

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

CATHOLICISM IN CHILE - THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis traces the development and political involvement of the Chilean Catholic Church from colonial times to 1990. There are three parts.

Part One describes society during Spanish rule and emphasizes the Church's rôle in the Conquest. Following Chile's independence the Church's privileges were enshrined in successive constitutions, but as liberal and radical politicians gained power Catholicism lost its monopoly status, and other religions were tolerated. The hierarchy discouraged clergy involvement in party politics, but the special relationship between the Conservative Party and the Church lasted until the 1930s. The issue of patronage caused friction between civil and religious authorities until Disestablishment in 1925.

Part Two outlines growing Church concern for the underprivileged and its distancing from the ruling élite. Fear of Communism motivated ecclesiastical support for Christian Democracy in the 1964 Presidential Election, but by 1970 a more forbearing attitude emanating from Rome allowed Chilean Catholic authorities to accommodate with Allende's Popular Unity government. However, Christians for Socialism posed a threat to the bishops' authority between 1971 and 1973.

Part Three spans 1973 to 1990, explaining the Church's progression from qualified support to outright condemnation of military rule, and its championing of human rights. It is claimed that the Solidarity Vicariate, the CEBs, Cardinal Fresno's 1985 Acuerdo, the Jesuit magazine Mensaje and Pope John Paul II's 1987 Chilean tour all contributed to Pinochet's defeat in the 1988 plebiscite.

The thesis ends on a cautiously optimistic note with the return to democratic rule under President Aylwin in 1990.

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Introduction

In 1992 we commemorate the five hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus. The history of the colonization of South America contains the history of its evangelization, since the two missions went hand in hand. As Pope John Paul II said when he visited Chile in April 1987, Christianity is at the very roots of South American civilization:-

La evangelización, como afirma el documento de Puebla de los Angeles, está en los orígenes de este Nuevo Mundo que es América Latina. La Iglesia se hace presente en las raíces y en la actualidad del continente.

(Evangelization, as the Puebla de los Angeles document states, is in the origins of this New World which is Latin America. The Church is present in the roots and in the contemporary life of the continent). (Pope John Paul II, Puerto Montt, April 4, 1987).

The Catholic Church itself is rapidly approaching its second millenium, and in those 2,000 years the Church's relationship with the civil authorities has undergone many changes. When asked whether the payment of taxes to Rome was legitimate Christ replied 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's' (Matthew 22:21). Thus the institution of the Church at its foundation was separate from the State, and the members of the Church, the Christians, were united not because they belonged to the same race or political system, but because they shared the same faith and the same religious leader - the successor of St. Peter. During the Roman Empire many Christians were persecuted for their beliefs and were forced, literally, underground - the first basic Christian communities were to be found in the catacombs. But when the Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity he annexed the Cross of Christ as a symbol of conquest and proclaimed Christianity as the State religion in 334 A.D.

It was Pope Gelasius I, (492-6), who articulated the classical definition of the relation between Church and State. According to Gelasius, in Christian society the spiritual and the temporal powers

are entrusted to two different orders, each deriving its authority from God. Each of these powers is supreme in its own sphere and independent of the other power. Yet the two authorities are not completely independent, since both serve the welfare of the same men and women living in the same society. While each power is supreme in its own sphere, each is subordinate in relation to the sphere of the other. In spiritual matters the civil ruler is subject to the bishop; in temporal matters the bishop is subject to the civil ruler.

The traditional hierarchical structure of the Church, which began with St. Peter and the Apostles and continued through the Popes and bishops, fitted well with the mediaeval concept of ranks and orders. The 'corporate' theory of societies modelled on the structure of the human body was commonly used in feudal times to describe both temporal bodies, such as guilds, and spiritual bodies, such as religious orders. But there were ambiguities in mediaeval attitudes towards authority. On the one hand there was the theory of authority descending from God as enunciated by Pope Gelasius, and on the other hand law and government were seen as ascending from the people. St. Thomas Aquinas, (1226-74), examined the political theories of his time and expressed them eloquently in his writings, the most influential of which were the Summa Contra Gentiles and the Summa Theologica. According to St Thomas, the best form of government is one in which 'all participate in the election of those who rule', although the best rulers are monarchs, since the monarchy promotes unity and mirrors the divine order of the universe. The Pope is the leader of men towards a spiritual life and can only intervene in temporal affairs 'with regard to those things in which the temporal power is subject to him'. (1).

Following the Reformation and the destruction of the unity of Christendom, the Church came to a pragmatic decision concerning its relationship with the new nation states which emerged in Europe after the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). The principle of cuius regio, eius religio, (the religion of the prince is the religion of his subjects), prevailed, so that in countries with a Catholic sovereign Catholicism was the official religion. Whilst still claiming divine authority for the Papacy, the Church refused to recognise the parallel temporal claim

of the divine right of kings and preferred the concept of authority being transferred from the people to the ruler (albeit stemming originally from God). The Church did, however, endorse the rule of the monarch, and by means of a 'concordat' obtained guarantees for itself of certain privileges in the state, such as a special status in civil law, financial support, and the right to a monopoly in the performance of baptism, marriage and burial, and the organization of education. The monarch, for his part, obtained considerable control over the Church in his territory, particularly through the right of 'patronage' which gave him a say in the selection of bishops.

Once this cooperation between Church and crown had been established it proved so mutually advantageous that neither side wished to break it, but with the inevitable development of liberal ideas and revolutionary zeal in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe the Church was placed in a defensive position. Several nineteenth century Popes uttered strong denunciations of the spread of democratic aspirations. Gregory XVI, (1831-46), rejected the democratic model as 'utter madness', and in his encyclical Mirari Vos, (1832), denounced those who were attempting 'to separate the Church from the State and to break the mutual concord between temporal authority and the priesthood.' Pius IX, (1846-78), published a Syllabus of Errors, included amongst which were the error that 'every man is free to embrace the religion he shall believe true by the light of reason', and the error that 'the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile himself to, and agree with, progress, liberalism and modern civilization'. (2).

Leo XIII, (1878-1903), showed greater flexibility towards liberal democracy, and in his encyclical Immortale Dei (1885), he conceded that it was not 'blameworthy in itself in any manner for the people to have a share, greater or less, in the government', although in Libertas Humana (1888), he denounced the whole liberal project as 'the sullied product of a revolutionary age of man's unbounded urge for innovation'. (3). Leo XIII was responsible for the encyclical Rerum Novarum (1891), which drew attention to the plight of working men in the new industrial societies, and also for the encyclical Aeterni Patris (1879), which encouraged renewed study of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. The

rediscovery of the Thomist doctrine of the popular origin of political authority stimulated the founders of the Christian Democratic movement, for whom democracy was the only form of government that accorded with Christian values.

It was not until Pius XII that the Papacy began to speak in terms linking the ideals of freedom and democracy with Christianity. In his Christmas message of 1944 Pius XII praised democracy, but at the same time gave a warning about Communism, epitomised by 'the mass', which the Pope described as 'the main enemy of true democracy and of its ideal of liberty and equality'. (4).

It is to his successor, Pope John XXIII, that we owe the Church's present commitment to democracy. In his encyclical Pacem in Terris (1963), the Pope discussed human rights, one of which was 'the right to take an active part in public affairs and to contribute one's part to the common good of citizens'. The Second Vatican Council, (1962-65), was the forum in which the Catholic Church elaborated its present attitude to the relationship between religion and politics. The Council widened the concept of Church and State to embrace that of Church and society - recognizing that there were different groups in society, whose needs varied according to their status, and that the Church had responsibilities to meet as well as rights to claim.

John XXIII died before the Council he had convened came to a close, and it was left to the next Pope, Paul VI, to make the final summing-up. In his closing address to the members of the diplomatic corps Pope Paul made a plea, not for special status for the Church within the State, but for freedom to carry out its mission of evangelization:-

And what is it that the Church asks of you, after almost two thousand years of all manner of vicissitudes in her relations with you, the powers of earth - what is it that she asks of you today? ... She asks of you nothing but freedom - freedom to believe and to preach her faith, freedom to love God and to serve Him, freedom to live and to bring to men her message of life. (5).

It follows that if the Church is to be free to bring her message to the citizens of a state, those citizens must be free to accept or reject that message, and the state has a responsibility to ensure that its citizens live in an environment where they are free from coercion.

In the following pages I shall trace the 'vicissitudes' of the relations between the Church and the temporal authorities in Chile, where, in one of the most remote corners of the globe, events followed a pattern very similar to the one I have just outlined in general terms. From the arrival of the Conquistadores with their missionary zeal to spread the message of Christ and also extend the bounds of the Spanish empire, through the special relationship between the Spanish colonies, the Spanish monarch and the Papacy expressed in the 'Royal Patronage of the Indies', to Chile's struggle for independence from Spain in the nineteenth century, the gradual diminution of the Church's privileges during that century and its identification with Conservatism in its attempt to preserve those privileges; from the official separation of Church and State in 1925, the awakening of a social conscience and eventual identification of the Church with Christian Democracy, its condemnation of Marxism followed by its accommodation with a legally-elected Marxist government, its cautious acceptance of a military régime which claimed to be motivated by Christian ideals, through to its rejection of that régime and its championing of democracy and human rights, the history of the Catholic Church in Chile has been a paradigm of the political development of the Church in general over the last five centuries. It has to be remembered, however, that the apex of authority in the Catholic Church remains in Rome, that the structure of the Church remains monarchic, that even though the Church now supports the ideals of democracy in civil affairs it is by no means a democracy itself. The universality of the Church is both an advantage and a disadvantage when it comes to its involvement in politics. It is an advantage because the Church is supra-national and can be seen to be non-partisan when it wishes to act as a mediator in conflicts both within and between countries. It is a disadvantage when a swift and immediate response to an emergency is expected of the Church. Perhaps we should bear in mind that whereas a week is a long

time in politics, a Church which can trace its succession back over almost two thousand years tends to take a long view of events.

PART I - The Established Church

CHAPTER I

The Spanish Legacy

One of the smoothest official separations of the Church from the State and from the Conservative party in Western societies occurred in Chile during the 1920s and 1930s. Although drawn up while an anti-clerical Liberal Alliance was in power, the Constitution of 1925 which disestablished the Church met with only limited resistance by the hierarchy.(1)

The influence and the privileges of the Catholic Church in Chile had been steadily declining long before this separation, but the effect of disestablishment was not to further weaken the Church, but to strengthen it, since the Chilean bishops recognised that henceforward they would be more free to pursue their primary religious mission. By the mid-1930s the Chilean Church finally distanced itself from the Chilean Conservative party, although the latter continued to claim that it was the party closest to Catholic principles and teachings. By this time, also, the Vatican had realised that disestablishment efforts were gaining momentum throughout the world and could not be resisted.

Disestablishment marked officially the end of an era in Church/State relations. To trace the course of these relations it is necessary to go back, not just to the departure of the Conquistadores from Spain towards the end of the 15th century, but to the state of society in Spain itself after the Reconquista.

'At the time of the discovery of America, Spain was in the process of achieving national and political unity.' (2) In 1475, Isabella, wife of Ferdinand of Aragon, succeeded her brother Henry IV to the throne of Castile, and when Ferdinand became King of Aragon in 1479 Christian Spain was united under one crown. Each kingdom, however, retained its own political and administrative identity, its own laws, assemblies and many other institutions. Columbus's voyage of discovery was financed and legitimized by Isabella, hence the laws and institutions of Castile were the ones which were transplanted to the New World.

Spain at this time was an oligarchy of military, clerical and land-owning interests. (3) The aristocratic class was divided into three groups:- 1. hombres ricos or grandees, 2. hidalgos or infanzones and 3. caballeros or knights. When an hombre rico was also a bishop or other high official in the Church hierarchy, he held enormous authority. The Reconquista exaggerated the role and importance of the caballero, and in addition the Church took on military functions. Religious leaders led troops into battle and monasteries were fortresses and staging centres for forays against the Moors. Finally, the Reconquista strengthened the large landowner who increased his properties as territory was retaken from the Moors. The traditional alliance between the landed aristocracy and the Church hierarchy in Latin America had its roots, therefore, in Spain itself.

The policy of the Castilian monarchs during the Middle Ages had been to isolate the Jews and the Moors from the Christians. Jews could not legally eat, drink or have sexual relations with Christians, and both Jews and Moors were required to wear distinctive symbols to render them easily recognizable. Attempts were made to exclude Jews and Moors from the New World by requiring all immigrants to prove limpieza de sangre (purity of blood).

Social position in the colonies was determined largely by birth, and as a general rule one had to be born a white, Catholic Spaniard to qualify for membership of the élite. Social stratification based on birth and race was furthered by carefully recording the racial parentage of each child on his baptismal record. People were classified by race and each group had a different legal status. The social stratifications were as follows in the colonial period:-

1. peninsulares (whites born in Spain),
2. criollos (whites born in the New World),
3. mestizos (people of mixed blood),
4. Indians and
5. negroes.

The 'whites' constituted a social aristocracy during the colonial period and the peninsulares were at the top of the ladder. Their dominance in the Church hierarchy followed a similar pattern. For example, of the 166 viceroys and 588 captains-general, governors and presidents who held office during this period (754 posts in all), peninsulares held 736. Of the 706 bishops in America prior to 1812, 601 were peninsulares - the other 105 were criollos (despite the fact that there were ten times as many criollos as peninsulares in Spanish America by the early nineteenth century).

Miscegenation was common - Christianity preached 'the brotherhood of man' - but the coloured groups had less dignity and influence in the community than the whites. Mestizos, for example, were legally prohibited from receiving academic degrees, and although some of them did fill minor posts in the parishes, convents and missions, they never achieved high places in the Church and were actually excluded from the priesthood until some time before 1588.

The Indians were not regarded as gente de razon (men of reason) and legally they were minors. It was unusual for them to be admitted to the clergy, whilst the negroes and those with a preponderance of negro blood made up the social class with the least prestige and were permanently barred from the priesthood.

Castile was ruled by an absolute monarch and power, both secular and clerical, was concentrated in the crown. The Indies were treated as the direct and exclusive possession of the crown as though they were separated kingdoms, united with the mother country 'under a common sovereign, bound to Spain by the dynastic tie'. (4) To a great extent the laws and institutions of the Indies were patterned on those of Castile, although the juridical customs of the Indians were respected as long as they were not opposed to the interests of Spain, and frequently local conditions made the application of Castilian law impracticable. Gradually the 'Laws of the Indies' were formulated and although an effort was made to give them a uniform structure, the forces of local reality prevailed and institutions which had common

aims acquired different features according to the region and environment.

The Laws of the Indies were above all inspired by religious feeling. The conversion of the Indians and the defense of the faith were among the main objectives of colonization - many laws were drafted by theologians rather than jurists and economic and social interests were secondary to ethics and religion.

The first royal representative in America was Columbus who, by his contractual agreement with Ferdinand and Isabella (the Capitulaciones de Santa Fe), received the titles of admiral, viceroy, governor and captain-general of the lands he expected to find. When he reported his discovery the Catholic Kings appealed to the Pope, Alexander VI, to grant them title to the new lands. In presenting their petition they maintained that their primary aim was to spread the Catholic faith, and in her letter to Columbus from Barcelona on May 29, 1493 Isabella declared that her first care was the conversion of the natives of the new lands. The Catholic Kings were aware that Portugal was also sending explorers to the New World and they sought the papal confirmation, not so much to put the seal of legitimacy on their conquests, as to avoid differences with Portugal. The Pope, for his part, was aware of the papacy's inability to equip expeditions to the New World in order to spread Christianity independent of temporal power and he agreed to their request. By the bull Inter Caetera of May 4, 1493 the Pope conceded to the Catholic Kings title to the lands discovered or to be discovered west of a line drawn from pole to pole and distant 100 leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands, (later amended to 370 leagues by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494). A condition of this concession was that the Catholic Kings should undertake missionary work in the new lands.

The union of altar and throne was much closer in the colonies than it was in Spain, one of the reasons for this being the authority which was granted to the crown to make direct collection of the tithes in America, which it then redistributed to the Church. This authority was also granted by Alexander VI in his bull Eximiae Devotionis of

November 16, 1501. When the Spanish king acquired the tithes he at the same time assumed the obligation of assisting in all the expenses connected with the building of the churches. The ordinary practice was that one third was paid from the royal treasury, and two thirds were paid by the encomenderos and the Indians.

Dating from the bull Inter Caetera of 1493 the Spanish sovereign exercised the exclusive right of licensing ecclesiastics to go to the Indies and also of controlling their movements once they were there. The clergy's transportation expenses were paid for by the royal treasury and the viceroy or governor directed them to their destinations. It was not possible for a priest to go to the colonies without a license, nor to return to Spain without the royal approval - the assent of the Pope was not sufficient. Having said this, it is also necessary to point out that the clergy always maintained much independence in purely ecclesiastical matters and once a cleric was appointed, tenure was permanent. A high degree of dignity was given to the clergy and one of their privileges was exemption from the control of the ordinary tribunals, known as the fuero ecclesiastico (ecclesiastical code) - a practice based on Spanish custom dating back to the fourth or fifth century.

As well as asserting control over the clergy who travelled to America the crown also scrutinized and regulated the flow of correspondence between the Church in Europe and in America. The reason for this was fear on the part of the sovereign that the Pope would interfere in purely temporal matters.

This extensive jurisdiction which the Spanish monarch exercised over the ecclesiastical affairs of the colonies was known as the real patronato de las Indias, and its essential feature was the right of presentation, i.e. the power of the king to nominate to the Pope a candidate for any vacant ecclesiastical office. Never before or since has a sovereign, with the consent of the Pope, so completely controlled the Catholic Church within his dominions and it could be said that in America the Spanish king exercised quasi-pontifical authority. There existed two schools of thought, however, on the nature of the authority

inherent in the real patronato - was it the property of the crown (as asserted by the 'regalists') or of the papacy (as asserted by the 'canonists' or 'ultramontanists')? This question became important after the colonies had won their independence from the crown - did they inherit the real patronato, did it revert to the papacy, or did it remain the right of the King of Spain? This problem was to become a thorny one.

There can be little doubt that royal aid and supervision was of considerable advantage to the Church in America. Every effort was made to ensure morality and purity of faith and dogma - and one of the most powerful means of effecting this was the use of the Inquisition, which was established in South America by Philip II in 1569 - the first tribunal being erected in Peru. The jurisdiction of the Holy Office extended over Catholics accused of heresy and schism, foreigners and Protestants who were shipwrecked in America, Moors and Jews. The Indians were excused, as they were not considered gente de razon. The Inquisitors were appointed by the king and were responsible to him alone and not to the Pope. Towards the end of the colonial period the Inquisition was used more and more for political ends, in particular to keep liberal ideas out of America, by exercising strict censorship over the importation of books.

The clergy, for its part, provided valuable support for the crown. Not only were churches, convents, monasteries and missions built, but also hospitals, schools and charitable institutions. The clerics served the king without the slightest inclination to rebel and felt more closely attached to him than to the Pope. Undoubtedly the loyalty and obedience which the colonials felt towards their 'most Catholic Sovereigns' were largely the result of clerical promptings and were ample compensation to the crown for the cares and expenses of propagating the faith.

The Spanish-American Revolution

Whatever the reasons for the colonies' discontent with Spanish rule leading to the revolt early in the nineteenth century,

dissatisfaction with the rôle of the Catholic Church was not one of the major causes. There was undoubtedly resentment on the part of the criollos at the monopolization of the highest positions in the political, military and ecclesiastical spheres by the peninsulares.

This resentment was as bitterly harboured by the parish priest as by the sergeant in the army or the regidor in the municipality. Among the clergy there existed the rivalry of birth. (5)

A re-allocation of positions of influence within the Church was called for, but not a repudiation of religion itself.

One serious problem, however, had become the enormous wealth which the Church had derived from various sources such as tithes, fees, the sale of bulls, and benefactions. This wealth was generally invested in revenue-producing lands, capital loaned at interest and property which was rented out. Its effect was to accumulate vast areas of land in the ownership of the Church - much of it under the right of 'mortmain' which meant that it could not change owners or be divided or redistributed. The Church was an indulgent creditor and lent money at very low interest, often allowing the debt to run on from generation to generation. This represented a permanent, easy investment for the Church and allowed the landowners to invest as much capital as they could in land, since the Church provided an easy, cheap source of money for their working capital. The result was ever-larger estates for both the Church and the large landowners, and a natural feeling of co-operation between the two.

During the colonial period the crown had tried to put a curb on the ownership of land by the Church. Viceroy Mendoza was directed to dispose of public land to prevent it falling into mortmain, and in 1576 a decree forbade religious orders from acquiring any more property, whilst a decree of 1796 imposed a tax of 15% on property sold to the Church. When the Jesuits were expelled in 1767 the crown acquired all their estates. However, the united opposition of the clergy and the large landowners defeated an attempt by the crown in 1804 to take over all real estate belonging to benevolent institutions, including all

sums invested as loans on properties - on the grounds that such a measure would paralyse agriculture and business.

Religion, though widely taught, was superficial. The Indians were converted in their thousands and the clergy made great use of imagery and ceremonials to appeal to their primitive minds. The whites, also, were treated in a paternalistic way and no attempt was made to explain the deeper issues of Christianity. Both whites and coloureds came to believe that the essence of the faith was its outward show, and the clergy were content if they managed to inculcate blind belief with little understanding.

This religious shallowness meant that when the revolution did occur religion itself was not one of its causes. On the whole the lower clergy supported the revolution, whilst the higher ecclesiastics remained loyal to the crown. The support of the lower clergy was motivated by social, political and economic reasons, but not by religious ones. One main cause of their dissatisfaction with Spanish rule was the amazing disparity of economic condition within the ranks of the clergy. Whereas many prelates enjoyed incomes of from 200,000 to 650,000 pesos, nine-tenths of the clergy did not receive more than 150 to 300 pesos annually.

Unlike the disorganized minority of the lower clergy which supported the revolution, the Spanish American hierarchy remained loyal to the monarchy - for did it not owe its great wealth and privileges to the status which had been granted to it by the crown? The relationship between Church and crown had been one of mutual advantage, and in any case the natural instinct of an organization which was (and is) as authoritarian as the Catholic Church was one of conservation and not one of change. The wealthy hierarchy accepted their advantages as of right, and as for the poor - they could expect their reward in the next world.

The colonials themselves did not associate rebellion against the State with rebellion against the Church. They were convinced that the

only way to eternal salvation was via Christianity in a priest-run Church, and the habits of obedience had been well impressed on them.

So great was the power of the clergy and its influence over the ignorant inhabitants of the colonies that the French minister Vergennes believed this alone would make secession of the Spanish colonies impossible. And well it might had the whole weight of the clergy, high and low, been thrown in the balance on the side of the Spanish king. But, strangely enough, leadership was assumed on both sides in the struggle and at times the war was carried on almost wholly by them. (6)

Once the various states of South America had become independent most of the revolutionary leaders declared their loyalty to Catholicism, and clauses providing for the continuance of that religion were included in the first organic laws. The 'Liberator' himself, Simón Bolívar, was an exception, as he was in favour of the separation of Church and State. However, he recognized the strength of the hold which religion exercised over the masses and was careful not to antagonize the clergy, and seeing that separation of Church and State was unacceptable he proposed that a diplomatic mission be sent to Rome to conclude a concordat with the papacy.

The same dichotomy in the attitudes of the clergy towards independence emerged in Chile as elsewhere in South America. There is no doubt that many of the clergy, particularly the Spanish, were not sympathetic to independence, and they used the pulpit to denounce it. For example, when General Pareja occupied Concepción, Bishop Villodres preached in the name of God against the patriots. On the other hand Bishop Andreu y Guerrero preached to the army of General Carrera in support of the war and against the soldiers of the king.

During the royalist reaction (1814-1816) the Pope confirmed the presentation by the King of Spain of the king's choice for the See of Santiago, José Rodríguez Zorilla, a member of the aristocracy and an ardent partisan of the king. He called the patriots 'perfidious insurgents and traitors' and organized the clergy into a reactionary faction violently opposed to the revolution. He celebrated the royalist victory at Rancagua, but after the patriot triumph at

Chacabuco the Chilean government deprived him of his ecclesiastical authority and ordered his expulsion from the country. In 1821 he was allowed to return to Chile, but not to resume his office.

The Problem of Patronato Nacional

It was after the break-away of the colonies from Spain that the question of their relationship with Rome became a problem. Pope Pius VII had to decide (a) whether or not to recognize the independence of the new Spanish American republics and (b) how long to continue to observe the real patronato de las Indias as being a prerogative of the King of Spain.

Once the South American states repudiated Spanish authority they lost their diplomatic representation at the Holy See, and the decline in numbers of the Catholic hierarchy in America became a cause for concern. The rebels appealed to Rome for religious, if not for political recognition. The Pope's dilemma sprang from the temporal and spiritual nature of his own office, for to all intents and purposes 'religious recognition' also implied political recognition, at least in the eyes of the King of Spain who contended that any direct dealings between the Pope and the American prelates would constitute an infringement of the real patronato. The Pope replied to Spain that if ever the authority of Spain was re-established over her former colonies the real patronato would be re-established also. On the other hand he announced to the Americans that the patronage had reverted to the papacy. The new American governments were not satisfied with this reply, as they maintained that they were the heirs of the Spanish king and that if the royal patronage did not become a national patronage it meant that they had not achieved full independence.

Prior to 1820 Pope Pius VII was careful not to upset Spain in his dealings with the rebels. The independence of the former colonies was by no means certain, and they had not been recognized by other countries. The Pope, therefore, had no desire to undermine Spanish authority in South America and he agreed to Ferdinand VII's request that he publish a brief exhorting the obedience of the American

subjects through the intercession of the colonial prelates (the encyclical Etsi Longissimo, January 30, 1816). In 1817 the Spanish ambassador in Rome urged the Holy Father not to confirm the action of the Congress of Tucumán which had proclaimed Santa Rosa of Lima as patroness of Latin American independence, and a statement was consequently issued that Rome would have no direct communication with the rebel governments. More significantly, during the years 1814 to 1820 the Pope confirmed the persons presented to him by the King of Spain for the vacant sees of Santiago de Chile, Charcas, Arequipa, Merida, Popayán, Bogotá, Mexico and Puebla. (7)

After 1820 there was a change in Pius VII's attitude. One reason for this was the establishment in Spain itself of a Liberal constitutional government which brought in anti-clerical measures culminating in the expulsion of the Papal Nuncio from Madrid in January 1823. The Pope began to question why he should now lend his moral support to a Spanish government which, if it regained control over the American states, would similarly damage the Church in America. Also, by 1820 the independence of the former colonies appeared to be a certitude, but between 1814 and 1833 the chief obstacle to the establishment of direct relations between Spanish America and the Vatican was the Spanish embassy in Rome which made every effort to prevent American agents from gaining an audience with the Pope.

