that was conducted within the best traditions of Chilean democracy. On November 3, Allende was sworn in as President and charged with leading the nation through the following six years. Standing with his wife on a second-story balcony of La Moneda, the President saluted the gathering crowd and proclaimed: "The people have entered with me into the home of presidents."²²

¹⁹New York Times, Oct. 23, 1970, pp. 1-2.

²⁰El Siglo, Bogota, Colombia, Nov. 4, 1970, pp. 1, 7.

²¹El Espectador, Nov. 1, 1970, p. 6.

²²New York Times, Nov. 4, 1970, pp. 1-2.

Before making any generalizations about the passage of events in Chile between 1964 and 1970, it is necessary to explore briefly what role the United States might play in Chilean affairs however blatant or subtle that role might be. It is understood that pressure from the United States would lead Allende to radicalize his program to an extent that his government might deviate from Chile's democratic traditions. Any deviation from general trends in recent Chilean history, including the possible dismantling of the democratic process would violate any propositions set forth on the basis of continued constitutional rule.

Over a period of approximately eight months preceding the September election, the United States Navy made application to the Chilean Embassy in Washington for 87 visas for noncommissioned officers and civilian employees. The only reason stated for the visas was official duty in Chile on behalf of the United States Navy. In the week preceding the election, the Chilean Embassy denied the last 19 applications and requested that the State Department give a more complete explanation. State Department officials replied that the 87 individuals in question were members of the United States Navy band which was planning a good will tour of Chile in the near future.²³

Officials from the Chilean Foreign Ministry expressed concern when an inquiry revealed that the training and rank of the individuals made it unlikely that they were members of a military band. The individuals already granted visas included three captains, three commanders,

²³New York Times, Sept. 5, 1970, p. 3.

fifteen lieutenant commanders, and at least one person who had received training in intelligence work. When confronted with this information by Chilean officials, the State Department explained that the previous statement about visas for a military band was incorrect. It was then announced that the group was destined to participate in Operation Unitas, a cooperative military program in which many Latin American countries were involved. Discussion on the matter ended abruptly when Chilean officials reminded the State Department that Chile's participation in Operation Unitas had been cancelled for several months.²⁴

From the information available on this controversy, it is possibly somewhat farfetched to imply a manifestation of CIA activities in Chilean affairs but it is undeniable that a controversy of this nature provides material for the anti-imperialist rhetoric of Salvador Allende. Moreover, President Nixon's failure to congratulate the winning presidential candidate on the day of his election victory and Henry Kissinger's warning that Allende is threatening Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina with communism only forces the Chilean president to adopt strong measures to solidify and to secure his position.²⁵

Allende has given public notice that any unconstitutional threat to his authority will not be tolerated. On September 13, he explained what the response would be to a challenge to his rule: "The country will stop as a first step. Workers will occupy factories, peasants will occupy the land and civil servants will occupy their offices."²⁶ On October 3

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ New York Times, Nov. 1, 1970, Section VI, p. 106.

²⁶ New York Times, Sept. 14, 1970, p. 7.

Allende further explained his position: "We will answer reactionary violence with revolutionary violence, but that will be an answer. If others unleash violence, we will answer with violence, but we are not going to unleash violence."²⁷

There are many indications that Allende possesses the tools to effect the "revolutionary violence" which he describes, partially because of the "committees" which were created during his campaign. Luis Corvalán has described these bodies in the following manner:

The election campaign brought into being 14,800 Popular Unity committees with hundreds of thousands of members, many of them with no party affiliation. The committees will continue in the factories and residential areas. Though short of funds and technical means, they conducted an effective campaign that helped to raise the political understanding of the masses, popularize the Popular Unity program, organize and stimulate the fight for the people's vital demands. Under the new government these committees will remain the motive force of the social struggle.²⁸

Furthermore, Allende has not divorced his government from association with the semi-violent doctrine of the "unarmed path" though the relationship is rather vague. When speaking of the MIR, Allende retains the ambiguous position that was prevalent during the campaign.

We have said many times that we have no political agreement or understanding with the MIR. The tactics that they have set, and do set for themselves, are strictly their own responsibility. During the campaign they made some expropriations. If they have made no more, I don't know the reason why.²⁹

²⁷ New York Times, Oct. 4, 1970, p. 24.

²⁸ Luis Corvalán, "Chile: The People Take Over," World Marxist Review, XIII, No. 2 (Dec., 1970), pp. 7-8.

²⁹ New York Times, Oct. 4, 1970, p. 24.

Since assuming office, Allende has pardoned those leaders of the MIR who were jailed during the previous administration.³⁰ Moreover, the continuing MIR leadership of land invasions has become a curious phenomenon. Though the government has officially stated that illegal takeover of private land may not continue, in cases where violence has broken out, it has been the landowners who have been prosecuted rather than the invaders and their leaders.³¹

On the condition that Salvador Allende does not radicalize his government as discussed above, there are a number of important generalizations that can be made about recent Chilean history. According to Frederick Nunn, the Christian Democrats came to power in 1964 because of a "desire for firm leadership, meaningful and far reaching social reform and executive-legislative cooperation."³² In many respects, they came very near to fulfilling these requirements. While partial nationalization of the copper industry was achieved, 1,224 private estates were expropriated and land was distributed to 30,000 families. Approximately 260,000 new housing units were constructed and the number of schools was tripled to educate 600,000 more children.³³ In Frei's first year, 25 per cent of the national wealth was held by 5 per cent of the people, and

³⁰The Times of the Americas, Jan. 27, 1971, p. 4.