CHAPTER II

Legislation Concerning Ecclesiastical Matters in Chile Between 1811 and 1925

The Constitutions of 1811, 1818, 1822, 1823, and 1828

The revolution of independence was waged by valorous, patriotic men imbued with a love of Chilean nationality; but they were under the influence of Church customs, beliefs, and superstitions, even, of the colonial period. It is not strange, then, that in the different constitutions and constitutional projects from 1810 to 1833 they stipulated privileges in favour of the Catholic Church and frankly refused liberty of conscience. (Balmaceda) (1)

The first Congress following the revolution, that of 1811, during the period known as the patria vieja, virtually abolished the Inquisition in Chile by suspending the remittances of money sent to Peru to pay the inquisitorial agents in Chile. Congress also suppressed the parochial fees which were paid to parish priests for christenings, marriages or burials and established a fixed salary for these priests - a reform which raised many protests. Among the projects planned by this Congress were the creation of secular cemeteries in the environs of the city, rather than in the confines of the churches and churchyards, as was the custom, and the extension of public education from the elementary schools to institutes of secondary and higher education. These projects were not carried out, however, as the Congress came to an end in December 1811.

In 1813, during the dictatorship of José Miguel Carrera, a new plan of primary instruction was sanctioned, according to which each place where more than fifty families lived was to have a school for males and another for females. Moreover, each convent of nuns was to have a school for girls. Teaching was to be absolutely free and the status and qualifications of teachers were to be established. The National Institute was inaugurated in August 1813 and provision was made for the creation of a library based upon the collection of books possessed by the University of San Felipe.

Such vast reforms needed a period of internal peace, which unfortunately they did not have, as the Viceroy of Peru directed a royalist invasion against Chile in 1814, and the patria vieja ended with the defeat of the patriots at the battle of Rancagua. The period of the reconquista lasted from 1814 to 1817 and the restoration of the old régime was accompanied by several violent measures aimed at re-establishing almost all the former institutions that the revolution had abolished. The royal audiencia and the university were restored, and as a result, the courts of justice created by the revolutionaries were suspended and the National Institute was closed. The Inquisition was again introduced, as were the order of Jesuits, who were reinstated in 1814 after their suppression in 1767, and were summoned by Ferdinand VII to establish themselves in his dominions.

Chile was not to remain long a colony of Spain, and the republic was re-established, this time for good, with the installation of Bernardo O'Higgins as 'supreme director' in 1817 and the decisive defeat of the Spanish army at Maipú on April 5, 1818.

Some explanation needs to be given at this point of the elements which constituted the new Chilean nation when it embarked upon its life of independence from the crown of Spain. The situation of Chile after the battle of Maipú was that of a country affected by a revolution which had lasted for eight years, from 1810 to 1818; that is to say, it was a situation in which all classes of society had been disturbed and all public services disorganized. The disturbance had been so profound that it could not be limited to a simple change of political rule. Social habits and institutions had to change and be adapted to a new form of government, to be established in the place of the one which had been defeated. The fact was, however, that society itself had scarcely changed since early colonial times and was still as stratified as it had ever been. The privileged class of European Spaniards, the peninsulares, had either been expelled from the country or assimilated into the criollos and had disappeared completely, but there were still those who bore the titles of count and marquis, the old primogenitive aristocrats who insisted upon their superiority over all classes.

The prejudices of nobility, blood and fortune still caused productive labour, and the labourer, to be looked upon with contempt, and learning with compassion. (2)

The masses still had an attitude of complete obedience to the clergy, despite the adherence of the majority of the hierarchy to the conquered colonial régime, and continued to regard the priest as not only the guardian of the faith but as the fount of all wisdom and the indispensable helper towards salvation. The masses continued to be illiterate and superstitious, and were in no way ready to participate in the election of a government or to reap the benefits of their new-found independence. They continued to be as servile as before.

A republic with such a social foundation can be a republic in name only. In this way only the rich, educated class of Chileans had the privilege of exercising political power. From that moment, through force of circumstances, the wealthy Creoles constituted a dominating oligarchy, and the republic was to be organized in disregard of the people. (3)

Creoles now monopolized all public power and the three influential groups - the colonial aristocracy, the Church and the army - were the ones who must form the government and organize the republic. The colonial aristocracy were still recovering materially from the revolution, the clergy were still tainted by their support of the old régime, and, as the threat of royalist occupation was still a possibility, it was the military element which prevailed. Consequently, the people would have to live under a provisional military régime before constituting a political state. One thing was certain, and that was that no-one wished for the return of the monarchy. Emancipation had substituted for the monarchical and colonial form of government a republican one and transferred the predominance of the Spanish social group to the purely Chilean Creole group. But the institutions on which such things as property, family, labour, religion and law were founded were not affected by independence.

This, then, was the society which O'Higgins attempted to govern. He was aware that in order to organize a real republic it was necessary

first to modify society so as to break down the barriers of class and create a broader popular basis. He was convinced that the key to this transformation of society was the development of education and he directed much of his energy towards this end. In 1819 the National Institute, founded in 1813 and closed during the Spanish reconquest, was re-opened, followed a year later by the Public Library. Other educational institutions, such as the Liceo of La Serena and the Lancasterian schools in Valparaíso and Santiago were opened. The Lancasterian schools were so-called because their method of teaching was based on a system of mutual instruction propounded by the English educator Joseph Lancaster. Some foreign teachers were brought in to establish these schools, two of them being English Protestants, 'a circumstance', according to the Chilean historian Luis Galdames, 'which could not be viewed with indifference'.(4)

Valparaíso had developed rapidly as a result of the foreign population which had gradually settled there. O'Higgins ordered a cemetery for dissenters to be founded there, in order to avoid trouble among non-Catholic immigrants, but this measure aroused protests from the Chilean clergy, as did the creation of the general cemetery in Santiago.

Despite these concessions to non-Catholic immigrants, the Constitution of 1818, which was the first fundamental law designed to guide the infant republic of Chile after its independence had been definitely secured, denied freedom of worship to any faith other than the Roman Catholic, which was put under the protection and control of the new government. The article pertaining to this subject read:-

The Roman Catholic Apostolic religion is the sole and exclusive faith of the State of Chile. Its protection, conservation, purity and inviolability will be one of the duties of the chiefs of society who will never permit another public cult or doctrine contrary to that of Jesus Christ. (5)

O'Higgins believed that it was necessary, with a people like the Chileans, 'to confer good upon them by force' when other means failed. The Constitution of 1818 called for a five-man Senate with members elected from the provinces. O'Higgins essentially hand-picked the

membership, as he also did later the delegates to the constitutional convention of 1822. The Constitution of 1822 contained the religious articles of the Constitution of 1818, with this addition:-

The inhabitants of the territory shall pay it (the Roman Catholic Church) the greatest respect and veneration, whatever might be their private opinions....All violations of the preceding article will be a crime against the fundamental laws of the land.

This code was never put into force, because a revolution overtook O'Higgins two months before it was promulgated. The O'Higgins government lacked firm institutional support. He had met with resistance from the clergy over his attempts to transform colonial society and clashed with them over issues such as the cemeteries, the Lancasterian schools, the Protestant teachers, even over a trivial matter such as the expulsion of a priest who had asked the wife of an O'Higgins supporter to leave a church because she was wearing a low-cut dress. He had alienated the aristocracy over the elimination of titles of nobility conferred by the king on certain wealthy residents and the distinctive coats of arms which were placed on the fronts of their houses, declaring that 'such hieroglyphics were intolerable in a republic'. He had also tried, without success, to abolish the mayorazgos or entailed estates which were not appropriate in a republic. For these, and for other reasons, O'Higgins was forced to surrender the presidential sash and to leave Chile for exile in Peru.

Political uncertainty followed the abdication of O'Higgins and the period 1823-1830 was dominated by liberal federalist experiments. Ramon Freire attempted to govern the country from 1823-1826 and returned to office several times between 1826 and 1829.

Exponents of European or North American liberalism sought to impose republican institutions and practices on Chile's traditional administrative, economic and social structure. To many, liberalism also meant religious toleration or anti-clericalism. Implementation of liberal principles implied confrontation with perhaps the most significant social institution and symbol of Hispanic society: the Catholic Church. This alone assured bitter resistance to liberalism by some prominent criollo families. (6)

At the beginning of Freire's first term of office another republican constitution was passed by Congress. This fourth attempt at a fundamental code (the others being those of 1811, 1818 and 1822) is called the Constitution of 1823 and was drawn up by Juan Egaña; its distinguishing feature was its regulation of private as well as public life. It declared the Roman faith to be the religion of the State and prohibited the public or private exercise of other cults. Citizenship was confined to Roman Catholics. Juan Egaña, a revolutionary patriot, defended this seeming contradiction on the following grounds:- (1) a number of cults within a single state conduces to irreligion, (2) the existence of two or more religions side by side will tend to inevitable conflict which will destroy the state, (3) religious uniformity is the most effective means of establishing tranquillity in the affairs of the nation.(7) These views found general acceptance in the whole of South America.

The Constitution of 1823 lasted only six months. Freire, by a coup d'état, suppressed its operations and the senate accorded him dictatorial powers.

Public revenues were in a precarious state, and one of the measures devised to meet this situation, one which roused formidable opposition against Freire, was the seizure, in 1824, of the possessions of the regular clergy and a complete reform of their regulations. Several of the religious orders were dispossessed of their convents in order to provide room for the Lancasterian schools. These measures, plus the determination of the Freire régime to assert national patronage, and the dismissal of the ex-royalist bishop Rodriguez Zorilla, ruptured Church-State relations and doomed to failure the mission of Apostolic Vicar Juan Muzi, (this point is further developed in Chapter III). Freire's adversaries used these acts to arouse the religious prejudices of the majority of the people and asserted that they were signs of an irreligious attitude harmful to the faith.

Freire's resignation in 1826 was followed by a period of constant disturbance.

Different congresses and supreme directors succeeded each other and executed such measures of organization as they could and soon fell, defeated by revolts and military coups that had no more justification than the caprice of their leaders. (8)

Political activity in the post-independence decades took place within very restricted social circles. Intellectuals wrote constitutions and liberal legislation for a country unfamiliar with the practical meaning of federalism, inalienable rights or curbs on government authority. Chileans were accustomed to the 'benevolent despotism' of colonial times - involvement of 'the people' in legislation or administration had not been part of Hispanic politics. After independence there emerged within élite circles overlapping ideological factions and personal parties, such as those of O'Higgins, Carrera and Freire, which did not involve the masses, except as 'cannon fodder', and which anticipated the multi-party politics of later years. The party which supported liberal and/or federalist principles was given the nickname of piapiolo (novice or upstart) in a tone of disdain because of the limited social prestige of some of its members. The party defending more traditional principles, including the existing privileges of the Church, was made up for the most part of rich men, heirs of entailed estates and family heads of ancient nobility, and was nicknamed pelucón (bigwig), a name derived from the powdered wigs worn by the aristocrats on solemn occasions, - but it called itself conservative.

Conservatives and liberals, or pelucones and piapiolos, fought out the election of 1828, and the liberals won by an overwhelming majority. A man of marked liberal principles, José Joaquín de Mora, was entrusted with the editing of a new constitutional statute, known as the Constitution of 1828. This Constitution represented a compromise between liberal and federalist tendencies, and was more liberal religiously than its predecessors in that, although it re-asserted that the Catholic religion remained the religion of the State, it sanctioned the private worship of dissidents and declared that no-one could be prosecuted or molested for his private opinions.

Not until 1833 did political and social conditions become composed in Chile. The preceding decade was indeed a period of trial and tribulation, yet it is important to note that throughout the political vicissitudes of Chile little was done by

legislation or governmental action to destroy or curtail the rights of particular interests. The Church emerged practically unscathed in fortune and privilege. (9)

The Autocratic Republic. The Constitution of 1833

Public finance had fallen into a dreadful state as a result of the chaotic changes of administration. Ironically, however, it was this very chaos which brought into prominence the businessmen and military leaders who ended two decades of near anarchy with a conservative restoration. Led by Diego Portales, a merchant with hereditary links with the old colonial aristocracy who had remained aloof from the independence struggle, an alliance of the Concepción military élite, merchants, prominent pelucón families and the Church hierarchy, established what has come to be known as the Portalian State. Portales favoured decisive, pragmatic action, unconstrained by legal obstacles or constitutional curbs, but other conservative leaders and intellectuals felt the need for a constitution to define and legitimize the new régime. Consequently the Constitution of 1833 was drawn up, its principle author being Mariano Egaña. Both Portales and Egaña disdained democracy, popular suffrage and liberalism, and the new constitution formalized their anti-democratic principles.

The staunchest allies of the clericals were now in government and the Constitution of 1833 made no attempt to reduce the severity of Chile's religious policy. The constitutional provisions relating to the Church and religion were as follows:-

1. The religion of the republic was Roman Catholic and the public exercise of any other faith was prohibited.
2. The President, in taking his oath of office, was to swear to observe and protect the Catholic religion.
3. The President was empowered (a) to nominate, subject to approval by the senate, archbishops, bishops, canons, and prebends of Cathedrals, selecting from lists of three names for each office prepared by the Council of State, (b) to exercise the right of patronage with respect to churches, benefices, and ecclesiastical persons, (c) to grant or refuse, with the consent of the Council of State, admission to decrees of councils, papal bulls, briefs and rescripts, and (d) to maintain diplomatic relations with the Vatican and conclude concordats with it.

4. The Council of State, of which a Church dignitary had to be a member, was to have cognizance over all matters of ecclesiastical patronage that might be subject to litigation.

The founders of the autocratic republic thus sought to transfer the right of patronato to the new régime, although the Church did not concede that the republican government had inherited the patronato from the empire.

The constitutional exclusion of the public exercise of other religions was never completely enforced. The first Anglican chaplain assigned to Chile arrived in Valparaíso in 1837 and remained there for two years. In 1847 the Rev. David Trumbull organized a Protestant Union church in Valparaíso, and in 1856 this congregation erected its own building, the first Protestant church building to be erected on the west coast of South America. Soon afterwards a second church was built. Services were held openly and regularly and the authorities did not interfere. The constitutional phrase 'public exercise' was generally regarded as not prohibiting religious worship of non-Catholics inside buildings. This interpretation, fortified by 30 years of practice, was eventually incorporated into law in 1865, when the so-called Ley Interpretativa was passed by Congress. This law declared that the prohibition of the public exercise of dissident faiths did not refer to religious services held indoors.

The Constitution of 1833 provided a viable instrument for maintaining existing class relations, including the restoration of the mayorazgos which had been abolished by the liberals in 1828, and consolidating the political position of prominent criollo families. The alliance of merchants, landowners, clergy and military officers who were now in control did not lose sight of Portales' admonition: 'The stick and the cake, justly and opportunely administered, are the specifics with which any nation can be cured, however inveterate its bad habits may be.' (10). This constitution remained in force in Chile until 1925. The Conservative Party governed the country almost without interruption for thirty years (1831-61), and the Church enjoyed a very satisfactory status during this period. The predominance of the clergy had been noticeably increased after the earthquake and tidal wave of

1835, which destroyed all the towns of the coast between the rivers Maule and Biobio; just as on other occasions this catastrophe was represented by the clergy as a visitation from heaven, and the people were correspondingly induced into a state of great devotion and religious intolerance. Yet the clericals were not allowed to give free rein to their ambitious pretensions, as evidenced by the following acts of legislation.

In 1844 the Ley sobre Matrimonio de Disidentes freed non-Catholics from the obligation of celebrating nuptials according to the Catholic rites, and in such cases compelled the parish priest to serve as a witness to the validity of the contract. The Ley sobre el Patronato Civil conceded to the executive authority of the government jurisdiction over parish priests to see that they fulfilled their duties. The Ley sobre Profesion Religiosa fixed the age of 25 years as the minimum for entering on major clerical orders. These acts caused considerable discussion and disagreement in clerical ranks and the rift between Church and State was so acute that the Archbishop of Santiago, José Alejo Eyzaguirre resigned in 1845, after having held his office for less than two years. His successor, Rafael Valentín Valdivieso, continued to struggle against the legal prerogatives which the State was exercising, or rather against the right of the political authority, emanating from national sovereignty, to intervene in ecclesiastical affairs, for the balance of the term of President Bulnes (1841-1851).

There were other incidents, however slight, which showed that the predominance of the religious spirit was being weakened. The administration of Santiago told the serenos or night-watchmen not to add the words 'Hail Most Holy Mary' when they were calling the hours and the state of the weather. Similarly, at the Corpus Christi procession the custom whereby the priest carrying the host walked over the flags of the battalions was discontinued. Both innovations gave rise to offensive publications and arguments. Protestant ideas were being widely disseminated during this period and there began to develop an element that was hostile to the official State religion. This culminated in the founding of a periodical called El Mercurio, dedicated to religious tolerance. The Church was stimulated to action,

and La Revista Católica was founded in 1843 to undertake the defense of the Church and check the subversive teachings which, it was felt, were threatening to corrupt the intellectual youth of Chile. Little by little, however, the unfolding of general culture and the influence of Protestant foreigners were eroding the domination of the Church, and the religious spirit of Chileans was gradually waning.

During the first term of President Montt (1851-1856) cordial relations existed between the government and the Church authorities. The Church was in a strong position financially, as it received yearly grants from the national treasury and these grants were increased annually. The tithes, which were still collected after the reforms of Freire in 1824, were abolished in 1853 and the Church was financed directly from the treasury. The Archbishop of Santiago was authorized by the Pope to agree to this arrangement.

It was during the second term of President Montt (1857-1861), when a younger and more liberal element had gained control of the government, that the good understanding which had existed between the Church and the State was rudely interrupted by an incident which was rather insignificant in itself. A sacristan of the Cathedral was expelled, and in the ecclesiastical council discussion arose as to whether he had been expelled deservedly. Two canons thought not, and they opposed the wishes of the majority. The two canons were, in their turn, suspended from their duties, with the consent of Archbishop Valdivieso, for treating their superiors with disrespect. The canons appealed to the Supreme Court, which revoked the decision of suspension. The Archbishop then protested vigorously, basing his protest on the fact that the civil authority could not interfere in purely spiritual matters. There followed a sharp exchange of notes between the Archbishop and the Minister of Religion, and the question ended with the submission of the canons to the will of the Church, through the mediation of the President. The incident left a bitter after-taste, and although the clergy and the old aristocracy opposed the so-called irreligious government and its liberal tendencies, they were forced to give way before a changing order in Chile.

After half a century of independence it was not the landed aristocracy, formed by the great proprietors, descendants of the entailed estates, which dominated the pelucón party. Commerce built up new fortunes and created new influences. Urban population was increasing:- Santiago became a city of 100,000 inhabitants, Valparaíso one of some 60,000. Although the rural element still formed 70% of the total population of the country, the increased tendency towards 'urbanization' brought with it an awareness of new ideas, the development of interior and exterior communications, better education, direct contact with European literary production, new periodicals and scientific and literary reviews, and, very important, the introduction of new elements of civilization by the immigrants.

It was the weakening of those old social classes - the nobility and the clergy - which gave way to the rising liberal aspirations, so much opposed at first, and so powerful later; and it was the development of wealth and culture which stimulated these same aspirations. Along with this evolution of ideas the entire nation was modernized; the cities not only increased in population, but in beauty...evolution was at once moral and material. (11)

The Liberal Republic. The Constitution of 1925

During the administration of President Errázuriz (1871-1876) the control of the government passed out of the hands of the old Conservative Party and into the control of the Liberals and a new political alignment, the Radical Party, who were frankly opposed to the Catholic Church. At the beginning of Errázuriz's administration the government was composed of a Liberal-Conservative coalition, but the 'theological questions' which were being discussed at that time made this coalition futile, and the President decided to remove the Conservatives who were thus ousted from power, not to recover it for twenty years.

The 'theological questions' were the rock upon which the coalition government foundered in 1873, and were as follows:-

1. The suppression of the fuero eclesiastico, or the right of the clergy to be judged by their own tribunals.

2. The secularization of the cemeteries so that the dead belonging to any religion, or none, could be buried in them. Old colonial decrees concerning cemeteries were still in force and the clergy could refuse to bury non-Catholics.
3. Civil marriage - the celebration of marriage, by a special contract, in the presence of public officials, leaving the bride and groom free to follow the civil ceremony with a religious one if they so wished.
4. The separation of Church and State, which would convert the Church into a society or private institution.

An irreconcilable difference of opinion in the cabinet over these reforms precipitated a crisis which resulted in the ousting of the Conservatives. Only the Radicals favoured the reforms without reserve, and they were not strong enough to enact them. Nevertheless, the fuero ecclesiastico was abolished for all civil and criminal causes, and the penal code, promulgated in 1874, introduced numerous statutes that punished priests for specific crimes. The complete secularization of the cemeteries was not achieved, but a section of the Catholic cemeteries was put aside for the burial of dissenters. Nothing was done about civil marriage and the separation of Church and State.

Not surprisingly the clergy offered violent resistance to the reform measures. The opposition was led by the aged Archbishop Valdivieso, and when the articles of the penal code affecting ecclesiastics were read in Congress he threatened with excommunication those parliamentarians who supported the laws. Archbishop Valdivieso was a priest who was known for his virtue and charity towards the poor, but when it came to the defense of the prerogatives of the Catholic Church he became harsh and unyielding. More than once he became involved in bitter conflicts with the civil authority, whose right of patronato he accepted only under protest whenever it was exercised. When he died in 1878, after having been head of the Chilean Church for over 30 years, the government, by then headed by President Pinto, (1876-1881), a Liberal, wished to fill his place with a priest who would work harmoniously with them. Without consulting the hierarchy they selected Canon Francisco de Paula Taforó, a man of pronounced Liberal leanings (and of illegitimate birth), and proposed him to Pope Leo XIII for appointment. The clergy of Santiago and the Conservative

Party were alarmed and succeeded in persuading the Pope to withhold the nomination. Thus there was created a conflict over the right to exercise the national patronage, and the argument dragged on for several years. Both sides remained obdurate and finally an Apostolic Delegate, Monseñor Celestino del Frate, was sent to Chile. Del Frate advised His Holiness to reject the nomination of Canon Taforó, relations between the government and the Delegate became strained and the latter soon received his passport. Del Frate left the country in 1883, after having insinuated in a note to the Minister of Religion that he did not recognize the Chilean government's right to patronato nacional.

This note was taken as a provocation by the government, and Congress again began to consider the 'theological questions' which had occupied such a prominent place in the administration of President Errázuriz. On June 1, 1882, the President, Domingo Santa María, in his message to Congress declared that the time had arrived for the realization of the oldest and dearest aspiration of the liberal thinkers of Chile, i.e. common cemeteries, civil matrimony, civil register and liberty of conscience. Congress, composed almost exclusively of Liberals, Radicals and Nationalists was thoroughly in accord with the administration's programme. A law was passed creating secular public cemeteries for individuals of any belief whatsoever, and when the clergy began their customary protests, the President issued a decree prohibiting the establishment of private religious cemeteries. Laws concerning civil marriage and civil registry were also passed. By these the clergy lost its ancient right of legally establishing the family.

More influential than the President himself in the passage of these reform laws was the Minister of the Interior, José Manuel Balmaceda. Balmaceda had studied for the priesthood in the seminary of Santiago, but literary and scientific reading had led him to question his faith, and he interested himself first in agriculture and then in politics. As a member of Congress in 1874 he had supported the constitutional amendment to disestablish the Church, whose power he regarded as an iron despotism which seized a person at birth and

controlled his most serious acts up to and even after his death. 'The Church marches, in a sense, against the liberal current of the century.' he said. (12) Although the government of President Santa María held long debates concerning the separation of Church and State it reached no agreement in respect of the status of the Church once it should become free. Three possible systems of Church-State relationship were championed:-

1. The system favoured by the Church was the union of Church and State, no national patronage and no liberty of cults.
2. The administration proposed the union of Church and State, but with national patronage and freedom of cults.
3. The Radicals wanted the absolute separation of Church and State and the reduction of the Church to the status of a simple institution of private law.

Despite the fact that in 1874 Balmaceda had supported a measure designed to separate Church and State, but which reserved to the Church a status in public law and supported it by a State subsidy, in 1884 he and President Santa María, for political reasons, supported system number 2 above. So great was the opposition made everywhere by the clergy against these laws that the country seemed to be on the brink of a revolution, and the question of disestablishment was not resolved. However,

the reformas teologicas seriously weakened the Chilean Church; in a formal encounter it had been defeated and humiliated; its prestige was shaken and thereafter it was placed on the defensive. (13)

When Balmaceda succeeded Santa María as President in 1886 it was his intention to unite all liberal groups, and he even tried to conciliate the Conservatives and the clericals by settling the old question of the vacant archbishopric of Santiago by taking their views into account. With the naming of Mariano Casanova as Archbishop of Santiago in 1887 cordial relations were re-established with the Vatican, and a quarter century or more of satisfactory Church-State relations was inaugurated. Archbishop Casanova and his successor in 1911, Juan Ignacio González Eyzaguirre, were both wise and tactful men

who were able to watch over the rights of the Church without inviting serious conflicts with the government.

However, disestablishment continued to be the cherished political ideal of advanced thinkers in Chile. With the passage of time the prospects of success became brighter. The slow, but effective, spread of culture in the country made possible the definite establishment of religious tolerance. A change in religious attitude began to emanate throughout Chile. Writing in 1911 Luis Galdames noted:

A marked religious evolution, however, is to be noted throughout the country. It is not that people are leaving the Church; at least three fourths of the national population continue to be as sincerely Catholic as during former times. Nor does it experience hostility from those who are not Catholic: the Protestants in the republic are almost entirely foreigners, English, North Americans or Germans, and respectful toward all beliefs; the freethinkers do not constitute a group organized against the Church; they are simply private persons who feel themselves free from the necessity of complying with the precepts of any religion whatsoever. The evolution noted presents other manifestations - religious tolerance and religious indifference. Today it is not a mark of honour in a believer to hate all other faiths except his own, or the men who support such faiths. In judging an individual one does not ask what religion he practices or what he believes. (14)

An event which contributed immediately to disestablishment was the victory of the Liberal Alliance at the polls in 1920. In the elections the candidate of the dominant political oligarchy, supported by the Conservatives and a large number of Liberals, was defeated by Arturo Alessandri, who became Chile's first 'middle-class' President. With the Radicals at last in power the separation of Church and State and the guarantee of freedom of conscience were obvious developments. There was dissent on the part of the Church at first, but in 1924 an agreement was drawn up and in the new Constitution of Chile which was promulgated on September 18, 1925, a clause was included which definitely terminated the ancient system of a State-Church. The text reads as follows:-

The Constitution assures all inhabitants of the republic...the expression of all beliefs, liberty of thought and free exercise of all religions not opposed to morality, good customs or public order, permitting the respective religious faiths to erect and

maintain churches and their appurtenances under the conditions of security and hygiene fixed by the laws and ordinances. The churches, confessions and religious institutions of any creed will have the rights which the laws now in force authorize and recognize with respect to property; but they will remain subject within the guarantees of this Constitution to the common law for the control of their future property. Churches and their dependencies, destined to the service of worship, will be exempt from taxation.

CHAPTER III

The Problem of Patronato Nacional as it Affected Church/State Relations in Chile.

In the preceding chapter I analysed the legislation concerning Church/State relations during the period from Chilean independence to the separation of Church and State in 1925, from the point of view of the political and social development of the country, and I described the various constitutions which were proposed and, in most cases, enforced between the years 1811 and 1925. In this chapter I shall deal with the same period, but I will look at it from the point of view of the development of the Church in Chile, and I will attempt to show how the Church gradually came to realize that its close links with the State were a hindrance rather than a help and how it came to accept the idea of a clean break or 'divorce by mutual consent'.

Certain characteristics of society in Chile are worth emphasising. One is that in a very striking way there were close links between the Church hierarchy and the ruling aristocratic families during these years. The leaders of the Church were related by blood or marriage to the leaders of the country. Another facet which emerges is the stubbornness with which the question of patronato was addressed. Time and again the various administrations endeavoured to assert their right to inherit this privilege, but the Church firmly resisted a 'take-over' by the civil authorities. It must have seemed to the Vatican, which had to make decisions for a universal Church, that this most distant of its territories was the most importunate one, the one which constantly refused to take 'no' for an answer. One reason probably lies in the fact that Chile was, and still is, remote in a geographical sense, bounded as it is by deserts, oceans and high mountains. This geographical isolation has tended to impart a single-mindedness to the Chilean character which has persisted to modern times.

Patronato in the Colonial Era

As has already been mentioned in Chapter I, Pope Alexander VI in the bull Eximiae Devotionis of November 16, 1501, had granted to the Spanish monarchs the right to direct collection of tithes in America, and Pope Julius II in the bull Universalis Ecclesiae of July 28, 1508, had added the exceptional privilege of derecho de patronato y presentación (the right of patronage and presentation), by which the selection of ecclesiastics for America was made in the first instance by the Spanish king who then presented his choice to the Pope. In order to inform a prelate-elect of his selection the monarch would send to him a carta de ruego y encargo (a letter of request and entrustment), but the appointment was not official until the bishop-elect had been preconized by the Pope in a papal bull. Of necessity the process was a lengthy one, owing to the slowness of communications over such vast distances.

The first instance of the use of patronato real in Chile was in 1557 when King Philip II, at the behest of Pedro de Valdivia, requested that the parish of Santiago should become a diocese, and presented to the Pope as the first Bishop of Santiago don Rodrigo González Marmolejo, a priest who had arrived in Chile in 1540 with Valdivia, and was essentially the first military chaplain in Chile. King Philip sent a carta de ruego y encargo to González Marmolejo on January 29, 1557, and upon receipt of the letter the new bishop-elect commenced his duties. However, Church affairs in Chile were destined to be controversial from the very beginning as, in March 1557, the Archbishop of Lima, who had jurisdiction over Chile, sent another priest, don Antonio Vallejos, as 'ecclesiastical visitor' (visitador eclesiástico) to Chile. There were thus two ecclesiastical authorities in the country for some time - the one, González Marmolejo, appointed by the King of Spain (the State), the other, Antonio Vallejos, appointed by the Archbishop of Lima (the Church) - both appointments were legal, but the muddle was a foretaste of the problems which lay ahead. The situation was clarified in 1561 when Pope Pius IV created the diocese of Santiago de la Nueva Estremadura by the bull Super Specula of June 27, 1561 and confirmed don Rodrigo González Marmolejo as the first

Bishop of Santiago. It was the most remote diocese in the world and extended from the Atacama desert to Cape Horn. In 1564 Pius IV, again at the insistence of King Philip II, created the diocese of La Imperial in the southern part of Chile; ten years later the boundary between the two dioceses of Santiago and La Imperial, after much wrangling between the two bishops, was fixed as the Maule river. The first Bishop of La Imperial was a Franciscan, Brother Antonio de San Miguel Avendaño y Paz, and the See was moved to Concepción in 1603.

Independence. The Church between 1810 and 1840

No new dioceses were established in Chile until 1840, thus in 1810, when the idea of independence from Spain first began to take hold in Chile, the situation was as follows:- The See of Santiago had been vacant since the death of Bishop Francisco José Marán in 1807, and was being administered by a canon, José Santiago Rodríguez Zorilla, and the See of Concepción was occupied by Bishop Diego Antonio Navarro Martín de Villodres. Both men were confirmed 'regalists' and any idea of separation from the crown of Spain was anathema to them. However, opinions were divided among the rest of the clergy in the two dioceses and the participation of the Chilean clergy in the political life of their country can be dated from this time. Up until then the Church had given a moral lead in la alta política, and had made its voice heard in such matters as the treatment of the native Indian population and the abolition of slavery, but the convening of the Cabildo Abierto on September 18, 1810, shows the direct involvement of the Chilean clergy in la política partidista and immediately factions began to emerge. There were four discernible groups:- the royalists led by Canon Rodríguez Zorilla in Santiago and Bishop Navarro Martín de Villodres in Concepción, the confirmed revolutionaries whose leader was a member of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy, Brother Joaquín Larraín y Salas, the moderates who wished to combine independence with loyalty to the King of Spain and the Pope, and finally the neutrals who were of the opinion that the clergy should not get involved in politics, and whose spokesman was presbyter Manuel Vicuña Larraín. It is worthy of note that members of the aristocratic Larraín family, who were of Basque descent, were already in these earliest days of the Republic of

Chile providing priests who were to exercise an influence on the development of both Church and State. The name of Larraín is virtually never absent in any account of Church/State relations in Chile, from the active participation in the Cabildo Abierto of September 18, 1810, of the brothers Joaquín and Vicente Larraín y Salas (both priests), to the appointment as ninth Archbishop of Santiago in 1983 of Monseñor Juan Francisco Fresno Larraín, who became Cardinal in 1985. Joaquín Larraín y Salas became president of the first National Congress in 1811 and at one point was able to boast:-

Todas las presidencias las tenemos en casa; yo, presidente del Congreso, mi cuñado (Rosales) del Ejecutivo, mi sobrino de la Audiencia. Qué más podemos desear? (We hold all the presidential offices in the family; I am the president of the Congress, my brother-in-law (Rosales) is president of the Executive and my nephew is president of the Court of Tribunal. What more could we want?) (1)

The problem of filling the vacant See of Santiago became very complicated - on the one hand the Council of the Regency in Spain presented Rodriguez Zorilla to the Pope as Bishop of Santiago on June 9, 1812, and Rodriguez Zorilla, once he had received the carta de ruego y encargo considered himself to be the Bishop-elect, although he had not received a papal bull to confirm his election. On the other hand the Chilean junta which was then running the country, unwilling to accept the intransigent royalist Rodriguez Zorilla, appointed Rafael Andreu y Guerrero, a missionary who in 1804 had been granted the titular bishopric of Epifanía, as Bishop of Santiago in 1812. Thus the ambivalence of the real patronato was highlighted - the King of Spain was the prisoner of Napoleon, the Council of the Regency was acting for him, but so also was the junta in Chile, and in the meantime there were two contenders for the bishopric of Santiago, one the choice of the Council of the Regency, the other the choice of the junta.

The confusion in Church matters reflected the confusion in State affairs during the period 1810 to 1830. During the time of the 'reconquest' 1814-1817, Rodriguez Zorilla took charge of the See of Santiago, the election of Andreu y Guerrero was declared null and void, and the priests who had been most active in the revolution, including

Joaquín Larraín y Salas and José Ignacio Cienfuegos were sent into exile. Rodríguez Zorilla was officially elected 21st Bishop of Santiago by Pope Pius VII on March 15, 1815. Although he was born in Chile Rodríguez Zorilla was as royalist as any peninsular and for him 'Dios era el rey, y el rey era Dios'. His fortunes varied with the changes of government, and he was only effective as Bishop of Santiago during the reconquest, after that he went into exile, returned to Chile, was exiled again, and died in Spain in 1832.

During the period that Rodríguez Zorilla was in exile his duties as Bishop of Santiago were fulfilled by the presbyter José Ignacio Cienfuegos, who was as enthusiastic a republican as Rodríguez Zorilla was a royalist. It was Cienfuegos who headed the mission to Rome in 1822 which resulted in the appointment of Apostolic Vicar Muzi, who was sent by the Pope to South America to try to resolve the problem of patronage and the chronic shortage of ecclesiastics. Muzi's mission to Chile was a failure, and in 1828 Cienfuegos again went to Rome, this time on a private visit, but with the approval of Vice-President Pinto. Cienfuegos this time achieved a notable success. Pope Leo XII received him in special audience and listened to his description of the lamentable state of the Church in Chile. The following day the Pope made two appointments - Cienfuegos was preconized as titular Bishop of Rétimo and Manuel Vicuña Larraín, titular Bishop of Cerán. Cienfuegos was to have the responsibility for the See of Concepción, vacant since the death in Spain in 1827 of Bishop Villodres, and Vicuña Larraín was to be Apostolic Vicar of Santiago, as Rodríguez Zorilla, although in exile, was still alive and still officially the 21st Bishop of Santiago.

Problems could have arisen in the Chilean government because the Pope had preconized the two titular bishops before the State had presented them to him. In the event Church/State links were very close, as Manuel Vicuña Larraín's brothers Francisco Ramón and Joaquín were respectively candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency of the Republic, and Cienfuegos was a senator, so both papal candidates were approved by the State. At this period of Chile's history there was a complex series of different administrations, but a common feature

was the determination of all of them to exercise the former real patronato, as in this way they could control the hierarchy.

The period of worst confusion in the history of the Chilean Church was drawing to a close. Rodrigues Zorilla died in exile in 1832, and Pope Leo XII in his bull of July 2, 1832 appointed Manuel Vicuña Larraín as 22nd Bishop of Santiago. The government, intransigent as ever, did not approve the bull, since they had not nominated Vicuña in the first place, but he ignored the opinion of the State and carried on with his duties in the diocese of Santiago where Church matters were in a parlous state. The diocese extended from Bolivia in the north to the River Maule in the south, and had not been visited by a bishop for 37 years. Churches were in a state of semi-ruin and had been used as military quarters during the War of Independence. There were only 174 priests to administer to 680,000 souls and many of the 77 parishes were in remote and dangerous places. Furthermore, many of the priests had become so involved in political affairs that they gave them precedence over their spiritual duties.

Bishop Vicuña, despite the fact that he was the nephew of the brothers Joaquín and Vicente Larraín y Sala, who were so active in the Cabildo Abierto of 1810, always maintained the strictest neutrality in political matters. In his first pastoral letter he spelt out unequivocally the duties of the State with regard to Church affairs:-

Proteger, pero no decidir; velar a la puerte del santuario, pero no entrar en él temerariamente; apoyar a la Iglesia con sus ejemplos y su poder, defenderla durante su tránsito sobre la tierra, pero no conducirla; esto es lo que pertenece a los príncipes temporales. (To protect, but not to decide; to keep watch at the door of the sanctuary, but not to enter recklessly; to support the Church with their example and their power, to defend it during their earthly life, but not to lead it; that is the rôle of temporal princes.) (2)

Papal Recognition of the Republic of Chile

Ever since the days of O'Higgins the civil authorities in Chile had been requesting the Holy See to elevate the bishopric of Santiago to an archbishopric, but the Pope had continued to deny this honour,

out of deference to the King of Spain. Even so, hope had been kept alive in Chile and the Constitution of 1833 had contained this significant phrase:-

Al Presidente de la Republica le correspondería presentar los candidatos para los arzobispados y los bispados. (It should be the responsibility of the President of the Republic to present candidates for the archbishoprics and the bishoprics).

Finally, in 1840, Pope Gregory XVI elevated Santiago to the status of archbishopric, and created the new dioceses of La Serena and Ancud. Bishop Vicuña became the first Archbishop of Santiago on July 1, 1840.

The Government of Joaquín Prieto had, in 1828, sent Francisco Javier Rosales to Rome to request, not only the creation of the archbishopric of Santiago and the bishoprics of La Serena and Ancud, but also recognition by the Pope of the independence of the Republic. After much negotiation, the Holy See officially recognized the independence of Chile on April 13, 1840. The stubborn insistence of the Chilean government on its right to inherit the derecho de patronato y presentación from the Spanish monarch was still a matter for contention between Chile and the Vatican, and Rosales tried to insist that the Pope should make express mention of the President's right of patronage in the bulls relative to the new archdiocese and dioceses. Cardinal Lambruschini was the Vatican's negotiator with Rosales and his response is interesting because it illustrates the scope of the Vatican's international responsibilities and puts the Chilean problem into a world-wide context. Firstly, the right of patronage had been granted to the King of Spain and could not be inherited by a government which declared its independence from the King of Spain. The same right of patronage had been granted to the King of Portugal who, when Napoleon invaded his country, left Europe and set up his court in Brazil. The Vatican had without hesitation extended the right of patronage to the Emperor of Brazil, thus proving that in the Vatican's eyes the patronage belonged to the person of the hereditary monarch, and not to whatever régime happened to be running the country. Secondly, the other American countries would insist on the same privilege if it was granted to Chile. Thirdly, the bulls which the

Pope sent to Russia and Prussia concerning bishoprics in those countries were worded in the same way as those which he sent to Chile. And lastly, 'Chile no podía pretender que se hiciera una alteración de esta costumbre' (Chile could not aspire to an alteration of this custom.) (3) The Chilean request was turned down by the Vatican in January 1841.

When Manuel Vicuña became the first Archbishop of Santiago he was already 63 years of age and in poor health, and he died after only three years, in 1843. He had always remained aloof from politics, despite his close family links with politicians, and his efforts had been directed at repairing the spiritual affairs of the Church in Chile. The same could not be said of many of the ordinary clergy who began to align themselves with the politicians who defended the Church and were thus drawn into party politics.

Archbishop Vicuña died on May 3, 1843, and four years were to elapse before his successor was elected. In fact, the government of President Manuel Bulnes selected José Alejo Eyzaguirre as the next Archbishop of Santiago, and sent him the carta de ruego y encargo in June 1844. It appears, however, that Eyzaguirre was never preconized by the Pope, and he resigned as Archbishop-elect on April 22, 1845. It is not correct, therefore, to consider him as the second Archbishop of Santiago. The reason for his resignation was his opposition to the laws which the government passed concerning the marriage of non-Catholics, the disciplining of clergy, and the fixing of a lower age-limit of 25 years for candidates for monastic orders. Eyzaguirre considered these laws to be an unwarranted interference by the State in Church affairs, and his protest resignation was an early sign that a power struggle was beginning to emerge between the civil and the religious authorities.

After Eyzaguirre's resignation the government selected Valentín Valdivieso y Zañatu as the next Archbishop. Valdivieso was also a priest from an aristocratic family of Basque origin and was only 42 years of age. He commenced his duties as Archbishop-elect in July 1845, with the sole authority of the Government's carta de ruego y

encargo, as he was not preconized by the Pope until October 1847. Valdivieso was unhappy with this state of affairs, but he felt that the Church in Chile needed firm leadership and this consideration took precedence over his qualms about the lack of papal preconization. His enemies seized on the irregularity of his election, and used it against him during his long incumbency of the archbishopric.

Yet another mission from the Chilean government to the Vatican failed to secure papal recognition of its right to patronato in June 1847. Nor was the Chilean request for a concordat with the Holy See received favourably. Eventually Pius IX in his bull Romanus Pontifex of August 18, 1873 condemned once and for all the practice whereby a civil authority nominated a bishop or archbishop to a vacant See before authority to do so was received from Rome. Chile was not mentioned by name, but was alluded to thus:- 'the abuse introduced in certain kingdoms or regions, principally distant ones'.

The Affair of the Sacristan, 1856-1857

The archiepiscopate of Valdivieso lasted for 33 years, and not surprisingly during this long term he crossed swords with the various administrations. The 'Affair of the Sacristan' in 1856, which has already been alluded to in Chapter II, was basically a conflict over the question of patronage. The State had considered that it had the right to intervene in a purely ecclesiastical disciplinary matter - the two canons concerned had appealed to the Supreme Court against a decision of the Archbishop, and the civil court had taken up their appeal. From here onwards relations between Church and State grew steadily worse and were only resolved when the two estates were formally separated in 1925.

To form an effective body of support for the Church Archbishop Valdivieso at the time of the 'Sacristan Affair' founded the Sociedad de Santo Tomás de Cantorbery (sic). The society grew quickly and many churchmen and laymen opposed to President Montt joined it. These cantorberianos withdrew from the pelucón party and later founded the Conservative - or 'Catholic' - Party in 1857. There is no doubt that

Valdivieso sympathized with the aims of the Conservative Party, but it was his stated opinion that priests should not actively engage in politics. In a letter to the parish priest of Talpén in November 1863 Valdivieso said:

I should point out that I do not claim that the clergy ought to take no personal interest in the fortunes of their country, but that their manner of taking an interest should be appropriate to their calling; and, in this regard, in my opinion, it is not suitable that we priests should join any party that is purely political. (4)

The Partido Conservador

Political parties as we know them today did not exist in Chile until the 1850s and 1860s when the Conservative, Liberal and Radical Parties were founded. But two main tendencies were discernible from the earliest days of the republic, and political opinion divided itself broadly along liberal and conservative lines. The Church allied itself with the conservatives and was closely associated with the land-owning oligarchy of aristocratic creoles who, as I have already pointed out, shared the same social background as the leaders of the Church. Priests were elected as deputies in the various National Congresses - 10 in the first National Congress of 1811, 20 in the Congress of 1824, 18 in the Congress of 1826, and were also appointed as senators in the Upper House. During the primacy of Valdivieso the numbers of clergy elected to Congress decreased, as the Archbishop was not in favour of the active participation of priests in politics, so that, for example, in the Congress of 1851-61 there were only 4 deputies and 1 senator, and in the Congress of 1861-71 there were 2 deputies and 2 senators.

The 'Affair of the Sacristan' in 1856 had precipitated the formation of the Partido Conservador and when the government of Manuel Montt, who had shown himself to be so aggressively patronatista in his determination to control the Church, came to an end in 1861 great efforts were made, in particular by Bishop Salas of Concepción, to organize strong opposition to the Partido Nacional, which represented the ideals of ex-President Montt. Bishop Salas became a fervent

supporter of the Conservative Party and actively campaigned from his bishopric in Concepción for the participation of all Catholics in the Party:-

'Pido a Dios que me deje ver en Chile organizado el partido católico, no el partido de don fulano o don mengano, sino el de los católicos que lleven la expresión de sus doctrinas y las consecuencias de su fe al orden público, al municipio, a las cámaras y a todas partes'. (I pray to God that He will permit me to see in Chile the organization of the Catholic Party, not the party of any Tom, Dick or Harry, but the party of Catholics, who may bring to bear the expression of their doctrines and the lessons of their faith on public order, local affairs, central government and all aspects of the country's affairs.) (5)

Bishop Salas' desire was to see the influence of the Catholic religion spread throughout all the public and private institutions of the country.

Another mentor of the Conservative Party was Joaquín Larrain Gandarillas, the Rector of the Seminary in Santiago. He was, in fact, elected to Congress as a deputy by the Conservative Party in 1864, but he disliked active campaigning and preferred to exercise his influence by moulding the ideas of the young men who were studying for the priesthood; these young men, once they became priests, passed on their political ideals to their parishioners and to future young seminarians, so that Conservatism was promulgated among Catholics for several generations. Joaquín Larrain Gandarillas was also the uncle of the leader of the Conservative Party, Manuel José Irarrázaval Larrain.

An inevitable result of the increased activity of the clergy in party politics was the growth of a reaction; the Radicals, Nationalists and Liberals all opposed the new Conservative Party and there appeared a flurry of new periodicals hostile to the Church, in particular La Reforma whose principal objective was the reform of Article 5 of the Constitution of 1833, in order to establish freedom of religion.

During the presidential elections of 1871 the candidate favoured by the Conservative Party was Federico Errázuriz Zañartu, a first

cousin of Archbishop Valdivieso y Zañartu. Bishop Salas was energetic in his efforts to secure the election of Errázuriz Zañartu, who headed a Liberal-Conservative alliance, and after the success of his favoured candidate Salas went on to support the foundation of the periodical La Libertad Católica, which was the organ of the Conservative Party. President Errázuriz later dismissed the Conservative members of the coalition and formed a cabinet of Liberals, Radicals and Nationals - the so-called Liberal Alliance. The clerical reforms which were proposed by this new political alliance were bitterly opposed by the Archbishop and the clergy, and this bitterness was more acute because of the family ties between the Archbishop and the President.

On the death of Archbishop Valdivieso on June 8, 1878, Joaquín Larraín Gandarillas became the capitular vicar of Santiago - he had, in fact, been the auxiliary bishop for two years and had wielded much influence when Valdivieso was in declining health. The Archbishop was 74 years of age when he died, and he had been the head of the Chilean Church for over 30 years. The government of President Pinto was determined that Larraín Gandarillas should not become the next Archbishop, because of his close association with the Conservative Party. As I explained in Chapter II it selected Canon Francisco de Paula Taforó, a priest who had been opposed to Archbishop Valdivieso during the 'Sacristan Affair' and who was unacceptable to the clergy, not least because of his illegitimate birth. In putting his name forward to the Holy See as the next Archbishop of Santiago the government was offering a direct challenge to the Chilean Church, and once again was attempting to exercise the right of patronage. But a new element had now entered the conflict - Taforó was a Liberal and was selected by the government because it thought he would be a complaisant prelate; Larraín Gandarillas was an out and out Conservative and, if elected Archbishop of Santiago, was likely to be a thorn in the flesh of any government which did not have the support of the Conservative Party.

Alberto Blest Gana, the Chilean writer who was also Ambassador to France and the Vatican, went to Rome to canvass the

preconization of Taforó and told the Sacred Congregation that:-

...el clero chileno ha tenido la mala inspiración de tomar una carta demasiado activa en las cuestiones políticas. A su sombra, y bajo su inspiración, se ha organizado un partido que busca el triunfo de intereses mundanos, encubriéndose con el prestigio de los ministros de la Iglesia. (the Chilean clergy have been unwise enough to take a too-active rôle in political affairs. Under their protection and inspiration there has emerged a party which pursues worldly aims, under cover of the prestige of ministers of the Church). (6)

What Blest Gana did not mention was that Taforó had, in his time, been a Liberal deputy in the Congress of 1851-1861! The Holy See, however, had been fully appraised of Taforó's background and unsuitability by Larraín Gandarillas, who, aware that he personally was not welcomed by the Chilean government as a candidate was in favour of Bishop Salas. Archbishop Valdivieso had left a short-list of suitable candidates - Salas headed the list, but Taforó did not figure on it at all.

In 1882 Pope Leo XIII sent Bishop Celestino del Frate to Chile to try to resolve the impasse. Four years had elapsed since Archbishop Valdivieso's death, and Domingo Santa María was now President of Chile. When Del Frate decided against the suitability of Taforó the Chilean government threatened to break off diplomatic relations with the Vatican and to introduce anti-Church laws - the so-called leyes laicas. The Pope refused to be blackmailed in this manner, rejected Taforó once and for all and informed Blest Gana of his decision. As a result diplomatic relations between Chile and the Vatican were broken off in December 1882, and Del Frate was handed his passport.

The government began to exact its revenge on the Church. Larraín Gandarillas' income as vicar capitular was suspended, as were government grants to the seminaries, and Congress began to discuss and approve laws concerning civil marriage and non-religious cemeteries. Larraín Gandarillas added fuel to the fire when he refused Catholic burial to the body of ex-President Pinto who died in 1884, without the sacramental rites of extreme unction. The conflict was not settled until 1885 - it was by then obvious to all parties concerned that neither Taforó nor Larraín Gandarillas were suitable candidates for the

archbishopric, and a new name was put forward by President Santa María - that of Mariano Casanova y Casanova, whose name had also appeared on Archbishop Valdivieso's short-list. Both the Pope and the President were in accord and without undue delay Mariano Casanova's candidature went forward. Almost nine years after Valdivieso's death Pope Leo XIII preconized Mariano Casanova as third Archbishop of Santiago on December 3, 1886, and the new President of Chile, José Manuel Balmaceda, resumed diplomatic relations with the Holy See.

Archbishop Mariano Casanova and the Revolution of 1891

The personality of Archbishop Casanova made him an excellent choice as primate at this particular point in the history of Church/State relations. He was diplomatic and intelligent, and he took no interest in party politics. Furthermore, he was of Italian and not Basque descent. One of his first acts on becoming Archbishop was to quash the Unión Católica, a society formed by the clergy and the Conservatives to oppose the government and the Liberal Alliance; he didn't make a great issue out of disbanding the Unión, but let it fade away by ignoring it.