³¹The Times of the Americas, Jan. 13, 1971, p. 1.

³²Frederick Nunn, "Chile's Government in Perspective: Political Change or More of the Same?" Inter-American Economic Affairs, XX, No. 4 (Spring, 1967), 88.

³³Thomas G. Sanders, "Chile - The Elections and After," American Universities Field Staff Reports, West Coast South America Series, XVII, No. 10 (Sept., 1970), pp. 2-3.

2.5 per cent of the wealth was held by the poorest 20 per cent. In 1970, the richest 5 per cent controls 20 per cent and the poorest 20 per cent has 5 per cent.³⁴ Revenue to Chile from copper has been increased to an amount of nearly three times that of 1963, while tax collection has been enforced and a moderate external debt of \$2,084 million has been maintained.³⁵

Although this is a very respectable record, it was not the achievements of the Christian Democrats which moved the electorate to the left, but rather their failures. James Petras has made the following observation:

Election slogans such as "revolution in liberty," because they are premised on future gratifications, are only campaign promises. And when the future becomes the present,³⁶ and the promise is unfulfilled, the electorate remembers.

Frei pledged to build 360,000 new housing units but he fell short by 100,000. Though the Christian Democrats distributed land to 30,000 peasant families, they had promised land to more than 100,000 families.³⁷ Frei promised to stall inflation but in the first eleven months of 1970, the cost of living rose 34.9 per cent.³⁸ As has been shown in preceding

³⁴Time, XCVI, No. 16 (Oct. 19, 1970), pp. 30-31.

³⁵Alan Angell, "Chile: From Christian Democracy to Marxism?" The World Today, XXVI, No. 11 (Nov., 1970), 489-490.

³⁶James Petras, Politics and Social Forces in Chilean Development (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969), p. 251.

³⁷Time, XCVI, No. 16 (Oct. 19, 1970), p. 31.

³⁸Latin America, IV, No. 51 (Dec. 18, 1970), p. 403.

chapters, executive-legislative cooperation was never established and even unity within the governing party ultimately collapsed.

The Christian Democrat's initial policy of building a trade-union movement apart from the Communist-Socialist forces also failed because the necessary legal reforms were defeated in Parliament. Furthermore, government supporters within the existing labor unions were never able to make their demands heard. The Christian Democrats therefore alienated their already weak support in the unions and hardened the attitudes of other groups against them.³⁹

If it can be said that a desire for dramatic reform, strong leadership and cooperation between the Executive and Parliament brought Eduardo Frei and the Christian Democrats to power in 1964, it might also be suggested that virtually the same circumstances brought Salvador Allende and Popular Unity to power in 1970. Few changes have occurred because polarization rather than compromise is institutionalized within the Chilean political system making it difficult or impossible for any president to maintain sufficient backing for effective government and genuine social reform. The leaders of the Christian Democratic Party found it difficult and eventually impossible to maintain a political consensus as the forces of polarization cut deeply into their organization. The resulting divisions within the Christian Democrats weakened the effectiveness of their government to an extent that the leaders of the left were able to exploit the government's failures and establish an electoral coalition which successfully challenged their rule.

³⁹Alan Angell, "Chile: The Difficulties of Democratic Reform," International Journal, XXIV, No. 3 (Summer, 1969).

Now Salvador Allende is charged with the responsibility of seeking a solution to the Chilean political enigma. As indicated in the preceding chapters, there are groups, both inside and outside of Chile, who believe that Allende can effect radical changes in Chilean politics and society. And there are some points of optimism. Popular Unity was constructed with the most careful diplomacy and its platform was ratified by all of the parties concerned before the presidential candidate was selected. Hence there is an implication that compromise, rather than personalism, is the basis of the coalition.

On the other hand, complete consensus among the groups of the left has not been established. Allende has not received the unconditional support of certain small but dynamic groups such as the MIR and the pro-China Revolutionary Communist Party. Moreover, within his own coalition it must be noted that Allende is considerably to the right of the current Secretary General of the Socialist Party, Carlos Altamirano.⁴⁰

"The remarkable thing about recent Chilean history has been the fact that the nation seems to have reached some type of political turning point but can not seem to turn."⁴¹ Disputes between the Executive and Parliament destroyed the "revolution in liberty" and in 1971 the President's parliamentary support is again in a minority. In the case of the Christian Democrats, disputes over the speed and style of the reforms

⁴⁰"Chile: September 4 to November 3," Monthly Review, XXII, No. 8 (Jan. 1971), 22.

⁴¹Dr. Robert Hayes, private interview held in Lubbock, Texas, April 10, 1971.

eventually undermined party unity and effectiveness. This same situation may develop as Allende attempts to convert his program into legislation through a Parliament in which the opposition retains control. The Christian Democrats were faced with striking a compromise between the left and the right and Popular Unity must also face this dilemma if it maintains the commitment to support the democratic process. The only perceptible sign of change in relation to the election of Salvador Allende, therefore, is that the focal point of political stress has moved somewhat to the left. Only the future will reveal if the people have really "entered . . . into the home of the presidents."

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