Although not a member of the creole aristocracy himself, Casanova was at home in their society and cultivated their friendship. He had been either a fellow student, or a professor, of many of the men who were now ruling the country. He was thus able to wield influence on behalf of the Church, without being too closely involved with the ruling class because of family relationships or party political affiliations.

As a man of peace Casanova viewed with horror the prospect of civil war in Chile when he returned to his own country after a visit to Rome in 1889. In the conflict between President Balmaceda and Congress, Archbishop Casanova was able to avert hostilities for a few months by acting as mediator between the two sides. He was in the best position to mediate, as he was respected by both the President, who was his ex-pupil, and the opposition, amongst whom were many Conservatives. When the agreement negotiated by the Archbishop broke down in 1890 the

country headed towards civil war. Casanova tried to suppress the political agitation of his own clergy, and on Palm Sunday, 1891, he addressed his sermon to them:-

In civil strifes in which only political principles and rights are at stake, it is not appropriate for the clergy to take a militant stance. Whatever may be the opinions of clergy as citizens, they must not use their ministry, which is a ministry of peace and conciliation, to co-operate in the success of those groups whose victory depends upon force of arms. (7)

In the end, Casanova only succeeded in antagonizing both sides. Balmaceda considered that he had not been sufficiently stern with the clergy, and the militant clergy, headed by Larraín Gandarillas, who was now the Rector of the Catholic University, could not forgive Balmaceda for the active rôle he had taken in promoting anti-Church legislation during the Presidency of Santa María, and they threw in their weight behind Congress.

Hernán Ramírez Necochea, the Marxist historian, has this to say about the activities and motives of the Chilean clergy during the revolution of 1891:-

The clergy also mobilized openly in favour of the opposition. As a traditionalist element they maintained the closest links with the aristocracy and the Conservative Party; the clergy were the force who ideologically nourished the Conservatives and actively contributed to support the material bases upon which reposed the social, political and economic power of the old aristocracy; furthermore, despite the fact that it was Balmaceda who normalized Church/State relations, in the eyes of the clergy the President was the champion of Liberalism and the politician who had discharged a leading rôle in the enactment of the secular laws during the government of Santa María. (8)

The clergy of Santiago took a particularly active rôle in the revolution, and several of them were detained or had to flee the country. There was also a clandestine printing press in the Seminary issuing anti-government propaganda. In all this the clergy acted contrary to the instructions of their own Archbishop and of the Pope from whom Casanova had sought advice. After the triumph of the Congressional army and Balmaceda's suicide, a service was conducted in Santiago Cathedral 'in homage to those who served the cause of the

Constitution and died fighting for it', and in churches throughout the country priests offered up a Te Deum to celebrate the victory of Congress.

In their eagerness to throw themselves into political activities and to support the Conservative Party, which was the party which voiced their opinions in Congress, the clergy were becoming more and more out of touch with the ordinary people of Chile. The clergy/Conservative Party mutual support pact was a cosy arrangement which did not take into account the needs of the poorer members of society. Chile, like many other countries, was going through a revolution of a different kind, a revolution of industrial change. 1891, besides being the year of civil war in Chile, was the year in which Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical Rerum Novarum, in which he discussed the conditions of working men in the new societies which industrialization was causing. On the whole Rerum Novarum was received with indifference in Chile, but I will deal with the Chilean Church's response to the Pope's encyclical in a later chapter.

Archbishop Casanova died in 1908, and there were no complications about his successor. He was able, on his death-bed, to discuss suitable candidates with President Pedro Montt, and they both agreed on Juan Ignacio González Eyzaguirre, the auxiliary bishop of Santiago. Casanova had been Archbishop for 21 years, and had strived in that time to bring harmony to Church affairs. One of his most enduring legacies was his institution of the first National Eucharistic Congress in 1904, the fore-runner of many later Eucharistic Congresses in Chile.

The fourth Archbishop of Santiago, Juan Ignacio González Eyzaguirre, was elevated by the Pope, Saint Pius X, on August 8, 1908. He was already 64 years of age and in poor health, and he belonged, like his predecessors Vicuña and Valdivieso to the Chilean aristocracy. Although he supported the Conservative Party, he had never been an active member of the Party, and his interests lay in the fields of social reform and Catholic journalism. He had been loath to accept the archbishopric in 1908, and two years later actually tendered his resignation to the Pope. The Pope had already accepted the

Archbishop's resignation when, in a strange interpretation of its rights of patronage, the Chilean government insisted that the resignation be withdrawn, and consequently González Eyzaguirre remained as head of the Chilean Church until his death in June 1918. He had been a pious and well-intentioned prelate, but he possessed neither the physical nor intellectual stamina to give a lead to his fellow churchmen in a period of great social upheaval.

Separation of Church and State, 1925

It was in the successor to González Eyzaguirre that the Church and the country found a prelate of stature who had the nerve and the imagination to bring the Chilean Church into the modern era. Crescente Errázuriz Valdivieso, the fifth Archbishop of Santiago, was the nephew of the second Archbishop, Valentín Valdivieso y Zañartu. He had been ordained in 1863, by his uncle, who had often confided in him, and he was, in fact, almost 80 years of age when he became Archbishop early in 1919. As a young man he had been a supporter of the Conservative Party, but he had had the wisdom to follow his uncle's advice to priests to keep out of party politics - he thus enjoyed great prestige among those politicians who were in principle opposed to the Church.

The two names which are synonymous with disestablishment are Crescente Errázuriz and Arturo Alessandri. Alessandri had supported the nomination of Errázuriz as Archbishop in 1918, in preference to the Conservative Bishop of Concepción, Gilberto Fuenzalido Guzmán, and in 1920, when Alessandri was proclaimed President of the Republic by a very narrow majority, Archbishop Errázuriz invited him to a Te Deum in the Cathedral. The two men understood and respected one another. Alessandri was the champion of the workers and of the new middle classes and he recognized in Errázuriz an ecclesiastic who would, despite his own aristocratic background, understand the need for social change.

Errázuriz supported the social reforms proposed by President Alessandri, but wanted the clergy to work for social improvement under

the direction of their bishops, and not of politicians. In his pastoral of September 6, 1921 he cited the words of Pius X:-

Para cumplir con su deber, la democracia cristiana está absolutamente obligada a depender de la autoridad eclesiástica, prestando plena sujeción y obediencia a los obispos y a sus delegados. No es pues, concluye, digno de alabanza, ni sincero en su piedad quien se atreve, sin autorización de su propio pastor, a emprender qualesquiera obras aunque en sí sean nobles y buenas. (In order to fulfil its obligations Christian democracy is absolutely obliged to be dependent upon ecclesiastical authority, owing complete subordination and obedience to the bishops and their delegates. I infer, therefore, that anyone who, without the authorization of his own minister, ventures to undertake any works whatsoever, however intrinsically noble or good they may be, is neither worthy of praise nor sincere in his compassion). (9).

These words were to find an echo in Chile 66 years later when Pope John Paul II visited that country. In his homily to the poor inhabitants of a población Pope John Paul II addressed these words to the priests and nuns who were working in the Base Communities:-

Para que el surgimiento de las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base sea una fuerza revitalizadora de la Iglesia en Chile, es necesario que mantenga siempre una clara identidad eclesial. Esto supone, ante todo, estar en intima unión con el obispo diocesano y sus colaboradores Esta identidad eclesial requiere que las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base eviten la tentación de identificarse con partidos o posiciones políticos. (In order that the emergence of the Base Communities should be a force which revitalizes the authentic dynamism of the Church in Chile, it is necessary for it to maintain a clear ecclesiastical identity at all times. This means especially being in complete agreement with the diocesan bishop and his assistants A requirement of this religious identity is that the Base Communities should avoid the temptation to identify with political parties or positions). (10).

It was especially important for Errázuriz to stress that he, as Archbishop, was the sole voice of authority regarding Church affairs in Chile. Many of the clergy were suspicious of Alessandri's motives, and rumours abounded that he wished to bring in laws to disestablish the Church. These rumours caused such a stir that in December 1920 Archbishop Errázuriz, in one of his most outspoken pastoral letters, clearly outlined the rôles of the Church and the political parties.

After stressing that, whatever their political views as private citizens were, clerics must maintain strict neutrality where politics were concerned when they were acting as ministers of the Church, he went on to say that the Church must neither influence nor be influenced by political parties. Priests must obey their bishop, who was uniquely authorized to express the teachings of the Church. He quoted the words of Pope Benedict XV:- 'quien no está con su obispo, no está con la Iglesia'. Where priests did have a clear responsibility was in the education of their parishioners concerning their civic duties, particularly the exercise of the right of suffrage.

Not only was the Archbishop confronted by critics within the ranks of clergy and laymen who considered it their duty as Catholics to actively support the Conservative Party, but two of his bishops, José María Caro Rodríguez of Iquique and Carlos Silva Cotapos of La Serena, were fundamentally opposed to the Archbishop's veto on clerical participation in politics. There was particular indignation when he refused permission to Prebendary Clovis Montero to become a Conservative candidate for Congress. These clerics were convinced that they were upholding the Church's rights by their political stance, and that Archbishop Errázuriz was betraying the Church by refusing to use the power of his high office to influence the government. Errázuriz was in a very difficult position and, already aged 83, was at one point on the verge of handing in his resignation to the Pope.

President Arturo Alessandri considered that the only way to ensure harmony between the Church and the State was to separate them completely. Errázuriz, on the other hand, despite his conviction that Church and State should not attempt to exert influence over one another, was opposed to the idea of disestablishment. Church and State had been joined for more than 350 years and, not unnaturally, no prelate would wish to be the one responsible for the break-up of this ancient bond.

Towards the end of 1922 it was divulged that Congress was considering disestablishing the Church and confiscating its property. The Archbishop, in his pastoral letter of April 24, 1923, repeated his

earlier injunction to the clergy against allowing their political opinions to influence their ministry, but the situation was very awkward now that the government was said to be aiming legislation directly at the Church's constitutional status:-

From all the evidence it seems that the proposed reform of the Constitution is not purely political, since it proposes to eradicate the name of God; and as I said to you in my pastoral of December 6, 1922, it is a priest's responsibility to instruct the faithful in their duties as Catholics, when religion and political questions overlap Such would be principally the situation in which the Chilean clergy would find themselves if it came to a discussion about the separation of Church and State; they would have to defend at the same time the doctrines of the Church and the true interests of the State. (11).

Errázuriz urged the clergy to remain impartial and moderate, so that their enemies could not accuse them of being 'petty defenders of petty personal interests.'

In September 1924 there was a political crisis, and President Alessandri tendered his resignation and quit the country for six months, leaving the control of Chile in the hands of a military junta. Alessandri went to Europe, and in January 1925 arrived in Rome, where he had an audience with Pope Pius XI. They discussed the problem of disestablishment which, as a general principle, was opposed by the Vatican, but which might be acceptable if in practice it proved to be the lesser of two evils. The Pope asked Alessandri to discuss the matter in detail with Cardinal Gasparri, and during this interview Alessandri told the Cardinal that he had been requested to return to Chile to resume his presidential office, and that on his return he wished to reform the Constitution. One of the reforms which he considered essential was that which guaranteed liberty of conscience and hence of religion, and in order to ensure this it would be necessary to disestablish the Catholic Church. It would be preferable if the severance of the bond between the Church and the State could be brought about in a spirit of goodwill, but Alessandri was determined that whatever happened this severance was essential. The Cardinal replied that Catholic doctrine could not approve of separation, but if the President was determined to bring in legislation to effect it,

there was no way in which he could be prevented from doing so; in which case, if the separation could be conducted along the same lines as in Brazil, the Church would be grateful. In Arturo Alessandri's own words, at this point he stood up, offered his hand to the Cardinal, and said 'Convenido, Eminencia' (Agreed, Your Eminence) (12), and this was the basis upon which the legislation for separation was worked out by the Commission formed to re-draft the Constitution when Alessandri returned to Chile.

In Chapter 3 of the Constitutional Guarantees of the new Constitution, liberty of conscience and the rights of all men to exercise the religions of their choice, provided that these were not detrimental to morals or public order, were enshrined. Freedom of education was also guaranteed. When the terms of the Constitution were transmitted to Rome the reply came back 'Tutto regolatto' (Everything in order).

Archbishop Errázuriz received the news with great sadness. He felt that both the Church and the State would lose by separation, but he was obliged to accept the verdict of the Holy See, and he tolerated separation, without approving of it. Once the new Constitution became law on September 18, 1925 the Archbishop, supported by all the hierarchy, declared:-

'El Estado se separa, en Chile, de la Iglesia, pero la Iglesia no se separará del Estado y permanecerá pronta a servirlo.' (The State is separating from the Church in Chile, but the Church will not separate from the State, and will always stand ready to serve it). (13).

An old man, with the wisdom of his 86 years, Archbishop Errázuriz thus had the generosity of spirit to close a long chapter in the history of the Church in Chile and to bring in a new era of tolerance and co-operation.

PART II - The Caring Church

The Social Question and the Beginnings of a Catholic Social Doctrine in Chile

But all agree, and there can be no question whatever, that some remedy must be found, and found quickly, for the misery and wretchedness pressing so heavily and unjustly at this moment on the vast majority of the working classes. (Pope Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum, May 15, 1891)

The end of the nineteenth century witnessed great changes in the social and economic scene in Chile. The War of the Pacific, which was waged between Chile on the one hand and Peru and Bolivia on the other, was decisively won by Chile. By the Treaty of Ancón, signed between Chile and Peru in 1883, and a separate truce between Chile and Bolivia signed in 1884, Chile enlarged its territory by more than one-third. The acquisition of the mineral-rich northern territories brought a profound change in the pattern of life and the economy of Chile. Peasants and labourers from the large, aristocratically-owned haciendas of the fertile central valley were drafted into the army and moved to the north. When the war was over, many of these workers did not wish to return to their traditional occupations, and remained in the north to work in the newly-acquired nitrate fields. The working conditions of this new, wage-earning proletariat were influenced by the Chilean government's decision to allow private capital, both foreign and national, to exploit the nitrate fields, whilst the government imposed a heavy export tax on nitrates. Thousands of Chilean workers found themselves working in large complexes, or oficinas, controlled by foreign administrators. The work was very labour-intensive and the nitrate industry expanded rapidly. Despite this expansion the market for nitrates was volatile and, as exports periodically fell off, so wages were reduced and workers were laid off. At the same time the War in the Pacific had caused inflation in prices - paper money had been issued to finance the war, and the wartime economy had created artificial demands.

The nitrate workers thus found themselves in an extremely vulnerable position. Part of their wages was paid as company scrip,

to be used in the company stores or pulperías. When labour was in demand, employers attracted workers by offering low-priced goods in the pulperías, when labour was in abundance the prices went up. At the same time inflation eroded the value of that part of the workers' wages which was paid in cash. A particular downturn in the nitrate industry, combined with continued inflation, brought the workers' sense of exploitation to a head in 1890 and precipitated the first 'general strike' in Chilean history. The strike was harshly suppressed by the police and the military, and although the employers agreed to meet most of the workers' demands in order to end the strike - once it was over they retaliated by firing the workers' leaders and returning to their former practices.

The labour crisis coincided with the strife which was developing in government between President Balmaceda and Congress and which led in 1891 to civil war. The war was hard fought for seven months, with severe losses on both sides, and resulted in victory for Congress and the suicide of Balmaceda. The outcome of the civil war did little to change the nation's dependence on nitrates; the population of the northern provinces more than doubled between 1885 and 1907, and the nitrate industry veered between periods of high output and high employment, and periods of depression, shutdowns and massive lay-offs. At times of great unemployment there were tens of thousands of labourers without jobs, homes or means of subsistence.

There was also a 'knock-on' effect on other sections of the economy. Downturns in nitrate production affected agriculture, coal mines, commerce and the newly developing industrial sector. There had begun to be a great movement of population to the cities and out of the countryside, so that by 1907 a census classified 43% of the Chilean population as urban. The vast bulk of these workers were illiterate - the Catholic Church did run some schools, but they were mainly for the children of wealthy families and the Church opposed the introduction of secular education. Since only adult, literate males were allowed to vote (and this extension of the suffrage only dated from the Government of Santa María 1881-1886), and vote-buying (cohecho) was commonplace, the government of the country was in the hands of a small élite which

protected its own interests, and the workers were unrepresented:-

No other problem so dominated Chilean development after 1891 - and received so little meaningful attention by Chilean political leaders - than the continued growth of the urban and industrial proletariat and the intensified struggle between labour and capital known as the 'social question'. Modest but persistent industrial growth in Chile from the 1890s until the world depression of the 1930s gradually increased the number of workers employed in factories, workshops, construction industries, and other urban manual jobs. This urban working class remained unprotected by social legislation or a strong labour movement.

(1)

Chilean governments at the time were influenced by liberal ideals concerning worker-employer relations, whereby the worker could come and go as he pleased and could work out his own agreement concerning conditions of work, wages and length of employment with whichever employer he chose to work for. Associations or 'unions' of working men that attempted to negotiate collective agreements with employers were condemned. The result was not an ideal state in which workmen and employers freely made and unmade working agreements, but a society where the employers were able to join together in powerful associations and to lobby governments in which they had bought support.

Rerum Novarum

As I pointed out in Chapter III, 1891, besides being the year of the civil war in Chile, was the year in which Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical Rerum Novarum. The Pope was concerned about the condition of working men in all countries, as the industrial revolution brought about fundamental changes in the pattern of life. He saw that working people were in a helpless situation - the working men's guilds had been abolished and nothing had replaced them. Religion was no longer the force that it had once been, and working men had now been 'surrendered all isolated and helpless, to the hardheartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition.' (2). The Pope was concerned about the way that Socialism was stepping into this vacuum, created by the demise of the guilds and the devaluation of religion. Socialists were proposing that private property should be transferred from individuals

to the State or the municipalities, to be administered and distributed so that everyone had his fair share. This system, argued the Pope, struck at the interests of every wage-earner since it would deprive him of the liberty of disposing of his wages, and thereby prevent him from 'increasing his stock and bettering his condition in life.' The family took precedence over the State, the head of the family had at least equal rights with the State in decisions concerning the well-being of the members of the family; a community is, after all, merely the result of a grouping-together of families. The main tenet of Socialism, the community of goods, is, said the Pope, directly contrary to the natural rights of mankind, and the first and fundamental principle to be observed by any system or authority seeking to alleviate the condition of the masses, must be the inviolability of private property.

Leo XIII rejected the idea that all men are equal - on the contrary:-

There naturally exists among mankind manifold differences of the most important kind; people differ in capacity, skill, health, strength; and unequal fortune is a necessary result of unequal condition.

Poverty is no disgrace in the eyes of God, and the true worth of man lies in his moral qualities. Christian charity should aim to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, and the State can help, not by absorbing the individual or the family, but by watching over the interests of the working classes and preventing them from being exploited by greedy capitalist employers 'who use human beings as mere instruments of money making.' As a rule worker and employer should make free agreements - 'remuneration ought to be sufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage earner', but, if workmen are forced to accept harder conditions out of fear or necessity, then they become victims of injustice and force.

To replace the old guilds, the Pope encouraged the formation of working men's unions, consisting either of workmen alone or of workmen and employers together - the latter helped to draw the classes together

and were a good thing, since 'Capital cannot do without Labour, nor Labour without Capital.'

This encyclical was not greeted with enthusiasm or even comprehension throughout the world, and in Chile it was considered by many to be relevant to Europe only, and to have no validity in that remote corner of South America, about which the Pope could have little knowledge. And yet, by 1891 industrial unrest was beginning to manifest itself in Chile. Archbishop Casanova was the Primate of Chile at that time, and the great bulk of the hierarchy and the clergy were keen supporters of the Conservative Party. The Conservatives were more interested in watching over the prerogatives of the Church as an institution than in concerning themselves with the conditions of working people.

But, at least in Chile Rerum Novarum was given some publicity, unlike in most other Latin American countries. Archbishop Casanova issued a pastoral letter which consisted substantially of quotations from Rerum Novarum, to which the Archbishop gave his own approval, promising that he expected

...later, when circumstances permit, to insist on the practical manner in which the desires of the Holy Father and his teachings can be utilized by means of associations. (3)

The Archbishop took no further practical steps, however. His successor, Archbishop González Eyzaguirre was a man who took a genuine interest in social problems, but was not gifted with the powers of leadership and inspiration. Before becoming Archbishop he had been the director and one of the founders of the workers' organization Sociedad Obreros de San José. He also helped to found, in 1894, the Centro Cristiano which provided primary and secondary education for poor children. After his election as Archbishop, Mgr. González called a 'Day of Christian Work' on the anniversary of Rerum Novarum, and went on to sponsor the organization of various social programmes, such as mutual societies and evening classes for workers. In his pastoral letter dealing with the doctrine of Leo XIII, Archbishop González stressed employers' obligations to pay a decent living wage and to be

receptive to workers' justified grievances. In 1910 the first Catholic Social Congress was called by the Archbishop, and as a result of this the National Federation of Catholic Social Works was founded, with its headquarters in Santiago. Archbishop González also initiated the Asociación Nacional de Estudiantes Católicos (ANEC), which would in later years provide a rich source of talented and dedicated young men for Acción Católica, whilst in the Catholic University a Chair of Social Economics was created, and the Seminaries of Santiago and Concepción established Chairs of Sociology.

Unfortunately, Archbishop González was in poor health during the whole of his short time in office, and his position was not helped by an undignified squabble which went on for years between the Papal Nuncio, Enrique Sibilia, and the government of President Barros Luco - it was a feeling of embarrassment over this squabble which led to Archbishop González handing his resignation to the Pope in 1910, (a resignation which he later withdrew, at the insistence of the government).

The Chilean historian Gonzalo Vial has this to say about Archbishop González:-

During the decade which was so important for the country, whilst consensus amongst Chileans was being irrevocably shattered, no special light emanated from the Archbishop of Santiago, save that which belonged to his sanctity as a private individual, but perhaps that light had an effective importance which our tired scepticism did not suspect. Despite everything, Monseñor González continued to give emphasis to social Christianity and Catholic journalism. (4)

Archbishop González might not have been the most effective leader in the history of the Chilean Church, but he deserves more recognition than is given by, for example, Henry Landsberger, who dismisses him in one sentence:-

Even the calling of the First Social Catholic Congress in 1910 by the Archbishop of Santiago, Mgr. González Eyzaguirre, did not result in further pastorals. (5)

In fact, the Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo Americana refers to:-

...the purely social action of the Chilean Church in our time, inspired by the Prelate, who is the apostle of the workers, Ignacio González Eyzaguirre, whose frequent pastoral letters are a masterpiece of sociology. (6)

The way ahead in social questions was not being blazed by either the Archbishop or the hierarchy, but by a Jesuit priest, Father Fernando Vives Solar, and the Archbishop's failure to support Father Vives when he was being vituperated by the Conservatives aroused the scorn of many of his contemporaries. At this point in the history of the relationship between the Church and the State in Chile one begins to see the difference in emphasis between the actions of the hierarchy and the actions some of the clergy, (particularly the Jesuits), and the laity who, until the beginning of the 20th century, had not played a rôle in advancing Church doctrines.

Father Fernando Vives Solar, SJ.

Father Vives can be considered the initiator of the social doctrine developed by the Church in Chile from the early years of this century. Born in Santiago in 1871, he began his novitiate in the Jesuit Order in Argentina in 1897, then continued his studies in Spain and returned to Chile in 1909, to teach at the Colegio de San Ignacio in Santiago. By 1909 the class struggle had already begun in Chile. Strikes in 1903 in Valparaíso, in 1906 in Antofogasta and in 1907 in Iquique had been suppressed with severity and bloodshed, and Marxist dogma was being disseminated among the workers. Apart from Archbishop Casanova's pastoral on Rerum Novarum and one or two rare examples of social awareness among laymen - for example the establishment of the Población Leo XIII by Juan Enrique Concha - nothing was being done to advance the teachings of Rerum Novarum. In the Colegio de San Ignacio Father Vives began to remedy this deficiency and to teach the need for a fairer distribution of wealth. The parents of Father Vives' pupils were, in many cases, wealthy Conservative landowners, who became alarmed at what they considered to be his subversive views, and they

complained so bitterly to the Provincial of the Jesuits that Father Vives was ordered to leave Chile. In 1912 he was sent to Argentina, but returned to Chile two years later and recommenced his teaching at the Colegio. Having spent some time in Europe Father Vives could see how backward Chile was in its social and economic policies, but the majority of Chilean politicians considered that the teachings of Leo XIII did not apply to them, and once again pressure was put on the Jesuit authorities to remove Father Vives. He was obliged to leave Chile again in 1918, and did not return until 1931, by which time there was a more enlightened climate of opinion. Archbishop González regretted what he considered to be the unjust expulsion of the Jesuit priest - but he did not use his influence to prevent it.

Father Vives had, however, taught his social doctrines to a group of pupils who were receptive to these new ideas, and the seed of social awareness had been sown. Amongst Father Vives' numerous disciples the names of Oscar Larson, Manuel Larraín Errázuriz and Alberto Hurtado Cruchaga stand out - they in turn eventually took Holy Orders and were responsible for passing on Father Vives' teachings to succeeding generations.

On the political front changes were also under way. The Partido Demócrata, founded in 1887, was the first populist party in Chile, supported mainly by artisans and the lower middle class, and challenging the assumptions and policies of the landowning, business and industrial communities which had dominated Chilean politics thus far. In 1920 the members of the Radical Party and the Partido Demócrata joined forces with some Liberal supporters and formed the Alianza Liberal, whose candidate for the presidency was Arturo Alessandri. His opponent was Luis Barros Borgoño, the candidate of the Unión Nacional Party, an alliance of Conservatives and a large group of Liberals. Alessandri was the idol of the working and middle classes, but the upper classes, the capitalists and the majority of the clergy supported Barros Borgoño. Despite the then Archbishop of Santiago, Crescente Errázuriz's instructions to the clergy to abstain from party politics and electioneering, the Bishop of Concepción, Gilberto Fuenzalida, who had been a student of the priesthood when the

Seminary in Santiago was run by Larraín Gandarillas, instructed his clergy and diocesans that it was the duty of all priests and Catholics to declare 'war to the death' on Alessandri, the candidate of the Freemasons. Clerics such as Fuenzalida ignored the fact that the lower classes were Catholics just as much as the upper classes. Pope Pius XI was to say, in later years, that the greatest scandal of the 20th Century was the alienation of the workers from the Church and, indeed, the anarchists, who began to play an important rôle amongst the Chilean work force during the mid-1920's, identified the principal enemies of the working classes to be 'government', 'church' and 'capital'.

Archbishop Errázuriz, however, was a remarkable man. Alessandri won the Presidential election by a very narrow margin and thereafter was given unstinted support by the Archbishop. The Congressional elections of March 1921 promised to be turbulent, and the Archbishop advised Catholics to vote for those candidates who would work for national harmony:- 'favorecieran con sus votos la selección de hombres cuyas prendas sean garantías de felicidad nacional'. In September of the same year Archbishop Errázuriz issued a pastoral on the topic of Social Action. The Archbishop did not mince his words - he spoke of the needs and the sufferings of workers in both the industrial and the rural sectors, and asserted that ignorance of the deprivations of ordinary working people was so great that the latter had the right to demand fair treatment:- 'el desconocimiento de las necesidades del pueblo dan derecho a éste para presentar justas reclamaciones.' (7) He spoke of the evils of inflation which reduced the value of wages to the point where a worker could barely support himself, let alone his family, and of the iniquity of the high prices charged by employers in cases where workers were obliged to buy their goods in company stores. He pointed to the contribution made by the workers to the capitalist economy, and argued for a just salary in return for honest and efficient work:-

Cuando con trabajo inteligente y honrado el obrero contribuye de manera eficaz al aumento de la fortuna o del capitalista, se reconozcan y se premien sus servicios. (When with intelligent and honest toil the worker contributes in an effective way to the growth of wealth or capital, his services should be recognized and rewarded). (8)

Workers should also receive aid when illness or accident rendered them unfit for work. The Archbishop called upon the wealthy members of society to become more aware of the needs of the workers and to forbear from exhibiting excessive luxury - many of the rich:-

...do not know the noble feeling of comforting the unfortunate, but instead seem to cling more passionately to their material wealth, the more of it they have. (9).

In phrases which foreshadowed the writings of the Liberation Theologians almost half a century later Archbishop Errázuriz described rural workers in particular as being treated neither as brothers nor as men who are providing a service. Such a state of affairs must cease, and it was the Church's duty, as the natural protector of the poor, to help in the formation of workers' associations whose members would be able to provide mutual assistance and defence against the 'cruelty of pitiless employers.'

This pastoral letter was in many ways more outspoken against the rich and in defense of the poor than either Rerum Novarum or Quadragesimo Anno, Pope Pius XI's encyclical which was not published until ten years later. In many respects, also, it anticipated the words of Pope John Paul II when he visited Chile in 1987 - he also spoke of his disappointment at displays of ostentatious wealth when poor people were living in conditions of abject poverty.

The Work of Socially-Aware Priests and Laymen

In 1926 Father Oscar Larson became Chaplain of the National Association of Catholic Students (ANEC), which had been founded in 1915. The Association in those eleven years had deteriorated to a mere club, offering no inspiration to the idealistic and socially-aware young Catholics who were entering both the University of Chile and the Catholic University. Larson, a former student himself of Father Fernando Vives Solar SJ, began slowly to change ANEC into an influential source of Catholic social action. The pupils were

receptive and eager, and under Larson's tutelage they began to 'vivir integralmente su cristianismo' (to put their Christianity into practise in their daily lives).

The new Chaplain established study circles in all the university faculties and introduced a method of practical application which he had learnt in Belgium - it consisted in looking at problems, taking a decision on action and putting that action into application, and was the method adopted by Acción Católica which was officially founded in 1931. The rejuvenated ANEC attracted into its ranks some of the keen new students who were aware of the need for social change, and were disillusioned with the policies of the existing political parties. Amongst these students two in particular were to make their mark on history - Eduardo Frei Montalva and Bernardo Leighton Guzmán, future President and Vice-President of Chile, and founder members of the Christian Democratic Party.

ANEC grew from strength to strength, and Oscar Larson brought in as his assistant Father Vives, who was allowed back from exile in 1931. Another Jesuit who was directing a circle of social studies in St. Ignacius College was Father Jorge Fernández Pradel SJ. In 1931 Pope Pius XI, on the 40th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, published his encyclical Quadragesimo Anno, in which he reiterated and re-emphasized the social doctrines of Leo XIII. Pius XI condemned those people who 'abuse religion itself and hide under its name in order to shield themselves from the totally just claims of the workers', he also spoke of the:-

...despotic economic dictatorship which is consolidated in the hands of a few, who often are not owners but only trustees and managing directors of invested funds, which they administer according to their own arbitrary will and pleasure.

The Pope went on to say that:-

This concentration of power and might...is the fruit that the unlimited freedom of struggle among competitors has of its own nature produced, and lets only the strongest survive, which is often the same as saying, those who fight the most violently, those who give the least heed to their conscience. (10)

Not unnaturally, the Conservatives repudiated Quadragesimo Anno, and the newspaper El Diario Ilustrado, which claimed to be the organ of Conservatism and Catholicism, refused to publish it, despite pressure put upon it by influential clerics, including Archbishop Campillo of Santiago, Bishop Rafael Edwards Salas of Acción Católica, and Father Fernández Pradel SJ. In fact, one of the paper's directors protested that the encyclical would not be printed because 'it was necessary to protect Catholics from the rashness of the Pope.' (11). The majority of the clergy were still fervent supporters of the Conservative Party, and viewed as almost heretical any Catholics who considered themselves part of any other political grouping. These die-hards became obsessed with the fear of division among Catholics.

The first newspaper to publish Quadragesimo Anno in Chile was the journal of the ANEC, Revista Estudiantil Católica, which appeared in a special edition in October 1931. Also in 1931 the first collective pastoral of the Chilean episcopate was published, under the title of The true and only solution of the social question - this pastoral consisted mainly of quotations from Quadragesimo Anno, but it represented a stance of some ideological independence from the Conservative Party. The Church was by now, of course, disestablished from the State, and was able to pursue a more independent line of argument on social matters. In this pastoral the establishment of Acción Católica, an organization which brought together the initiatives of clergy and laity in social questions, was announced.

Catholicism had become merely a veneer in Chile. The performance of the Sacraments, particularly those of Baptism and Marriage, had become no more than social occasions - and Sunday Mass was an outing to meet friends rather than a statement of faith. The state of the country's religion prompted Father Alberto Hurtado SJ, who was a counsellor to Acción Católica, to write his controversial book ¿Es Chile un país católico? (Is Chile a Catholic Country?), in which he did not hesitate to state the truth about the shallowness of the Catholic religion in his country.

The book caused an uproar amongst the clergy, the hierarchy and the Catholic community, despite the fact that the majority knew, although they would not admit it, that Father Hurtado was speaking the truth. He recognized the areas in which he could do the most good in society and acted accordingly - encouraging vocations to the priesthood among young men of ability, creating a hospice for the destitute, both young and old (known as the Hogar de Cristo), founding the trade union association ASICH (Acción Sindical Chilena), and writing a book Sindicalismo, in which he outlined the political theories of Pope Pius XI.

When Conservative politicians brought pressure to bear on clerics close to Archbishop Caro of Santiago to have Father Hurtado removed from his position as counsellor to Acción Católica, it must have been obvious to many of his supporters how wide the breach was between the traditional and the progressive elements of Catholicism in Chile. A new political party was needed which would transmit the social teachings of the Church into a secular political programme. This party, known as the Falange Nacional, was formed in 1938.

CHAPTER V

Developments Leading to the Election of a Christian Democratic President of Chile in 1964

For the first time in history we are witnessing a struggle, cold-blooded in purpose and mapped out to the last detail between man and 'all that is called God'. Communism is by its nature anti-religious. It considers religion as 'the opiate of the people' because the principles of religion which speak of a life beyond the grave dissuade the proletariat from the dream of a soviet paradise which is of this world.

In the plan of the Creator, society is a natural means which man can and must use to reach his destined end. Society is for man and not vice-versa. This must not be understood in the sense of liberalistic individualism, which subordinates society to the selfish use of an individual; but only in the sense that by means of an organic union with society and by mutual collaboration the attainment of earthly happiness is placed within the reach of all.

These two extracts from the encyclical Divini Redemptoris (On Atheistic Communism), which was issued by Pope Pius XI on March 28, 1937, sum up the pronouncements which emanated from the Vatican during the period 1937-1958, a period in which there was a gradual development of progressive thought in Chile. The Holy See was concerned by the spread of Marxism, and was anxious to promote its own solution to the social question. It forbade Catholic co-operation with Marxist movements or parties, but at the same time condemned the social divisiveness of liberal capitalism, and recognized the need for social change. The kind of society envisaged by the Vatican was a 'communitarian' society which would supposedly end class conflict through new types of 'worker enterprises', which would unite workers and employers and combine social pluralism and civil liberties with a just redistribution of wealth and income.

But just as Marxist-Leninists lack any detailed description of the workings of a truly communist society, Christian Democrats had various visions of a communitarian society. (1)

Eventually, in 1964, a Christian Democratic candidate for the Presidency of Chile, Eduardo Frei, would offer this 'third way' between atheistic Communism and liberal capitalism, as a solution to the nation's problems. But before there could be a sufficient consensus amongst Catholic voters to give Frei a majority in 1964, there had to be a considerable shift in attitudes at different levels of society and of the Church.

The group of young men who broke away from the Conservative Party in 1938 to form the Falange Nacional belonged to upper-class families - they had been educated at the expensive, fee-paying Jesuit College of San Ignacio, and at the Catholic University in Santiago. Their motives and actions were sincerely directed towards helping the poorer members of society, but their organization remained small and élitist for a decade after its foundation, and its representation in government was limited to one or two cabinet posts, such as Bernardo Leighton's spell as Minister of Labour in 1938, during the second Presidency of Arturo Alessandri. It is easy to see why the Falange remained a small organization in its early years - it appealed neither to the poor, nor to the rich. Throughout the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s the working classes, although they considered themselves to be Catholics, scarcely practised their religion at all; there was a great shortage of priests, and it was not uncommon in Santiago for a working-class parish of 40,000 to 50,000 people to be served by only one priest. The papal encyclicals and the social doctrine of the Church were not being taught to the working classes, what schools there were, were mainly run for rich children, and the urban poor felt that the Church was not concerned with them. The rural poor identified the Church with the latifundia system and the Conservative Party - even though the Church by this time had publicly disassociated itself from the Conservative Party. In the eyes of the campesinos the Church had for so long been on the side of the hacendados that they did not look to it for assistance. Furthermore, Marxist organizations had already created a firm base of popular support in the labour movement - the Partido Demócrata had been founded in 1887, the Partido Obrera Socialista in 1912, and the Communist Party in 1922. As regards the landowners themselves - they did not expect to find Catholic priests and lay

workers encouraging rural workers to join unions, and they were as suspicious of the falangistas as they were of the Communists.

The Falange also encountered opposition amongst certain sectors of the Chilean hierarchy. Whilst opposing Marxism, some bishops were not in support of the Falange's efforts to unionize the workers, and in 1947 Bishop Augusto Salinas, the national episcopal chaplain of Catholic Action, publicly accused the Falange of undermining Church teachings because they had criticised Franco's authoritarian régime in Spain and favoured the pursuance of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. When the Falange publicly criticised the bishop for these accusations, the rest of the hierarchy came to his defence, as they felt that an attack by a political party on the judgement of one bishop on a matter that he considered to be essential to Catholic principle, was an attack on the whole Church. This squabble did not encourage practising Catholics to join a party which had earned the opprobrium of the hierarchy. Furthermore, although the Chilean Church had severed its links with the Conservative Party, that party continued to proclaim itself the protector of Catholic interests:-

The party holds as its highest ideal a Christian social order, and in economic affairs espouses measures that promote the common good according to principles of justice and charity. It bases its fundamental doctrine on the teaching of the Church. It understands and supports rights, duties and liberties in a Catholic perspective. (2).

A book published in 1959 by Jorge Ivan Hubner Gallo, a Catholic professor at the University of Chile, could be said to have expressed the views of many of the hierarchy, since it was officially sanctioned by the Archdiocese of Santiago. In this book, Los Católicos y la Política, Hubner Gallo denounced liberal democracy and called for government by an élite group who had the good of the country at heart - again the parallel with Franco and Spain was evident:-

Only a government that is authoritarian, honest, impersonal and efficient, and which does not represent the majority but the better people in society, can inculcate true respect in the masses. This is the only régime that can implant the principles of order, hierarchy and discipline into social life, all of which are indispensable for the attainment of the common good and national progress. (3)

In order, therefore, to achieve any impact as a political party the Falange had to overcome opposition from Right-wing elements in the Church and the Catholic upper-classes, and suspicion from the poorer classes, especially in the countryside. An early initiative amongst rural workers was the formation, in 1938, of the Unión de Campesinos in the region around Buin, in the province of Santiago. This initiative was encouraged by Oscar Larson SJ, the former Chaplain of the Catholic Students Federation, (ANEC), and by the Rev. Emilio Tagle, the future Director of the Seminary in Santiago, and later to become Archbishop of Valparaíso. By 1941 membership of the Unión de Campesinos stood at 300, in 12 rural estates. This was not a large number, compared with the labour movement which was organized by the Communists and the Socialists between 1939 and 1941, but it was a beginning, and it was especially galling to the landowners insofar as it was supported by Catholic clergy. Pressure was brought to bear on the Church hierarchy by the Conservative Party, and as a result the Unión de Campesinos was disbanded, and Oscar Larson left Chile.

Gradually, however, the Falange gained support from a variety of sources. The growth of a middle class of professionals and technicians, the increasing political and social awareness of students, the enfranchisement of women in 1949, were all factors which accounted for an increase in membership of the Falange. Catholic Action had been more influential in the towns and cities than in the rural areas, but in 1952 a Falange politician, Emilio Lorenzini, began to organize rural labour in Molina, in the province of Talca, with the support of the Bishop of Talca, Manuel Larraín Errázuriz. Bishop Larraín was one of the original group of students at the Colegio de San Ignacio to be inspired by Fr. Fernando Vives Solar SJ over 30 years earlier. Emilio Lorenzini affiliated the Federación Sindical Cristiana de la Tierra with the major Catholic labour organization, Acción Sindical y Económico Chileno (ASICH), which Fr. Alberto Hurtado SJ, an early colleague of Bishop Larraín, had founded in 1947. Campesinos were provided with legal services, literacy and leadership training and assistance in labour conflicts.

In October 1953 Lorenzini organized the first union congress of the Molina rural workers, and labour petitions were drawn up, to be presented to the landowners in November, prior to the grape harvest. When the landowners refused to negotiate with the workers, the latter declared a strike - illegal under the terms of Law 8811 - and government repression followed. Lorenzini and other union leaders were sent to gaol for offences against the Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy, which had been brought in in 1948 in order to outlaw the Communist Party. Thus, the government of President Carlos Ibañez used a law which had been passed under the previous administration of President González Videla to suppress Communism, in order to imprison progressive Catholic labour leaders. The government's action prompted a retaliation by ASICH, who organized a march on Santiago by the Molina workers. Such was the political impact of this march that the government was obliged to free Lorenzini and the other union leaders, and at the same time urge the landowners to negotiate with the workers. The effect of this victory on the rural workers was enormous, and redounded to the benefit of the Falange. It had shown that the unions could be Catholic-, rather than Marxist-, orientated, and gave credibility to the Falange's claims that they favoured land reform, social justice, rural organization and social change. The support given to the rural unions by Bishop Manuel Larraín also showed that not all members of the hierarchy were die-hard Conservatives. Subsequently the Catholic rural labour movement spread throughout the central valley and provided Falange and Catholic reformers with a solid and expanding base in the Chilean countryside.

Just as the Falange had broken away from the Conservative Party in 1938, so new divisions in the Conservative Party led to the formation in the 1940s of the Partido Conservador Social Cristiano (Conservative Social Christian Party). The members of this new party were more conservative than the falangistas and their leaders included experienced politicians - consequently they had more general support in national and local elections during the 1940s and 1950s. However, the Partido Conservador Social Cristiano was dissolved in 1957 and its members joined with ex-members of the Agrarian Labour Party and the Falange Nacional to form the Christian Democratic Party (Partido

Democrático Cristiano, PDC), in time for the Presidential election in 1958. The Communists and Socialists made a similar union in 1956 and became the Frente de Acción Popular (FRAP). It was the near-election of the FRAP candidate, Salvador Allende, in the Presidential election of 1958 which was to bring about a further convergence of Catholic forces in Chile, helped by financial and technical aid from North America and Europe.

The Campaign Against Allende

(a) The work of the Jesuits

The Presidential election of 1958 was won by Jorge Alessandri, the son of Arturo Alessandri, but his majority over Salvador Allende was very slim, (the official election results, printed in El Mercurio were:- Alessandri, 386,192; Allende 354,300; Frei 254,324; Bossay 189,182; Zamorano 41,224) (4). One very potent reason for the increase in the vote for the FRAP candidate was the electoral reform introduced by President Carlos Ibañez before he left office in 1958. The new election law made voting compulsory and brought in a system of secret ballots - this meant that the landowners could no longer control the votes of the campesinos through distribution of party ballots and by monitoring the polls. Emancipation of illiterates was not introduced until 1970, but there was enough incentive after the 1958 reform for parties such as the Marxists, the Christian Democrats and the Radicals to canvass for support in the countryside, and the age-old political hegemony of the hacienda system began to break down. The decline in the power of the landowners also meant the decline in the power of the right-wing parties.

The possibility of the election of a Marxist president in 1958 had been foreseen by Catholic Church officials as early as 1956, and they took positive steps to enlist help in their battle against Communism. Ever since the end of the Second World War the Vatican and the United States had been concerned about the advance of Marxism in Chile, and as a result of initiatives set in motion by the Church in 1956 a complex system of financial, technical, educational,

organizational and religious assistance was orchestrated which involved many interests, not necessarily specifically Catholic ones, in this ideological Cold War.

Thus, in 1956, the Chilean bishops requested the Jesuit General in Rome, Father John Baptist Janssens, to send Jesuit social scientists to Chile. Fr. Janssens sent a fellow Belgian, Father Roger Vekemans SJ, who was to spearhead the 'offensive' against Marxism for the next decade, with incredible success. One of Fr. Vekemans' first actions was to recruit a researcher from the business community, another Belgian, J.N.A. Sierens, a former executive of Sabena airlines. Sierens began in 1957 to compile systematic reports on various Chilean institutions - in the spheres of big business, the political parties, the universities, the trade unions, branches of government, - to assess the amount of Communist penetration and to gauge the numerical and financial strength of the 'opposition'.

In a confidential report, entitled La Politique Chilienne en 1959, Sierens observed that the PDC candidate in 1958, Eduardo Frei, had taken votes away from Jorge Alessandri, the rightist candidate, the result being that the FRAP candidate, Salvador Allende, had almost won. If a Marxist electoral victory was to be avoided in 1964, Frei would have to be altogether prevented from standing, or given such support that a PDC victory was a certainty:-

Eduardo Frei, the defeated candidate, represents Christian Democracy and many independents of the middle classes. He has now rallied to Alessandri in order to reinforce the latter's parliamentary strength in all economic questions where there is compatibility between Alessandri's programme and his. Undeniably Catholic, Frei's candidacy has once more risked dividing the Catholic forces and returning to power the Socialist and Communist left. The present situation is extremely dangerous. (5)

In another report Sierens found that Communists were 'well entrenched and increasing their influence.' He concluded by making the following recommendations:- the Church should act in a united fashion to prevent a Marxist victory in 1964; the bishops should work together; Catholic Action should be alerted; Catholic labour unions - specifically ASICH

and the Federación de Obreros Chilenos (FEBRECH), who were quarrelling with each other, should be reconciled.

After completing his report Sierens returned to Belgium, but Fr. Vekemans took special note of his analyses. The Jesuit Centre for Research and Social Action, (CIAS), was organized by Fr. Vekemans and housed at the Centro Bellarmino in Santiago, and it was at the Centro Bellarmino that the campaign against Allende was to be orchestrated. The Marxist revolution in Cuba in 1959 gave added impetus to the anti-Allende campaign:-

On September 21, 1961, the Chilean Conference of Bishops received from their specially constituted Pastoral Advisory Commission (which included Jesuit CIAS members Roger Vekemans and Renato Poblete), a unanimous proposal for Church backing of the Frei candidacy through Catholic Action and all other Catholic organizations. (6)

The term 'other Catholic organizations' was extremely broad and came to include international Catholic agencies. The Jesuits of CIAS began to campaign for financial help from North American bishops, religious orders and Catholic foundations, whilst the Jesuit provincial superior in Chile, Fr. Alvaro Lavin, appealed for priests to be sent to Chile from North America to help in Jesuit schools and thus free Chilean Jesuits to assist CIAS to fight Communism.

The Chilean Jesuits' requests for help from their North American colleagues met with little response, however, and they were instead encouraged to seek help from secular sources. Fr. Vekemans established an agency independent of the Jesuits - known as the Centro para el Desarrollo Económico y Social de America Latina, (DESAL), - and this agency was granted a great deal of autonomy by the Church. It received funds from a wide variety of international sources, such as the US Agency for International Development (funded by the CIA), the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, Western European governments and the international Christian Democratic movement. One source of finance was the West German government, which sent millions of dollars to DESAL via the German Catholic Bishops' Fund (MISEREOR).

Coming to Chile directly from Europe, (he maintained that he was not sure where Chile was until he was told to go there!), Fr. Vekemans had been able to see the social situation with fresh eyes, and had been shocked by what he saw. He realized that the social structure itself needed to be reorganized. In his opinion the Catholic Church's approach to social problems was basically sound, but it needed help in modernizing its system:-

The Catholic Church, especially through the action of its Popes, is the only international power that during the last hundred years has been seriously interested in presenting an ideology and the reformation of structures for contemporary society. However, many Catholics in Latin America have not reached the level needed for the solution of its social problems. (7)

Fr. Vekemans realized that a new system of society could not be imposed from above - that, for example, the redistribution of wealth could not of itself solve social problems, end privation and bring about the involvement of the lower classes in the political life of their country. What was required was the development of the productive and political skills of individuals. In a confidential document sent to MISEREOR in 1961, Fr. Vekemans called for the construction of a 'New Order' in Latin America, and he specified what that order must be:-

As this is a revolutionary struggle to restore a New Order, these organizations (of aid recipients, workers, peasants) require an ideology, which in Latin America must either be Christian or Marxist, there is no alternative....For the revolutionary struggle to be successful and for a just and democratic order to be restored, the formation of élites on all levels is required: our universities, our schools for the education of professionals, our technical schools, are indispensable instruments for this task. They should teach our Christian doctrine, the structure of a Christian society, the history of social-Christian labour movements, the model of base organizations etc....The Communists have understood this problem well: when they send a technician he must be well-versed in Marxist propaganda. (8)

'State solutions' to social and economic problems were discounted by Fr. Vekemans - whether the States involved were Marxist, military or even Christian Democratic - since State solutions cause problems of paternalism, excessive bureaucracy and dependence by the groups receiving aid. What was required was that the poor should be given

help and advice so that they could help themselves - but this help should not consist of charity. The millions of dollars raised by DESAL were used to finance projects such as neighbourhood associations, workshops, savings and loan associations, co-ops and trade-unions. These 'base organizations' were run on business lines - money was loaned and not given. Known as CONCORDE a network of base organizations quickly spread throughout Chile. Fr. Vekemans had proved two important points - one, that a change in the structure of society was possible, and two, that such a change could be inspired by Catholic doctrine rather than Marxist ideology.

Also a part of the activities of the Jesuits at the Centro Bellarmino was the production of the monthly magazine Mensaje, edited by Father Hernan Larraín. A divergence of opinion developed between Fathers Vekemans and Larraín, however, as the former became more involved in the world of international finance through the contacts he made as director of DESAL, and the latter aimed his magazine at the student population which had more radical ideas and developed solidarity with the underclasses against the 'Establishment'. This potential rift did not become serious, however, until after the election of Eduardo Frei in 1964.

(b) The Chilean Hierarchy

Despite the fact that the Chilean hierarchy in 1947 closed ranks against the Falange when the latter became involved in a public dispute with Bishop Augusto Salinas, not all the bishops, by any means, were opposed to the socially progressive ideas of the Falange leaders. During the 1930s and 1940s the Chilean bishops published three pastoral letters on social problems. Although they mentioned some specific problems, such as low wages, and stressed the evils of both liberal capitalism and Marxism, they advocated the need for change in the individual human heart, rather than in the structure of the economy, as a means to eliminate poverty. (9). A fourth pastoral, issued in 1949, showed some marked differences from its predecessors, which had consisted substantially of quotations from the papal encyclicals of Pope Pius XI. The 1949 pastoral, entitled Concerning Social Problems,

referred to several radio addresses and speeches made by Pope Pius XII to meetings of Catholic Action groups; it also had something to say about private property, recommending that special steps be taken so that workers could become property owners, and bitterly attacking Chilean landowners who discharged from their estates peasants whose families had served there for generations. A long section of this pastoral also dealt with the need for Christian trade unions as an alternative to Socialist ones, and the bishops demanded that all opposition to the setting-up of unions should cease and that everyone should help in their establishment. (10).

Between 1955 and 1964 fourteen of the twenty-eight Chilean bishops either died or retired and, on the recommendation of the papal nuncio, Mgr. Sebastian Baggio, several of their replacements were young priests who tended to be social progressives. Seven of the new bishops had been chaplains of Catholic Action programmes, all of them had been educated in the same schools and universities as the early leaders of the Falange in the 1930s and 1940s, and many had family ties or had retained close friendships with them. In the 1950s the Seminary in Santiago was directed by Fr. Emilio Tagle, the future Archbishop of Valparaiso, who put great emphasis on making his students share the needs of the poor by serving part-time in working class parishes.

In November 1958 John XXIII became Pope, and although he only reigned for five years his impact on the Church was enormous. He convoked the first international meeting of bishops for 100 years - known as the Second Vatican Council - which lasted from 1962 to 1965. The Chilean hierarchy who attended the Second Vatican Council impressed the Council with their cohesion, and were themselves impressed by the progressiveness of contemporary European theology. They returned to Chile with many ideas for reform, including decentralization of authority, greater responsibilities for the laity and more social action on behalf of the poor.

In 1962 the Chilean bishops initiated their own land reform experiments, and in the same year they published two important pastoral letters. The first, published in March 1962, dealt with the problem of

the peasant, and denounced under-utilization of productive land, absentee landlords, lack of technical assistance and training for small landowners, and advocated just prices for agricultural products.(11) The second, published in September 1962 and entitled The Social and Political Duty, was written for the bishops by the Jesuits at the Centro Bellarmino; it reiterated many of the warnings about Communism that Pope Pius XI had made in his encyclicals, and described the dangers that Communism represents to religion, family life, the individual, private property and the working class:-

Communism...deprives man of his liberty, suppresses all dignity and morality of the human person; it denies to the individual all natural rights that are proper to the human person and attributes them to the collectivity. Individuals have no right whatever of ownership of natural resources or of the means of production; all types of private property, according to the Communists, should be destroyed at the root....For the Communist, the family has no reason for being; it is a bourgeois creation upon which bourgeois society is founded. It must be weakened and destroyed. Communism destroys any bond between mother and child; it denies to parents the right to educate their children; and it places in the hands of the collectivity the care of home and children; woman is thrown into public life and into work, no matter how heavy, just the same as man....In a Communist régime the workers have no rights except those given them by the State; there is no room for impartial information nor for legitimate strikes, nor for free unionization. (12).

The bishops' letter concluded that 'collaboration with Communism is not possible', although it did concede that it might be permissible to deal with individuals who happened to be Communists:- 'In a matter as delicate as this...one must use prudence and obey the directives of the Church.' (13).

This pastoral was published again in 1963, and in 1964, and was in great demand by the Christian Democrats, who distributed it by the thousands during the election campaign of 1964, illustrating it with posters of Chilean children being branded on the forehead with the hammer and sickle. It did not mention Frei and Allende by name - but it did not have to. The very words of the PDC campaign slogan were echoed - the 'Revolution in Liberty' was the duty of all Christians. Marxism in any form was unequivocally condemned. In the same way, Frei did not present himself as the preferred candidate of the Church, but

the similarity between his platform and the bishops' letter was unmistakeable. During the election campaign the PDC depicted Allende as a pawn of the Communist Party:-

The strong condemnation of Marxism in the 1962 bishops' letter, in which they warned of 'persecution, tears and bloodshed' for the Church if a Communist should win...made it almost impossible for a devout Catholic to support Allende in good conscience. (14).

In point of fact, both Frei and Allende had similar platforms - they both advocated agrarian reform, more government control over industry, more State ownership of natural resources, but Frei stated that his administration would employ democratic, rather than authoritarian, means to implement change.

The result of the 1964 Presidential election was an overwhelming victory for Eduardo Frei, who received 55.7% of the vote. He was particularly supported by the women of Chile to whom the Church's message, especially concerning children and the bond between mother and child, had been very strong. Almost twice as many women voted for Frei (844,423) as for Allende (375,766) - the men's vote was split more evenly i.e. 673,687 for Frei and 606,356 for Allende. (15).

CHAPTER VI

1964-1970, The Presidency of Eduardo Frei

Despite the fact that Eduardo Frei's victory on behalf of the Christian Democratic Party in the Presidential elections of 1964 was due in no small measure to the assistance of the Catholic Church, there was no return to the days when priests and bishops had been actively engaged in party politics, and a political party - the Conservatives - had bolstered the Church and protected its privileges. The Christian Democratic leaders accepted the concept of religious pluralism and avoided direct ties with the Church - Eduardo Frei and his fellow Christian Democrats were guided by the spirit of Christian humanism rather than by sectarian Catholicism. Their guru was Jacques Maritain, the French philosopher, who, having converted to Catholicism in 1906, had been influenced by the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas concerning the popular origin of political authority. Maritain employed the doctrines of St. Thomas to argue that government must be based on the consent of the people, and wrote many books about the application of Thomist principles to democracy. Some of the best known of these works are Integral Humanism (1936 French edition), The Rights of Man and the Natural Law (1943) and Man and the State (1951). Maritain argued that 'integral' or 'personalist' and 'communitarian' democracy was the form of government most in keeping with Christian values. He distinguished this religiously based personalism from the egotism of Liberalism and the collectivism of Marxism and presented a vision of a new democracy shaped by theocentric humanism, in which it was possible to achieve economic and social progress without the loss of individual self-fulfilment.

In Chile the tradition of anticlericalism was still strong enough to create serious difficulties for a party that maintained close official bonds with the Church. Chilean clergymen at the very highest levels of authority accepted this fact. (1).

The Chilean hierarchy had not forgotten the words of Archbishop Crescente Errázuriz over forty years earlier, when he announced that the Church:-

... cannot be held accountable for the act of any political party, nor does it seek to influence them. It leaves them completely free, and in return demands absolute and complete independence for its own activities.

The bishops' overwhelming motive in supporting Frei - although they had been careful not to name him specifically in their pastoral letters - had been to keep out the Marxist candidate, Allende, and once the elections were over and the Communist threat had been repelled, they were anxious to withdraw from the political arena and the world of US and European finance. This was not so easily achieved, however, as the Jesuit experts who had been drafted into the Centro Bellarmino several years earlier had by now established programmes of services to underprivileged people, students, businessmen and political and union leaders which involved the outlay of millions of dollars. In a report on the activities of the Centro Bellarmino, prepared in 1966 by Father Renato Poblete SJ for US AID, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and other sources of financial support, the following projects were detailed:-

1. A \$3,000,000 emergency low-cost housing programme - the Centro had constructed and sold 25,000 prefabricated low-cost homes during the previous year.
2. Production co-operatives. With a Chilean Government subsidy of \$80,000 and a US AID grant of \$460,000 the Centro had organized 65 production centres in slum areas employing 2,000 persons.
3. Central library facilities. The Centro Bellarmino library contained 20,000 volumes and 120 technical periodicals, and was open to students at the University of Chile and the Catholic University, as well as to Jesuit research groups.
4. The Socio-Religious Research Centre, which did basic research on Church matters, not only for Chilean bishops, but also for CELAM (the Bishops' Council of Latin America).
5. The Institute of Humanities and Theology. Special courses were offered to students and to business, civic, labour and political leaders.
6. The monthly magazine Mensaje, which published 8,000 copies, mainly read by University students and leaders in business and Government circles. 1,500 copies were sent to various Latin American countries.
7. A study centre for public high-school students.
8. A Specialized Services Centre organizing activities such as communications media techniques, a School of Psychology, the Latin American Institute of Doctrine and Social Studies (ILADES), the Centre for Latin American Economic and Social

Development (DESAL), and the supply of Jesuit theology teachers to the Catholic University. (2)

One consequence of all this activity, mainly funded though it was from sources outside Chile, was to make the Catholic Church appear to be very wealthy to ordinary Chileans - the rich considered that the Church did not require their contributions, the poor tried to extract as much aid from it as possible. The Church became a bureaucracy, and once the common aim of avoiding the election of a Marxist President had been avoided by the victory of Frei, quarrels began to break out among all the various factions who had worked together before the elections.

Father Vekemans had never been enthusiastic about the 'State solutions' of the PDC. In his opinion the consequences of social and economic problems being solved through State institutions were apathy and a lack of dynamism, (a) because the bureaucrats dealing with the problems were not personally interested in solving them and, (b) because the persons receiving the State aid were not encouraged to self-help. Vekemans, through his DESAL organization, wished to change the structure of Chilean society, and fundamental to his programme was the foundation of 'intermediate structures' or 'base organizations of Christian inspiration', which would bring together workers, peasants, slum-dwellers, and other depressed groups, and raise their consciousness of their place in society. Eventually, in 1966, Vekemans alienated President Frei. The bone of contention was CONCORDE, Vekemans' network of base organizations, which he insisted should be administered by DESAL as a private agency, unaffiliated to the Christian Democratic Government. Frei refused - now that the PDC were in power they wished to put their own social programme through the legislature and, furthermore, wanted to retain their influence over the working classes, who provided much of their political support.

The discord between Fr. Vekemans and the government worried Fr. Hernan Larrain, the editor of the Jesuit magazine Mensaje. Fr. Larrain felt that by antagonizing the President, Vekemans was weakening the position of the Jesuits in general. There was already discord between

the two priests because of the different groups they were aiming to influence - Vekemans the world of international high finance, and Larraín the student population. So long as university youth continued to support President Frei, and Christian Democratic students held control of the National and Catholic University senates, Fr. Larraín was anxious to maintain good relations between President Frei and the Jesuits. This situation would change as students became disenchanted with the official PDC and formed their own rebel wing.

The Myth of the Revolution in Liberty

The Christian Democrats, once their leader was installed as President in 1964, and particularly after they made important gains in the Congressional elections in 1965, which gave them majority control in the House of Deputies, were sincere in their aim of revolutionizing Chilean society. They were aware of the inequalities of wealth and opportunities caused by a highly stratified class system, and they aimed to even out these inequalities by levelling out income and wealth, improving the living standards of the urban and rural poor, broadening their opportunities and making Chile a more fair and democratic nation. Their ideas on reform covered the whole gamut of state activities - tax reform, improvement in the balance of payments, control of inflation, better health and education programmes, vocational training and agrarian reform. Unfortunately, six years was not long enough to initiate and carry through such an ambitious programme, and, despite their majority in Congress, the government came up against strong opposition to almost every feature of its reform legislation.

On the one hand, plans such as land reform alienated the right-wing parties because they impinged upon traditional privileges, and also upset the left-wing parties because they did not operate swiftly or comprehensively enough. The government's plans to 'Chileanize' the copper industry also upset the left-wing. as it did not completely nationalize Chile's copper assets. President Frei refused to seek alliances among other political parties, so the PDC found itself alone in Congress facing a hostile opposition.

Similarly, the government's programme of aid to the urban poor was not able to help all the shanty towns at the same time and at the same pace, so that inevitably there was disappointment amongst those callampas who were not helped:-

The backlog of need and poverty made even significant improvements in the living conditions of some groups of the urban poor a political defeat for the incumbent administration, just as distribution of land to some thirty thousand campesinos alienated many times that number who did not receive land from the government programme. (3)

The Christian Democratic administration offered favourable treatment to foreign investors, and the result was that more multi-national companies than ever before established themselves in Chile. These companies tended to be high-technology, capital-intensive industries which did not employ a large number of local workers and so did not significantly reduce unemployment. What they did do was increase Chile's dependence on foreign, particularly US, capital.

Fr. Vekemans had been right when he estimated that the type of social programmes envisaged by the PDC would encourage the growth of bureaucracy. The government mobilized thousands of workers, students, campesinos and women into unions and co-operatives which depended on government initiatives and subsidies. Hundreds of civil servants were employed to deal with these enterprises and the inevitable delays caused by 'red tape' gave rise to frustration. The result was an increasing tendency towards illegal seizures of land and factories (tomas), which the government was unwilling to punish by the use of state police - so that owners started to organize their own 'white guards'. Even so, the government did, on some occasions, use force against the workers during illegal tomas, and when workers were killed or injured, as in Puerto Montt in 1969, the left-wing press made political propaganda out of the affair.

Under this pressure the PDC itself eventually began to splinter. In May, 1969, the left-wing sector of the PDC withdrew and formed the MAPU (Movement of Unified Popular Action), which later that year joined

the Popular Unity coalition of left-wing parties. But several years earlier student groups had already begun to show their dissatisfaction with the policies of the PDC. The 1960's generation of Chilean students were looking for an identity as Latin Americans and wished to break once and for all with their colonial past - and that included the United States. The generation of students to which the leaders of the PDC had belonged in the 1930s found their inspiration in the social doctrine of the Church, which had been formulated in response to developments in Western Europe, and which tended to support very gradual change, rather than a revolutionary transformation of society. Eduardo Frei, himself the son of a Swiss immigrant, showed clearly in his writings that he believed that Chile shared the same heritage as the Christian West, and that the road to development in Chile should be based on the historical development of Western Europe and the USA. In La Verdad Tiene su Hora he wrote:-

These nations which form the democratic peoples of the West, whose culture is also ours, and whose reactions we have followed, repeating them at a distance not by chance but because of roots which go to the common sources which sustain us, have had to face in recent years problems similar to our own: social conflicts and tensions, together with crises and limitations in the economic order, a dissatisfied proletariat in open struggle, within a climate of political pressure, not to mention the tremendous weight of the external threat. To a certain extent, it is as if we saw, on a larger stage and with more capable actors, the presentation of our own drama and the ideas and sentiments which later arrive at these distant shores in successive waves. (4)

The young students who in the mid-sixties were coming to prominence in the universities in Chile, no longer looked to Europe for their inspiration, but were intensely aware of themselves as Latin Americans. Thus, when they saw that the Christian Democratic Government was increasing Chile's involvement with western business interests, they became disenchanted with the PDC. The United States had a particular interest in supporting the PDC's 'Revolution in Liberty', as they saw it as a positive alternative to the Cuban revolution, and US financial assistance was forthcoming on a generous scale. In a large measure the social reforms of the Christian Democrats came to depend not only on copper prices, but also on the goodwill of

the US Administration and the multi-national corporations. This dependency, in turn, involved Chile in American foreign policy, including the Vietnam war, a cause which was highly unpopular with the Christian Democratic Youth Movement.

In their search for an identity as Chileans the predominantly upper- and middle-class students came to know the poor and weaker members of society, and developed a feeling of solidarity with them. They also discovered that their own reaction as Christians to the terrible misery of 'the people' had a lot in common with the feelings of young Marxists. The possibility of dialogue between Marxists and Christians opened up as both groups realized that their aims were not diametrically opposed.

The Jesuit monthly magazine Mensaje, whose readership was mainly composed of students, began in the late 1960s to criticize the Frei régime for not going far enough in its reforms. There was a series of student strikes in the Catholic Universities of Santiago and Valparaíso in 1968, and Mensaje clearly sided with the students. (Mensaje 17, 1968)

Then in August 1968 Hernan Larrain published an editorial on the Diary of Che Guevara that praised the revolutionary for his 'great love' and 'revolutionary conviction'....Eduardo Frei was 'profoundly disturbed' and communicated his reaction through (Renato) Poblete to Larrain. The Chilean bishops published an open letter condemning the editorial and reprimanding Mensaje. The Cardinal (Silva) told Poblete that Mensaje was 'neither Christian nor much of anything else'. The open letter of the bishops was published on October 4, 1968. It did not refer to the Che article by name, saying only that the bishops 'disapprove of certain articles published in Mensaje. They are extremist and we do not sense in them the breadth of love for men which is made up of respect and humble service'. (5)

Hernan Larrain could not afford to alienate the bishops, who might have obliged their priests to cancel their subscriptions to Mensaje and thus force it to close, so he agreed that he would no longer advocate violent revolution in its pages.

The rift between the editor of Mensaje and the hierarchy was just one of a series of rifts which began to appear in the once-solid

coalition of forces which had helped to bring about the victory of Eduardo Frei in 1964. The difference of opinion between Fathers Larraín and Vekemans has already been referred to - eventually, in October 1968, the four Jesuit priests who produced Mensaje announced their intention of leaving the Centro Bellarmino; they were ultimately given permission to live amongst the poor in a lower-class barrio, whilst continuing to produce their magazine from the Centro Bellarmino. The deterioration in relations between the Centro Bellarmino itself and the government was highlighted in 1967, when the Centro requested the annual subsidy which they had been accustomed to receive 'from governments of Christian inspiration'. The request, for 100,000 escudos for 1968, was refused.

In more ways than one 1968 was a crucial year for the Catholic Church, not just in Chile, but in Latin America as a whole, since in that year the bishops of Latin America met at Medellin in Colombia in order to discuss the implications of the Second Vatican Council for their own continent. The Medellin conference was the second conference of Latin American bishops to take place - the first such meeting, a decade earlier, had resulted in the creation of a permanent secretariat, known as CELAM (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano: Latin American Bishops Conference), of which Chilean Bishop Manuel Larraín was a founder member and later president. Thus the Catholic Church in Latin America was beginning to assume an awareness of a Latin American identity and of shared problems. At Medellin the bishops argued the necessity for the Church to break its traditional alliances with privileged élites or the State, in order to be free to assume a prophetic mission as the champion of the underprivileged and the opponent of injustice. New stress was put on the importance of the individual conscience - the traditional teaching of the Church had been that salvation could only be achieved through obedience to priest-taught doctrine. This new openness allowed for the acceptance of the validity of other Christian religions and thence to the possibility of some Christian-Marxist dialogue. Co-operation between Catholics and members of other religions, or even secular bodies, became a possibility. Authority was not to be monopolized by the hierarchy - the laity was to acquire increased responsibility.

Pope Paul VI attended the Medellin conference - in fact the bases for discussion were the Constitution of Vatican II (Gaudium et Spes), Pope Paul VI's own 1967 encyclical Populorum Progressio, and his speech in Bogotá. Since the reign of Pope John XXIII there had been discernible a greater tolerance on the part of the Vatican towards left-wing ideas. In Pacem in Terris John recognized that historical movements which were philosophically opposed to religious faith could be carriers of important truths. Paul VI continued this more tolerant attitude - he even went so far as to receive the Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko at the Vatican in 1966.

There was a very different attitude on the Church's part towards the candidates in the 1970 Chilean Presidential elections than there had been prior to the 1964 elections. Eduardo Frei was not eligible for re-election, and the PDC chose as their candidate Radomiro Tomic, one of the founders of the Falange. He was an unfortunate choice - alienating the right-wing voters by expressing his determination to press for even more thorough agrarian reform by expropriating all the large rural estates 'from the Andes to the sea'. Salvador Allende was standing again, as the leader of a new left-wing grouping called Unidad Popular, but he had been unsuccessful three times already and there was no reason to suppose that he would not be defeated yet again. The Chilean bishops could no longer call upon the experts of the Centro Bellarmino to give them coherent policy proposals, as the Jesuit staff at the Centro was so divided within itself. Other advisors were called in who did not share the fears of Vekemans and Sierens in 1958 and see the wisdom of abandoning the Chilean right. The candidate most likely to succeed appeared to be ex-President Jorge Alessandri.

The 1970 Presidential campaign elicited no new episcopal declarations on the duty to vote. The bishops felt that Jorge Alessandri would win easily - as the opinion polls were predicting. They considered that the Christian Democrats were too divided to win, and had moved too far to the left by 1970 to attract those voters from the right who had voted for Frei to keep out Allende in 1964. If the PDC were going to spoil anyone's chances it was thought to be

Allende's. The bishops also felt that the Church had become too linked in the public mind with the PDC, and that now was their chance to show more independence. They were quite happy with the prospect of victory for Alessandri - who was 'muy católico', and in any case seemed to be already assured of success.

Unhappily for him, however, Jorge Alessandri did not win the election. He was defeated by his own performance on television. The image he put across was of a tired, inarticulate old man, and his ratings tumbled. Alessandri's weakness as a campaigner, and Tomic's refusal to reconstruct the alliance between the Partido Nacional, other conservative forces and the Christian Democrats, which had given Frei success in 1964, split the vote three ways, and Salvador Allende won the election by a very slim plurality (Allende 36.3%, Alessandri 34.9%, Tomic 27.8%). (6)

In fact, Allende's share of the vote in 1970 (36.3%) was smaller than it had been in 1964 (38.3%) - the significant difference was that in 1964 he faced a Church united behind Eduardo Frei, whereas in 1970 the Church was split between Tomic and Alessandri, and the rebelde splinter group of the PDC (MAPU) had joined Allende's own UP coalition.

The 'Revolution in Liberty' had proved not to be a revolution after all. Some important reforms had been carried out, a tax system had been instituted, land reforms had improved the lives of thousands of campesinos, primary and secondary education had been brought within the reach of many more people, and public health had improved, due to the introduction of rural clinics and trained health workers. But, on the debit side, the Christian Democrats had not solved the country's basic economic problems - inflation, dependence on foreign capital, slow economic growth and unequal distribution of wealth.

Christian Democracy's broad-front reformist projects proved to be both too much and too little of what Chile required to become a more Christian and more democratic society. (7)

CHAPTER VII

1970-1973, Salvador Allende, the Unidad Popular Government

In his book The Church as a Political Factor in Latin America David E. Mutchler, a former Jesuit priest who had access to many confidential documents relative to the Church's involvement in the Chilean election campaigns of 1964 and 1970, makes the following dramatic comment on the reaction to Salvador Allende's designation as President:-

The panic that then gripped the Chilean upper classes (and the Chilean Cardinal Silva Henrques) for a few months knew no bounds. Wealthy churchmen and laymen alike scrambled to liquidate their Chilean financial holdings and to deposit them in North American or European banks. Roger Vekemans swept up his DESAL operations and flew off to Venezuela, only to be denied entry there. (1)

This pejorative statement may, or may not, be true concerning Cardinal Silva's protection of his own private wealth, but on the public scene he and other Church leaders provided important support and legitimacy for the Allende government, particularly during the early years. Cardinal Silva had a useful precedent for his public action in the support which Bishop José María Caro of La Serena (later Cardinal Caro, the first Chilean Cardinal), had given in 1938 to Pedro Aguirre Cerda, who was elected by a slim majority as President of Chile at the head of a Popular Front government containing Radical, Socialist and Communist groups. Bishop Caro had stated that 'the Church would always be respectful of legitimate governments' in Chile, and would be willing to cooperate with them in promoting the common good. (2) Thus, very shortly after Congress had confirmed the Presidency of Salvador Allende, Cardinal Silva made the traditional visit to the President and pledged the support of the Church in helping him to carry out his programmes to promote the common good (El Saludo al Presidente Allende, Iglesia de Santiago, 8.10.70). A Te Deum was held in Santiago Cathedral, attended by President Allende and his cabinet on November 3, 1970, at which Cardinal Silva preached of the importance of united action to help the poor of Chile.

There were, in fact, many points of agreement between the Church and the UP government. Catholic attitudes towards Marxism had altered since the uncompromising papal encyclicals of the 1930s and 1940s. Whereas Pope Pius XI had stated that 'Communism is intrinsically wrong and no-one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever' (Divini Redemptoris, March 28, 1937), the papal encyclicals of Popes John XXIII and Paul VI were less polemical in their treatment of both Marxism and Socialism, and accepted the possibility of co-operation between Christians and non-Christians in promoting programmes which were aimed at the improvement of social conditions. Further rapprochement was achieved after Vatican II and Medellin, when some Latin American theologians went so far as to endorse Marxist attitudes concerning the class struggle, and to declare the impossibility of Church neutrality in politics in countries where basic human needs and rights were being denied. They asserted, in fact, that the official Church's position of neutrality was a tacit support of the status quo in countries where there was gross inequality between rich and poor. The Church ought, in their opinion, to make a radical commitment to the poor. In Chile the Christian Left was represented by a group known as Christians for Socialism (CpS), whose origins and development I will deal with later in this chapter. As far as the official Church in Chile, consisting of Cardinal Silva and the hierarchy and clergy, were concerned, their attitude to Marxism in their own country was that it was possible for them to co-operate with the Allende government, many of whose objectives concerning better housing for the poor, creation of employment, price control and restriction of foreign capitalist investment, were in harmony with Catholic doctrine. Thus, two months after Allende's election, Cardinal Silva made the following statement:-

I believe that Socialism contains important Christian values, and in many respects is very superior to capitalism - the value it places on work and the primacy of the person against capital. I think other extraordinary values of Socialism are its break with the necessity and tyranny of the pursuit of profit and its ability to co-ordinate all levels of production. I believe that these ideas which it espouses are very close to the Church's

preferred goals in the organization of society. (Ultima Hora (Santiago), 12.11.70). (3)

An opportunity occurred for the Chilean hierarchy to formulate their attitude to Allende's policies after Pope Paul VI had, in early 1971, issued an apostolic letter on the 80th anniversary of Rerum Novarum. The Pope recognized that Marxism was no longer a 'unitary ideology', but had splintered into different levels, some of which were attractive to Christians. He asked Catholics to distinguish carefully between different aspects of Socialism so as to safeguard such values as 'liberty, responsibility and openness to the spiritual', but he did not repeat the traditional papal condemnation of Marxism and all forms of Christian collaboration with it.

This cautious acceptance of some Socialist values on the Vatican's part allowed the Chilean bishops to articulate their own ideas concerning the possibility of co-operation with the government which was in power in their country. In May 1971 they published a working document entitled Evangelio, politico y socialismos. The contents of the document were considered by many to be 'open' and 'positive', although they were criticised by left-wing priests and theologians as being too cautious and supportive of the status quo (4). The bishops spoke of socialismos in the plural, thus emphasizing that there was a possibility of an overlap of ideals between Christianity and certain types of Socialist philosophy:-

Actually there are many forms of Socialism. It is conceivable that among them are some that are compatible with the spirit of Christianity. These would be the forms of Socialism that can duly guarantee that the State will not be transformed into an uncontrollable and dictatorial force, and that can assure the promotion of the values of personal and social liberation that the Gospel of the Risen Christ proclaims. (5)

For his part, President Allende himself recognized that his government had to take into account the Christian traditions of his country. His election was the only instance of a democratic shift to a Marxist government to have taken place in the western hemisphere. It had not needed a bloody revolution to bring him to power and he did not wish to provoke a class war:-

Our Socialist goal is in accord with Chilean traditions and historical development....We have not come to power through bullets, but by votes, and we will make our revolution accordingly....We will not follow the Cuban, nor the Soviet, nor the Yugoslav model. We are forming a unity of six parties with participation of Christians, Marxists, and laicist groups. (6)

The above sentiments were expressed by Allende in an interview given to Siempre, (Mexico City), on October 9, 1970, and in another interview, with the New York Times, he indicated that he expected to co-operate, rather than to conflict, with the Church:

I believe the Church will not be a factor against the Popular Unity government. On the contrary, they are going to be a factor in our favour, because we are going to try to make a reality of Christian thought. (7)

Allende's position as head of a six-party coalition was, furthermore, precarious and in order to be able to form a government he had been obliged to come to an agreement with the Christian Democratic Party. The Chilean constitution gave the President great discretionary power, and placed the Presidency on a higher level than Congress. In order to reduce Allende's power the Christian Democrats imposed conditions in return for their support of his candidacy, conditions which were designed to ensure that he could not take any decisions as President which were not approved by Congress. Among these constitutional guarantees were safeguards concerning the multi-party system, the maintenance of civil liberties and freedom of the press, protection of the armed forces against political purges or the creation of militia, autonomy of the university system, continued public subsidies for private education (on the whole this signified Catholic education), and protection for civil servants against dismissals or political persecution. One significant change was the ending of the State monopoly over television. In order to prevent the left-wing government from having sole access to the television, the University of Chile and the Catholic University were authorized to join in establishing a network to cover the whole country, and a TV council was established in order to supervise and control the medium.

Taking into account, therefore, Allende's slim majority over his rival candidates in the election, the differing ideologies among the six parties forming his UP coalition (including Communists, Socialists, Radicals and the MAPU rebels from the PDC), and the constitutional curbs put on him by the guarantees demanded by the PDC in return for their support for his confirmation as President, he was not in a position to implement a very radical form of Marxism. Such aspects of Marxism as strong centralized State control, single-party rule, dictatorship of the proletariat and revolutionary violence were ruled out as inappropriate, and although there were plans for State control over large enterprises, particularly foreign-owned ones, the vast majority of smaller industries were to remain in private hands and, most importantly from the Church's point of view, the Chilean Left committed itself to 'respect...all religious ideas and beliefs and guarantees for the exercise of worship'.

Christians for Socialism (CpS)

During the early years of the UP government, whilst political and ecclesiastical leaders were finding common ground in their approach to social change, the problems which the bishops had to deal with arose not in their relations with the government, but within the ranks of their own clergy and lay workers. The emergence of the Christian Left in Chile pre-dated the election of Salvador Allende and went back to 1968. Until then the expression of Catholic social activism had taken place within the Christian Democratic Party and a 'pastoral movement' centred on the poblaciones. But the failure of the Frei government to implement the social reforms which their supporters had hoped for in 1964, and the build-up of political activity prior to the 1970 Presidential election, made many Catholic social activists decide to take a more left-wing stance. A rebel wing developed in the PDC. On August 11, 1968, a group of nine radical priests and about 200 lay people 'occupied' the Cathedral in Santiago and used the publicity which this 'sit-in' received to denounce social injustice and the failure of the Church to alleviate it. The protest was timed to coincide with the Eucharistic Congress in Bogotá - attended by Pope

Paul VI - which preceded the CELAM conference in Medellin. The 'Young Church' movement grew out of this occupation, and from the 'Young Church' movement some members moved into secular politics and helped to form the MAPU (Movement of Unified Popular Action), which was to be one of the parties in the UP coalition, and others, particularly members of the clergy who wished to work for reform within the Church, subsequently formed a series of new movements i.e. 'the 80', 'Christians for Socialism' (CpS), and 'the 200'.

In April 1971, 80 priests, half of whom were foreigners, mainly working in poor areas of Santiago, met to discuss their pastoral responsibilities under the new Socialist government. The Cardinal had already expressed his view that there were many shared goals in the aims of Christians and Socialists in his statement of November 12, 1970, but 'the 80' went much further. They gave their support to several specific UP programmes, such as the 'nationalization of mineral resources, the socialization of banks and monopoly industries, the acceleration of agrarian reform'. They also stated that 'criticism should be formulated from within the revolutionary process, not from outside it', and said that priests should do what they could to make their own modest contribution to Socialist objectives. (8)

These priests were getting dangerously close to an espousal of partisan politics and were given a public warning against this by the hierarchy in their working document Gospel, Politics and various kinds of Socialism of April 22, 1971. Undaunted 'the 80' published two reactions to this document, the first criticised the bishops for over-simplification of the issues and lack of concrete proposals, and the second, written by Uruguayan liberation theologian Juan Luis Segundo SJ, denied that it was possible for the Church to take a politically neutral stance. A short time after they had issued these replies 'the 80' formed the first 'Christians for Socialism' (CpS) movement in Latin America and were joined by nuns, lay workers and Protestant leaders, not just from Chile, but from other South American countries such as Peru, Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil. In addition to the Uruguayan, Juan Luis Segundo, liberation theologians from other Latin American countries, such as Gustavo Gutiérrez of Peru and Hugo

Assman of Brazil, visited Chile several times and ran workshops and gave the Cps movement help in preparing publicity stating their aims.

The Cps were prepared to make fundamental changes in the Church, in order to bring about a closer alliance between Catholicism and Marxism. In November 1971 the executive secretary of Cps, Gonzalo Arroyo SJ spoke of 'a new Church', which would be less hierarchical and more concentrated on the base communities (9), whilst a group of priests, led by Sergio Torres from Talca, and known as 'the 200', proposed a new style of ministry in which priests would support themselves by secular work, would be free to marry, and would be able to actively engage in political programmes to assist the poor (10).

The Chilean hierarchy now found themselves in the anomalous position of seeking areas of agreement and co-operation between themselves and the Marxist government of Chile, whilst at the same time having to deal with a 'revolutionary movement' within their own Church, led by priests who wanted to undertake an explicit endorsement of Socialism which would not stop short of the use of violence and the promotion of class conflict. This extreme position was emphasized by a group of ten priests and two seminarians from Cps who visited Fidel Castro in Cuba in March 1972. At the end of their visit they issued a public message to Latin American Christians, from Havana:-

...denouncing all reformist solutions to the problems of under-development on the continent, criticising the Church for its past failures and calling for more radical strategies for change, including the use of violence. (11)

This incitement to armed struggle came at a time when Chile was in the throes of serious economic disruptions, accompanied by violence, when the bishops were particularly anxious to adopt a moderating rôle. Concern was also being expressed by the Vatican at the extreme leftist tendencies being exhibited by Cps and liberation theologians in South America.

When the first international conference of CpS was held in Santiago in late April, 1972 neither Cardinal Silva, nor any of the Chilean bishops, attended it. Turning down an invitation to attend, the Cardinal referred to the conference as a 'political meeting' whose aim was to commit the Catholic Church to Marxist revolution in Latin America. Whilst denying that they were supporting a particular party, the CpS agreed that they were political in the sense of being actively engaged in the struggle to liberate the poor. Their aim was also to link the entire institutional Church to the Socialist programme of the UP, and to transform the Church from within. The CpS movement went steadily further to the left between 1971 and 1973, by which time it was more left-wing than the MAPU or the UP coalition, and was moving closer towards identification with the MIR (Movement of Revolutionary Left). It became increasingly impossible for the hierarchy to tolerate the CpS and in 1973, when the Church found itself in opposition to the government on a specific issue for the first time (the introduction of the ENU syllabus in all schools), the CpS publicly contradicted the bishops and a clash became inevitable. During the last months of the Allende régime the Church hierarchy prepared a strong condemnation of CpS and a ban on participation in the movement. The military coup of 1973 pre-empted this final confrontation.

The Church's Rôle as Mediator During the Last Months of Allende's Presidency

As political attitudes became more polarized during 1972, the Church tried to exert a rôle as conciliator. The bishops were in a difficult position, however, as the members of their own Church were adopting more extreme stances - on the left of the spectrum were the Christians for Socialism and on the right was the group known as Patria y Libertad (Fatherland and Freedom), whilst the majority of Catholics identified with the policies of the Christian Democrats, who were moving more towards the right and into opposition to the UP. Tension developed in early 1972 concerning the UP's nationalization policies and in February the opposition-controlled Congress approved a constitutional amendment which stated that specific legislation was

required for takeovers of privately owned firms. The President vetoed the amendment and pushed ahead with his nationalization plans, whilst the extreme left, particularly the MIR, went even further and seized farms and factories which were not intended for nationalization. Food shortages were caused by the disruptions in agricultural production brought about by land reform, by black-marketeering and by the government's policy of distribution which favoured working-class areas. There were ugly scenes as street demonstrations were organized and middle-class housewives protested at the shortage of basic commodities.

To try to reduce the tension the bishops issued a joint statement in April 1972, praising such achievements of the UP government as greater opportunities, and more equality, for the poor and reminding the electorate that the government had a democratic mandate for its policies. Attitudes hardened, however, during the next few months, the economic situation worsened, inflation climbed so that by December it stood at 163% over the calendar year and domestic and foreign investments were curtailed. In August 1972 there were strikes by shopkeepers in the capital and provinces and clashes between pro- and anti- government demonstrators. A state of emergency was declared, and in September Allende announced that a possible right-wing coup to overthrow the government had been uncovered. On the same day that Allende made this announcement Cardinal Silva issued a message on the television, warning of the possibility of civil war, condemning violence and urging respect for the law. 'We must destroy hatred, before hatred destroys the soul of Chile', he said. (12) The Cardinal's words were echoed in the Jesuit magazine Mensaje, which urged both government and opposition to heed his advice and to seek common ground, otherwise extremist groups would provoke a military coup which would leave 'thousands dead' and provoke 'economic paralysis'. It is interesting to note that during the Allende régime Mensaje supported the stance taken by the hierarchy - unlike the situation in the final years of Eduardo Frei's government, when Mensaje, under its editor Hernan Larraín was condemned by Cardinal Silva for its left-wing bias and its support for violent revolution.

In October 1972 there was another series of strikes which threatened to paralyse the country. The Confederation of Truck Drivers began a nation-wide strike demanding higher rates, and protesting at the establishment of a state trucking agency. The truck drivers were mainly self-employed and owned their own trucks, and they were joined in their strike by other self-employed small businessmen, such as shop-keepers and farmers, and by doctors and bank employees. The government responded by gaoling leading truck drivers and requisitioning striking enterprises. All the parties of opposition supported the strikes, and the PDC accused the government of violating its promise to respect the constitutional guarantees. Christian Democrat leaders refused an invitation to meet Allende in order to discuss ways of solving the crisis, but the hierarchy accepted and had a conference with the President on October 20th. The next day the Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference issued a statement reaffirming the bishops' belief that the government had the support of the majority of Chileans and was the legal, democratically-elected authority. They called upon Christians of all parties to work together to resolve the crisis peacefully. (13)

Eventually the problem was resolved by the President, who appointed the three commanders-in-chief of the armed forces to cabinet posts, announced that the gaoled truck drivers would be released, that the nationalization of the trucking enterprises would not go ahead and that all requisitioned property would be returned. Despite this de-escalation of conflict, however, serious polarization of opinion along class lines continued to gain momentum throughout the last months of 1972 and the beginning of 1973, when Congressional elections were due in March. Opposition parties were hoping that they would gain sufficient seats in the elections to give them a two-thirds majority in the Senate, thus enabling them to impeach Allende and bring about his downfall in a constitutional manner. In the event the elections produced a pro-government vote of 43.9% and a vote of 54.2% for the combined opposition parties, the largest of which were the PDC and the National Party. Both sides regarded the results as favourable to themselves - the opposition parties had gained a clear majority, but the UP coalition had increased its share of the vote by 7.7% since the

36.2% which Allende had gained in the Presidential election of 1970. A very significant factor, however, worked in the government's favour in 1973, an element which had not been present in 1970 - that was the increase in the electorate caused by the registration of 800,000 new voters. The suffrage had been extended to illiterates and those between the ages of 18 and 21 in 1970, but not until after the Presidential elections. This newly enfranchised group were most likely to support a Marxist government, and, in fact, in the 1971 municipal elections, when the new voters had their first opportunity to go to the polls, the vote for the Left rose to 48.6%. Viewed in this light, the 1973 Congressional elections indicated a fall of 4.7% in pro-government support. The election results solved nothing. The opposition had obtained a majority of votes, but had actually lost seats in Congress; they thus saw their chance of removing Allende from power in a lawful manner blocked until the next Presidential election which was scheduled for 1976. The government had technically been defeated, but claimed their increased support in the electorate as a moral victory and were more determined than ever to press ahead with their nationalization policies. Allende decided that he did not need the three military chiefs in his cabinet and replaced them with civilians.

The ENU School Reform

Immediately after the elections the government announced a plan to implement a reorganization and reorientation of all public and private, primary and secondary education in a National Unified School (ENU) curriculum. There was agreement on all sides that school reform was overdue, and the ENU programme was the result of studies which had been begun during the Frei government. What caused concern were the provocative terms which were used to describe the reform, and the time-scale which was proposed for its implementation. The Ministry of Education described as its goal:-

The construction of a new Socialist society based on the development of productive forces, the overcoming of economic, technological and cultural dependence, the establishment of new property relations, and authentic democracy and social justice guaranteed by the effective exercise of the power of the people.
(14)

The education system was to be humanist and pluralist, there was to be a single syllabus in all schools, including the private schools which were mostly run by the Church, and secondary-school pupils were to be required to undertake social work as part of their studies. The objective of the programme was claimed to be 'the harmonious development of the personality of the young people in the values of socialist humanism'. Furthermore, the system was to be introduced on an experimental basis in the ninth grade on June 1st, 1973 i.e. in little more than two months' time.

Not surprisingly the announcement of the ENU reform aroused strong protests from several quarters. Whilst agreeing with the need to provide a more relevant curriculum, the PDC denounced the scheme as a violation of the statute of democratic guarantees, and called it a 'sectarian' document. The Catholic Church was alarmed and for the first time the Cardinal and the bishops took a public, anti-government stand. Cardinal Silva did not denounce the proposal out-of-hand, but, whilst praising such reforms as the integration of work and study and the extension of educational opportunities to adults, he pointed out that the spiritual aspect of education was going to be neglected in this new curriculum, and reminded the government that a considerable number of Chileans were not in agreement with the aims of the UP. He called for more time to be devoted to consultations among parents, teachers and pupils in all sectors of the population.

One sector of the population which was strongly opposed to the ENU was the military, many of whom belonged to the ultra right-wing Fatherland and Freedom movement, and many of whose children were educated privately in Church schools. They had no desire that their offspring should be taught the 'values of Socialist humanism'. Another group that was bitterly opposed was the Christian-Democratically controlled Federation of Secondary School Students of Santiago, who denounced the proposal and, at a meeting on April 9th with the Minister of Education, insisted that such a reform should be carried out by law and not by decree. On April 11th the Minister discussed the proposal for two hours with 150 members of the armed forces. The next day the

PDC council issued a statement threatening to 'make a pronouncement on the democratic legitimacy of the government' if it violated the freedom of education guaranteed in the constitution (15). On April 12th the government backed down and the Minister of Education sent a public letter to the Cardinal, in which he agreed to postpone the education plan in order to allow time for 'an open, democratic and constructive debate'. The plan was shelved and not reintroduced whilst Allende was in office.

The attempt at introducing the ENU curriculum was a serious political error. It aroused passionate opposition, caused further polarization of opinions, and for the first time involved the Catholic Church and the military in public opposition to government policy. There was a subsequent cooling in the Church's previously cordial relations with the government; in June the Episcopal Conference issued a document in which it claimed that ENU would turn schools into a battleground, and charged it with being unconstitutional, since the statute of democratic guarantees required education to be democratic, pluralist and free from all politically partisan orientations. (16)

The Final Months of Allende's Administration

During the six months which followed the March elections the Allende government was subject to increasing pressures from many quarters, both internal and external - there were problems with the foreign and domestic economy, internal sabotage, mounting violence (some of it subsidized from abroad, particularly the Nixon administration in the USA), black-market profiteering, and increased polarization of ideological positions. There were clashes also with certain elements of the Catholic Church - not only concerning ENU, but also with the Catholic TV station in Santiago, and with the Christian Democrats who took an increasingly opposing stance to Allende's policies. Notwithstanding these serious differences the Cardinal and the bishops strove to maintain a mediating rôle. In early June 1973, nine bishops, including Cardinal Silva, issued a public letter Solo con amor se es capaz de construir un país (A country can only be built with love), in which they warned of the danger of a Marxist dictatorship,

condemned the hardening of attitudes both for and against the government, and appealed for consensus:-

We ask people to look more at what unites them than at what divides them ... People count more than systems - persons are more important than ideologies. Ideologies divide people, but history, blood, common language, human love, and the common project which all Chileans share should help us form one family. Our words have no other objective or hope than to help all see each other as equals, as brothers. (17)

Events were moving swiftly, however, and this letter had little impact. More strikes and anti-government rallies were organized. On June 29th there was an attempted military coup, which was put down by loyal army forces but was followed by the imposition of a week-long state of emergency. In the meantime Chile was becoming an armed camp as opposing sides stockpiled weapons. The Episcopal Conference made one more appeal for dialogue and warned of the imminence of civil war; in their publication La paz de Chile tiene un precio (There is a price to Chile's peace) they appealed to politicians and socially aware citizens, both in government and in opposition, to try to reach agreement and sink their differences in order to construct 'a new Chile, built on respect for every human being' (18). This statement was printed in the August 1973 issue of Mensaje, which also carried an editorial which warned that a military coup at this moment would entail a dictatorship of the Right. These appeals were reinforced by a call for dialogue from the rectors of six private universities - including the three Catholic ones in Santiago, Valparaíso and Antofagasta - which was also printed in the same August edition of Mensaje (19).

There was an early positive response from moderate sectors of the PDC and the Communist Party, who both wrote to Cardinal Silva to support the appeal for dialogue. Extreme groups, however, on the left in the form of the MIR and sections of the Socialist Party, and on the right in the form of the National Party and Fatherland and Freedom, rejected talks as being a 'waste of time'. Jaime Ruiz-Tagle in his book Poder político y transición al socialismo, published in September 1973, a few days before the final coup, comments upon the initiative of the Church leaders in trying to bring about a dialogue whilst a

democratically elected parliamentary system, which should have provided a forum for such dialogue, was still in place in Chile. He accuses both the government and the opposition of behaving like two sleep-walkers who wake up suddenly to find themselves on the cornice of a high building; they realize that if they do not join hands they will both fall into the void, but neither is willing to make the first move because it would be an admission of weakness. A third party who enjoyed the confidence of both was needed to link their hands - this third party was Cardinal Silva. His final effort had been to invite President Allende and Patricio Aylwin (the president of the PDC) to lunch at his house on August 17th. The two politicians had reached some agreement, but when Allende had tried to extend this agreement to the UP coalition he made no progress. In the meantime the country was in the throes of more strikes called by the truck owners, shopkeepers and professional groups. Allende's naval aide-de-camp was assassinated, power stations and railways were bombed (Fatherland and Freedom claimed responsibility), pro- and anti- government forces clashed in acts of street violence and workers were killed during arms searches carried out by the military. The PDC called on the President and the government to resign so that new elections could be held to resolve the crisis, but two days later, on September 11th, 1973, the military intervened in a decisive and violent coup and the government was overthrown. Salvador Allende died in the armed attack on the Presidential palace - it is claimed by the military that he took his own life, shooting himself with a weapon which was a gift from Fidel Castro, but this has never been proved.

Much has been written about the Unidad Popular government and the attempt to take Chile along the peaceful road to Socialism - but what began peacefully in 1970 ended three years later in violence and bloodshed, and the reaction which set in once the military gained control was destined to last far longer than the politicians could realize. Many reasons have been put forward for the failure of Allende's administration and, in truth, he had to face hostility from many quarters, both at home and abroad. But one element of Chilean society which was not hostile to him was the official Catholic Church - and this is surprising when one remembers how determined the Church

had been to prevent him from becoming President in 1964. Between 1964 and 1970, however, the Church had experienced the Second Vatican Council and the Medellin Conference, and had itself become aware of the necessity for social reform and of the urgent needs of its poorest members. Many of the aspirations of the UP government were in accord with Catholic doctrine. What the Church could not condone were violence and class conflict. It tried to hold the ring and to respect the via chilena, the voice of the majority and of consensus. But in the end the Allende government was bound to fail because there was an in-built contradiction from the very beginning - that was the fact that in 1970 the elections produced an executive which was determined to carry out major social reform, whilst the legislature remained in the control of those elements of society who had the most to lose from such reform. Allende made promises which he could not fulfil, and failed to gain the support of that middle strata of society, the small businessmen, working class and peasantry who should have benefitted from his policies against large monopolies and foreign corporations. The failure of his policies threatened the livelihood of the very sectors of the population whom he should have been able to help, and this failure set the stage for a counter-revolution whose brutality could not have been guessed at at the time.

PART III - The Prophetic Church

CHAPTER VIII

The Church and the Junta, Developments Since 1973

In my last chapter I referred to the polarization which occurred in Chilean society between 1970 and 1973. When the armed forces carried out their coup on September 11, 1973, they overcame the threat of one extreme (that of Marxist totalitarianism), and associated themselves with the opposite extreme (that of right-wing nationalist authoritarianism). The same Cardinal - Raúl Silva Henríquez - and substantially the same National Episcopate of 31 bishops who had accepted the Unidad Popular government of Salvador Allende in 1970 as the constitutionally elected government of Chile, now had to come to terms with a military junta which had seized political power by force. Attitudes towards the armed forces' intervention varied considerably among the bishops - from outright support to condemnation - but the theme of the statement which the Permanent Committee, speaking for the Episcopate as a whole, issued on September 13, 1973, was one of reconciliation. They stressed that they had done what they could to maintain constitutionalism and avoid conflict, they regretted the bloodshed and appealed for respect for the dead, particularly Allende himself, and called on the Junta to act moderately towards the defeated, to respect the social and economic advances made by the poorer classes under previous governments and to organize a swift return to constitutional normality. In a press interview Cardinal Silva brought the Church down firmly on the fence with the following statement:-

The Church is not called upon to form governments or to overthrow them, to recognize them or not to recognize them. We accept the government which these people have chosen to give themselves, and we serve it. (1)

The hierarchy, in fact, considered that the military coup had put an end to an incompetent government which had proved itself to be incapable of running the country, a government which had been an aberration from Chile's historical path of development. They expected that the military would retire to their barracks after a few months,

having called new elections in which the PDC would return to power, thus enabling the Church to regain its former position of prestige as the majority religion of a country ruled by a political party whose origins were based on Catholic social doctrine. Several bishops openly welcomed the overthrow of the UP government which, in the words of Archbishop Juan Francisco Fresno of La Serena (later to become Chile's primate) had been in the process of destroying 'the soul of the populace'. Amongst these bishops can be named Bishops Francisco Valdes of Osorno, Eladio Vicuña of Chillán, Augusto Salinas of Linares (the same bishop who had, in 1947, publicly accused the Falange of undermining Church teachings by criticising Franco's régime in Spain), and Archbishops Emilio Tagle of Valparaíso and Alfredo Cifuentes, retired Archbishop of La Serena. In their opinion the military had not perpetrated an illegal coup, but had liberated Chile from an illegal government. These bishops had clearly resented the Allende government, but had tolerated it in obedience to the official Church acceptance of it as a constitutionally elected administration.

The Christian Democratic Party also initially accepted the coup which they firmly believed would lead to the restoration of a PDC government. The four-man military Junta had, on the day of the coup, stated that their aim was to restore order and constitutionality, and that once this had been achieved they would no longer remain in power. Eduardo Frei declared that the military had assured him that there would be elections within six months to a year. The PDC were confident of victory at the polls, and in the meantime they pledged themselves to collaborate with the military 'within the general frame of our principles, subordinating, if necessary, the interests of the Party in order to serve Chile', as Patricio Aylwin, the president of the PDC, explained. (2).

In relying upon the traditional respect of the Chilean armed forces for democratic institutions both the bishops and the Christian Democrats made a grave error. It is true that the military had not attempted to intervene in government since the 1930s - with the exception of the Tacnazo revolt in 1969, which had only involved two units, the Tacna and Yungay regiments. But the fact that this revolt had taken place at all was significant, since it occurred during the

month of October, 1969, as Eduardo Frei's PDC government was nearing the end of its term, and at a time of high inflation. The object of the revolt had been to obtain better pay and equipment for the armed services and was more in the nature of a strike than a coup, but it had the desired effect of raising forces' salaries, even though the leader of the 'strike', General Viaux, was court-martialled. The military were traditionally non-interventionist rather than non-political, using pressure-group politics in preference to coups to achieve results. They did not intervene in 1970 to stop the election of Salvador Allende - the kidnap of General Schnieder had been intended to provoke military intervention, but was a plot formulated by right-wing groups, allegedly with CIA backing. However, individual personnel had their own political opinions, and, when voting, most of the military did not support the PDC. The Chilean Navy drew its officers largely from the upper classes, and their sympathies lay with the Nationalist Party; they tended to be conservative and Catholic (in a traditional or Integralist way). Army and Air Force officers mostly came from the middle classes, many of them were Freemasons and voted Radical (indicating that they were anti-clerical and mildly progressive). Most officers did not share the view of the Frei administration about reforms and development. They were unhappy about increased taxation, inflation and low salaries (hence the Tacnazo in the final year of Frei's government), but they probably voted for Frei in 1964, since the only alternative candidate was the Marxist Allende. In 1970 they did not approve of the PDC candidate, Radomiro Tomic, and they supported Jorge Alessandri. (3)

Thus the assumption of Eduardo Frei that the Junta would pave the way for a new PDC government headed by himself was founded upon a false assessment of the military's political affiliations. Other PDC Congressmen, including Bernardo Leighton and Renán Fuentealba, disassociated themselves from Frei and condemned the military seizure of power. There followed a split in the PDC, but as the party was gradually removed from all spheres of influence by the Junta, and it became obvious that executive power was not within their grasp, the PDC gradually turned to opposition, and their change of heart influenced the relationship between the Junta and the Church.

Motivations Leading to the Military Intervention in 1973

The Chilean military consider themselves to be very patriotic, and in the Army in particular there is a very strong tradition of discipline and a rigid hierarchy. They are also very anti-Marxist and Allende's victory in 1970 was a source of deep concern to them. The commander-in-chief of the Army, General Schnieder, died in a bungled kidnap attempt, and he was succeeded by General Carlos Prats. The military were to some extent appeased by the constitutional guarantees which Allende signed, as one of these guarantees was that no militias would be allowed. The younger Army officers, however, were not convinced and thought that Allende had 'bought off' the more senior officers with higher salaries, and within a year, by late 1971, senior officers also began to be concerned as they saw Allende surround himself with a body-guard of left-wing MIR supporters, and learned of the importation of weapons from Cuba to arm 'communal commands' formed by the MIR and the Socialist Party to defend the revolution. Army intelligence was preoccupied with the arming of workers in factories and lower-class poblaciones, and from April 1972 had contingency plans for containing an outbreak of violence by these groups. The ultimate coup was based on these plans. (4)

During the upheavals which culminated in the first truckers' strike in October 1972 Allende drafted the three armed forces chiefs into the cabinet. Their presence helped to de-fuse the crisis, and when Allende left the country to go on a foreign tour he left General Prats in charge as Minister of the Interior. General Prats did not wish to remain permanently in the government since, in his opinion, 'it is dangerous for the armed forces to appear to be linked to a government whose ideological lines are so clearly defined'.(5) Many Army officers felt that Prats was too sympathetic towards Allende, and that the latter was using the military to give stability to a tottering régime.

The inconclusive Congressional elections in March 1973 precipitated a polarization of attitudes, and left-wing groups, now convinced that Socialism would only be firmly established in Chile by

armed struggle, stepped up the importation of weapons and prepared their supporters to seize power by force. The military had managed to push through a weapons control law when the three chiefs-of-staff had been in the cabinet, and they began to carry out arms searches or allanamientos in factories, shanty-towns, offices of UP supporters and even government departments.

The three military chiefs and the commander of the national police force (carabineros) returned to the cabinet on August 9, 1973 in the wake of more strikes by the truckers and members of the gremialista movement. The allanamientos were increased and served not only to collect intelligence on the quantity of arms available to potential insurrectionists, but also to train Army units in tactics for confrontation with civilians at gatherings in factories, work sites, meeting halls and shanty towns.

On August 23, 1973, General Prats resigned from both the cabinet and the Army, and stated that he did not wish to be:-

A factor of rupture of institutional discipline and of the state of law, nor serve as a pretext for those who seek the overthrow of the constitutional government. (6)

His resignation was followed by those of his immediate subordinates Generals Pickering and Sepúlveda, and the position of Army commander-in-chief was taken over by General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte.

General Pinochet has subsequently re-written history in his memoirs by claiming that he was a key figure in the planning of the coup, but, in fact, it was the naval officers who decided, after the March 1973 elections, that the only way to break the political deadlock was by removing Allende by force. Three naval captains - Troncoso, Castro and Lopez - were the key officers in plotting the coup. They were in contact with the 'Monday Club', a group of influential figures from the worlds of business, finance and the press who had begun to meet (on Mondays) to co-ordinate a campaign against Allende, which was not based on any one political party. It was from this source that the

Navy received an economic plan to deal with the chaos which would have to be tackled in the aftermath of a coup; the Navy in turn passed the plan to trusted Air Force generals. As long as General Prats was in command of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force could not act, but once he had resigned events moved fast. The Navy took the initiative, they informed the Air Force and sympathetic Army officers that they intended to launch a coup; the new Army commander-in-chief, General Pinochet, decided to join them. The coup began in Valparaíso, the Navy's home port; it was a well co-ordinated and brutal action, and within 24 hours it was clearly successful.

Post-Coup Repression

Once the UP government was no longer in power and President Allende was dead the military began the process of 'cutting out the cancer' of Marxism, and 'clearing out the stables' of Marxist supporters. The ruthlessness with which they did this can be partly explained, but not excused, by the concern with which they viewed the discovery of such large quantities of weapons in searches which took place both before and after the coup, and the discovery of MIR strongholds near the homes of senior military officers. Military intelligence had detected escalating stockpiling by both left- and right-wing groups, and (as Allende government officials later admitted) arms training on the part of UP parties, and one or two cases of the manufacture of armaments in government-run factories. (7) It is claimed that Allende himself had personal knowledge of the illegal importation of arms from Cuba as early as February 1971, (Allende's son-in-law was an official of the Cuban secret police and lived in the Chilean Presidential residence). (8). The military had begun to fear a threat to their monopoly of force from an unofficial army which had support not only from abroad but from the highest authority in their own country.

The deep-seated hatred of Marxism among the leaders of the Chilean military had its origins in earlier periods of world history - it went back in ideological terms to the period of Catholic doctrine when the teaching emanating from the Vatican was vehemently

anti-Communist, before the rapprochement which began in the 1960's and the Second Vatican Council, and in political terms to the period of the Cold War during which the senior military officers in the 1973 coup were receiving their early instruction. President Frei had begun the practice of sending officers of the Chilean armed services on anti-subversion courses run by the US military, and joint programmes between US and Chilean military establishments had continued throughout the Popular Unity period. US financial assistance for military programmes actually increased during the Allende administration, whilst at the same time Nixon, Kissinger and the CIA were bent on wrecking the Chilean economy. (9)

Whilst there is no doubt that the coup was an extremely brutal affair and was followed by cruel acts of repression, there are great variations in the actual figures involved, depending upon the political affiliations of whoever is writing the commentary. Figures as to the number of dead during the first few days vary from 2,500 to 80,000 - the CIA put the figure at 11,000. The military made a deliberate attempt to prevent the outside world from receiving accurate information, all news despatches were censored, foreign correspondents were not allowed to move around the country, some were expelled, borders were closed and international communications were cut. Improvised detention centres were set up around the country and Allende supporters and other 'subversives' (including many foreigners, amongst whom were priests and nuns), were rounded up, imprisoned, tortured and, in some cases, killed. The Junta justified these repressive measures by alleging that the Allende régime had a plot, (plan zeta, the existence of which has never been proved), to murder military and civilian opposition leaders in order to impose Communism definitively on Chile. (10) From now onwards any persons, including representatives of such groups as Amnesty International, the Red Cross and the OAS Human Rights Commission, who produced reports on repression and torture in Chile, were denounced as agents of Moscow.

Despite the initial promise of the Junta that their purpose was to restore order and constitutional rule, and that they would remain in power only as long as necessary to achieve this, they closed

Congress, outlawed Marxist political parties, placed other parties in recess, destroyed the voting lists, and declared a 'state of siege in time of war'. The war was an internal war - Chile's armed forces were at war with its own population. Again, it was their obsession with rooting out Communism which drove the military to consider themselves to be in a state of 'total war' - the sinister imperialism of Marxism was seen by them to be infiltrating every level of society, and in order to combat it the 'Doctrine of National Security' sanctioned the use of force against civilians, and torture became a legitimate form of self-defence.

Church Reaction to the Repression

Having guardedly accepted the coup as an unfortunate but inevitable outcome of the economic chaos and political polarization under the UP government, the Church began to look at the intense level of repression with concern. On September 18, 1973, Chile's national day, Cardinal Silva declined an invitation by the Junta to preside at a Te Deum in Santiago Cathedral, but instead arranged a 'Mass for the Fallen' at the Church of National Thanksgiving. Three ex-Presidents of Chile - Eduardo Frei, Jorge Alessandri and Gabriel González Videla - attended this Mass, which was interpreted abroad as the Church's endorsement of the new régime. Cardinal Silva was, however, merely continuing the policy which he had followed since his consecration as Primate of Chile in 1961 - that of co-operating with whatever government was in power. He prayed for 'those who have fallen' and said that the Church offered its 'impartial collaboration to those who, at a difficult time, have taken upon their shoulders the very heavy responsibility of guiding our destiny.' (11)

In early October 1973 there was a meeting between Cardinal Silva and the four-man Junta, whose members were General Pinochet, head of the Army, General Leigh, head of the Air Force, Admiral Merino, head of the Navy, and the man who, until the coup, was seventh in command of the Carabineros, General Mendoza. An agreement was reached - the Junta would not interfere with the institutional freedom of the Church to conduct both pastoral and humanitarian activities, and the Church, for

its part, would accept the legitimacy of the Junta as the government of Chile and would attempt to play a constructive rôle during the period of reconstruction. (12) This was a similar agreement to the one which Cardinal Silva had made with Allende when the latter first came to power in 1970 - he hoped that despite the swing of the political pendulum from left to right the Church would be able to steer a centrist course.

Unfortunately the military régime did not honour its pledges as faithfully as the UP government had done. Far from restoring order and constitutional rule within a reasonably short time the Junta continued with its repressive measures, and by late October, 1973, the Church was forced to take action.

Some of the bishops, those in dioceses which were remote from the capital, at first were not aware of the full gravity of the situation, but when evidence of arbitrary arrests, incarcerations, torture and murder was presented to them and to their priests by victims and their families there was no doubt that help was urgently needed. In late October, in cooperation with the Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal and Orthodox Churches, and the Chief Rabbi, Cardinal Silva formed the Committee of Cooperation for Peace in Chile (COPACHI) 'to give material and spiritual aid to all persons and families affected by the current situation.'

The growth of COPACHI was spectacular - from five officials in October 1973 it grew to 108 in August 1974 in Santiago alone, and by 1975 it had 15 regional offices throughout the country. An important early initiative was to obtain funds from overseas, which COPACHI was able to do through its links with the World Council of Churches and various religious and lay organizations in Europe and the USA. Through this international network not only were funds channelled into Chile, but information was channelled out, and since press censorship was preventing free access to information via the usual press agencies COPACHI became a vital source of news to the outside world. It provided practical and legal assistance to many groups of people - those who had been arrested and imprisoned without trial, families of

detainees left destitute whilst the wage-earner was absent, often exiled to remote areas, employees who had been thrown out of work because of their political views, students expelled from universities (grants were arranged to help them to study abroad), hungry children for whom soup-kitchens were organized. An important function was also to collect data concerning human rights abuses by the Junta.

The Junta referred constantly to the supposed threat posed by the many foreigners who had been attracted to Chile by the Allende experiment in 'democratic Marxism'. Some of these foreigners were priests, nuns and active laymen who had been associated with Christians for Socialism. With the help of the National Committee for Aid to Refugees, a group formed by COPACHI in collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 5,000 foreigners were assisted to leave Chile, amongst whom were some 150 religious personnel. Not everyone was so fortunate, however, and the deaths of several priests are on record. When statistics of political murders are of such enormous proportions as were those in Chile in 1973, particularly when there is such disagreement as to the actual total, we tend to lose sight of the human sacrifice involved. The deaths of a group of people, probably about 10,000, give or take a few thousand, are so shocking as to be incomprehensible and we tend to think only of the statistics and not of the individuals. We are incapable of sharing the suffering of so many fellow human beings, and in a way destruction on such a grand scale comes to be accepted as in some fashion devoid of real pain. To bring the events of 1973 in Chile down to a scale that we can identify with here are details of the deaths of two priests (both foreigners):-

September 14, 1973:- Father Michael Woodward, arrested in Valparaíso, taken on board the vessel Lebu, interrogated and savagely tortured. He died under torture. He was accused of 'political activities'.

September 19, 1973:- Father Juan Alsina, accused of acting as a 'sniper' at the San Juan de Dios hospital. The matter having been satisfactorily cleared up with the hospital director he was given guarantees that he could continue to work there. The following day he was arrested for interrogation by a military patrol and a few days later his bullet-riddled body was recovered from the Mapocho River. (13)

Supporters of the Junta criticized the Cardinal and the bishops for their tolerance of the Allende régime, for the formation of COPACHI and for their ambivalent attitude towards the new government. At the same time public opinion outside Chile condemned the Chilean hierarchy for not speaking out more forcefully against human rights abuses in their country. Consequently, in December 1973, Cardinal Silva travelled to Europe where he explained the situation to several European bishops and to Pope Paul VI. A different interpretation of events had already been conveyed to the European bishops, and through them to the Pope by the foreign clergy and nuns who had been expelled by the Junta. The Pope gave his approval to the Chilean bishops' stance and on his return to Chile Cardinal Silva gave an interview to the magazine Ercilla, in which he said:-

Now that we have seen what has passed, more than ever we want to renew this dialogue. We wish that the Chileans would understand each other today more than ever. We believe that there will be no peace in Chile based on the destruction of large numbers of Chileans. (14)

The Episcopate sent a private letter to the Junta deplored the continued repression, but the letter was poorly received and evoked no response. This was the unsatisfactory state of affairs at the end of 1973. Not until the following year did the various protagonists in the Chilean power struggle decide where they stood in relation to one another, and a pattern of cooperation and resistance start to emerge.

1974 - Year of 'Crystallization'

During the early months of 1974 it gradually became apparent that there was to be no early return to constitutional rule for Chile. The repression and brutality which marked the actual coup and its immediate aftermath were aimed at ridding the country of Marxist supporters, the next stage was the formation of a decision-making structure and a set of policies for running the country. In theory the four military leaders who made up the Junta were equals, but in practise the commander-in-chief of the Army, who traditionally assumed the rôle of

commander-in-chief of the armed forces, became the head of the Junta. In any case the Army had the most active function in subduing the populace and already had experience in curbing civilian unrest. General Pinochet's own appetite for power and opportunistic ruthlessness suited him to assume a dominant position over the other service chiefs, and in June 1974 he formally took on the rôle of president of the Junta. Only General Leigh, the head of the Air Force, made any attempt to oppose Pinochet's ascendancy, but Leigh did not receive firm support from Admiral Merino and General Mendoza.

There had been no discussion on a structure of government by the four service branches before the coup. After Congress was dismissed the Junta ruled by decrees which had the force of law. The first decree-law constituted the Junta, under the presidency of General Pinochet, as 'the Supreme Command of the Nation with the patriotic duty to restore chilenidad, justice and the institutions which have broken down'. The armed forces had no clear idea of the kind of society which they wanted to construct, but there was a group of right-wing thinkers who had already begun to exert an influence on the military before the coup (they had supplied the economic plan which was passed to the Navy) - and these were the 'Integralists' of the Society for Defense of Tradition, Property and the Family (TFP). The TFP had been vigorous opponents of Allende, and once the military had taken control of government, and were obviously open to political pressure groups owing to their own lack of political experience, the TFP became one of the key civilian groups to collaborate with them.

The Integralists had a very carefully worked out interpretation (of society) that corresponded to many elements of the Chilean military's thinking: nationalism, anti-Marxism, traditionalism, authority, hierarchy, a sense of duty and morality, and opposition to political parties. (15)

Many of these concepts could be expressed in the one word chilenidad which featured in the Junta's first decree-law.

In March 1974 the Junta published a Declaration of Principles which clearly showed evidence of Integralist influence. Harking back

to the ideals expressed by Pope Pius XI in his 1931 encyclical Quadragesimo Anno, the aim of the Junta was stated to be:-

The promotion of the common good in the interest of the human person, which enjoys a being and a final end which no human authority can legitimately infringe. (16)

The Declaration of Principles interpreted 'the promotion of the common good' by employing the principles of 'subsidiarity' - a term also used by Pope Pius XI:-

By virtue of which no higher group can arrogate to itself the area which lower entities can satisfy, in particular the family, nor can it invade what is properly and privately the domain of each human conscience. (17)

In other words, the State cannot supplant the family and can help to co-ordinate agencies which perform social functions, but must not take them over. Following from this principle comes the recognition of the right to private property. Another 'principle' stated in the document is the duty of the government to suppress organized groups who might be planning to construct a totalitarian state i.e. Marxist movements and parties.

Thus, selective use of certain passages of Quadragesimo Anno gave the Declaration of Principles a veneer of Thomist social philosophy. Within this framework the military began to develop a policy of laissez-faire capitalism which was to bring about the very state of affairs which Pius XI had castigated - the 'concentration of power and might' and the 'despotic economic dictatorship' which is 'consolidated in the hand of a few' and:-

...is the fruit that the unlimited freedom of struggle among competitors has of its own nature produced, and which lets only the strongest survive. (18)

In the month following the Declaration of Principles the bishops issued an official statement entitled Reconciliation in Chile, (April 24, 1974). Whilst praising the Declaration of Principles for its 'explicitly Christian inspiration', the bishops emphasised that the

basic requirement of reconciliation was that such principles should emanate from the free acceptance of the Chilean people 'after a discussion in which all citizens can participate'. The Episcopate diplomatically praised the 'honest intentions and good will of our rulers', but went on to criticise the violation of human rights, the climate of insecurity and fear, arbitrary dismissals of employees for ideological reasons, detentions without trial, interrogations using physical and moral pressures, and lack of legal redress. The bishops also expressed concern at the economic pressures being put on wage-earners and at the restructuring and reorientation of education.

(19)

The bishops' statement was read out to congregations as the Easter sermon in churches throughout Chile, and was the first public criticism of the Junta to be made by any official body. The impact of the statement was lessened, however, by the divided opinions concerning it among the bishops themselves; four of them voted against some sections of it and Archbishops Fresno and Tagle expressed their dissent in public - Mgr. Tagle actually refused to read it out to his congregation. The right-wing newspaper El Mercurio was not slow to praise Archbishops Fresno and Tagle for having 'clarified' the meaning of the Episcopal Conference's declaration and 'thanked them for emphasising loyalty and respect for the government's policies as the best way to achieve national reconciliation'. (20) Consequently, even though a delegation of bishops had a meeting with members of the Junta, their statement was not favourably received, and they were even accused of being unwitting 'international Marxist agents'.

In May, 1974, COPACHI published a report which contained an analysis of the Junta's campaign of repression against left-wingers, and claimed that what had been random acts of repression by the security branches of all the armed services had been coordinated in a single National Department of Intelligence (DINA), created in January, but not officially announced until June. The DINA was, in effect, a secret police force, responsible to General Pinochet alone and headed by one of his close personal friends, Manuel Contreras. It grew enormously in personnel, finance and influence and appointed experts in

the dubious sciences of interrogation, torture and surveillance. The DINA was later reported to have 2,000 military men in its employ, an equal number of civilians, and 16,000 informers throughout the country (21). Its influence extended abroad, and the deaths of General Carlos Prats and his wife in Buenos Aires in 1974, the shooting of PDC leader Bernardo Leighton and his wife in Rome in 1975, and the car-bomb deaths of Orlando Letelier and an American citizen in Washington in 1976 were DINA operations. Not all the DINA's actions were so spectacular - opposition to the régime was stifled by such covert tricks as telephone tapping, the opening of mail and the use of informers.

In August the Permanent Committee of the Episcopate ordained that religious services should not be held to celebrate the first anniversary of the coup on September 11, 1974. Despite this, several priests, military chaplains and a few bishops did take part in public masses of thanksgiving. Obviously there was still a lack of unanimity in the Church's reaction to the Junta, even after a year during the course of which tens of thousands of Chileans had been 'detained'. This continuing division in the clergy's ranks detracted from Cardinal Silva's influence over events, and when he, and leaders of the Protestant and Jewish communities sent a letter to Pinochet calling for a:-

...cessation of the state of war that affects Chile, and the mitigation, where possible, of the painful consequences from the political struggles which we have known and suffered in recent times, (22)

General Pinochet responded by announcing a reduction from 'a state of siege in time of war' to 'a state of siege of internal defence'. This meant that punishments were milder, civilian tribunals had broader jurisdiction and some decisions of the military courts could be appealed to the Supreme Court. (23) No amnesty was granted, however.

The first anniversary of the coup was marked by a huge demonstration in support of the régime, organized by the government. In his speech General Pinochet attacked all the political parties and

said that the recess in party government would have to be prolonged by several more years, by which time a new generation of Chileans 'imbued with sound patriotic and civil values and inspired by an authentic national feeling' would be ready to take over the running of the country. (24) He was obviously planning that the military would remain in power for some considerable time. By December 1974 Pinochet had become President of Chile, and during the next few years he would consolidate his power, eliminating potential rivals within the armed forces, silencing the voices of protest from the universities, the unions, the media and the politicians.

The re-structuring of the economy during the next few years would have drastic effects on the Chilean people, particularly the middle-income and lower classes, and would emphasise the division between the rich and the poor. Politically the bishops would come to represent the only independent influential body capable of voicing criticism of the military régime. They would be hampered, however, by the division of opinion within their own ranks and by the presence of powerful right-wing Catholic influences within the government itself. One area where the Church would find a powerful rôle would be in the poorest sections of society where the need for prophetic leadership for those unable to speak out for themselves would be greatest.

1975 - The Programme for Economic Recovery

In the crucial field of economics the Junta were obliged to admit to their inexperience, and they appointed Fernando Leniz, the editor of El Mercurio, as Minister of the Economy - the economic policy which was adopted was that which had been passed to the Navy by the Monday Club prior to the coup. Once again, as in the Declaration of Principles the influence of Catholic social thinkers was evident.

There was a link between the Catholic University in Santiago and the economics department of the University of Chicago in the USA. This connection dated back to 1955, when a North American aid agency financed a link between the two universities in order to combat the teachings of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), which

blamed the soaring inflation characteristic of so many Latin American countries on structural weaknesses in their underlying economies and called for state intervention to foster industrialization and undertake fundamental structural reforms (25). The Chicago school of thought, on the contrary, advocated a return to a free-market economy based on competition. The golden rule of the proponents of this economic theory - prominent among whom was Professor Milton Friedman - was that economic liberty is more fundamental than political liberty. The implementation of such a policy required determined and ruthless single-mindedness, and thus appealed to General Pinochet. The Catholic contribution to the régime's economic liberalism took the form of a proposal to include worker participation in profits and ownership of companies. Industries which had been nationalized by Allende were returned to their owners, with the proviso that the workers were to share in the decision-making process. Worker representatives were to have seats on corporate boards of directors and combine with management on enterprise committees. This kind of 'integrated enterprise' (hence the sobriquet 'Integralist'), based on the co-operation of capitalists and workers, was not to be confused with the Christian Democrats' 'workers' enterprises' which were now denounced as Marxist in inspiration.

The Economic Recovery Programme was not published until April, 1975 and its implementation was further delayed - but already in June 1974 El Mercurio had outlined the two basic solutions for inflation as 'gradualism' versus 'shock'. Both solutions would result in extensive unemployment, as this was a necessary corollary to the defeat of inflation, but 'shock' treatment was supposed to be the lesser of the two evils in that, although it would be more drastic, it would be of shorter duration. General Pinochet had a further reason for preferring 'shock' - it would save him from the embarrassment of applying for a foreign loan, which might have certain conditions attached, such as a timetable for a return to democracy. He therefore opted for the 'shock treatment' which would reinforce his own position as President and free him from outside interference in his government. The economic plan was adopted with virtually no discussion in cabinet. It put the 'Chicago

Boys' in the ascendancy and marked the end of Christian Democrat participation in government.

The social effects of 'shock' were devastating. Government expenditure was cut by 27% in 1975 and capital investment fell by 50%; taxes in the form of VAT were increased, so were public sector prices, wages fell, firms became bankrupt and defaulted on their social security insurance payments, the government refused to pay unemployment benefit to those workers who were made redundant. Unemployment rose to staggering heights, particularly in the urban shanty towns where it reached 80% in some instances (26). The only sustenance for many of the poor was to be found in the soup kitchens organized by the Comité pro Paz.

1975 - 1976. Deterioration in Church-State Relations, Despite Attempts at Accommodation

By mid-1975 the pressure on the hierarchy to speak out officially against the continuing torture and disappearances, as well as hunger and great hardship amongst the poor, was such that in September they issued their third statement since the coup - a working document entitled Gospel and Peace. However, the bishops by no means took a firm line against the military; they somewhat deferentially recognized 'the service lent to the country by the armed forces in freeing it from a Marxist dictatorship', then went on to request the Junta to 'remove other obstacles which impede the progress of the Fatherland'. The bishops again stressed their own official political neutrality - 'We are not in favour of or against this government or any other' - but pointed out that extreme anti-Marxist measures tend to produce those very conditions of social inequality which Marxism aims to eliminate. (27)

Again, in general terms, Gospel and Peace condemned narrow-minded nationalism, comparing it unfavourably with healthy patriotism, of which the armed forces were not the sole guardians, and whilst not specifically denouncing the régime's monetarist economic policies, the bishops spoke of the immense power and wealth which some individuals

were accumulating, whilst the majority of the population was enduring great privation. They appealed to 'the spirit of justice in our armed forces' to help to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth.

The ambivalent terms in which the Episcopate couched their criticisms of the régime demonstrated that Chilean Church leaders were not anxious to provoke a confrontation with the military. They knew that there were divisions within their own ranks, and did not wish to give the government or the pro-government media any excuse to publicly condemn the Church. As it was, there were three incidents which occurred towards the end of 1975 which highlighted the growing tension between the Church and the government.

The first incident involved Bishop Carlos Camus, the secretary of the National Episcopal Conference, who, in late September, gave an 'off the record' briefing to the foreign press corps in Santiago, criticizing the government and the Protestant Evangelicals who supported its policies. The pro-Junta newspaper La Segunda purchased a tape of the briefing from a Bolivian journalist and published extracts from it, quoting Bishop Camus' statements out of context and distorting their meaning. The right-wing press declared their outrage and, significantly, various conservative bishops added their own criticisms of Mgr. Camus and showed that they were more inclined to believe the media than to express solidarity with a fellow bishop. It was not until December that the Permanent Committee of the Episcopate issued a defense of Mgr. Camus, but by then it was too late to repair the damage caused by the media's earlier distortions of the truth.

In October 1975 an incident occurred which attracted a great deal of publicity both in Chile and overseas, particularly in Britain, since it involved a British citizen, Dr. Sheila Cassidy. Security forces were engaged in a shooting confrontation with members of the MIR, two of whose leaders, with their female companions, sought help from certain churchmen involved with COPACHI. The latter disarmed them, provided medical assistance for the one who was wounded, and secured asylum for them in the Vatican and Costa Rican embassies. Security

forces broke into the house of the Columbian Fathers, arrested several priests and also Dr. Cassidy, who was tortured, imprisoned, and later expelled from the country, along with three North American nuns and a priest. Four Chilean priests and several lawyers linked to COPACHI were also imprisoned. Cardinal Silva approved a statement by the Santiago Archdiocese which, while condemning any Church involvement with the MIR, nevertheless supported the offer of humanitarian aid to anyone who was suffering, regardless of their political affiliations. Again, it was not the government, but the media which stirred up opposition to the Church. Jaime Guzmán, the leader of the gremialist movement, appeared twice on TV, where he condemned not only the actions of churchmen in harbouring fugitives, but also Cardinal Silva's interpretation of mercy. Guzmán declared that the government should have been obeyed unconditionally - implying that civil law takes precedence over moral law. The Cardinal's reaction was swift and decisive. He publicly condemned Guzmán's statements and threatened him with excommunication for attempting to incite the faithful to disobey their bishops. Subsequently Guzmán partly retracted his condemnations, but went on to complain that a government 'of clear Christian inspiration' was not being given wholehearted Church support.

There is a parallel between the Church's treatment of the Integralists under Pinochet, and its treatment of Christians for Socialism under Allende. However, the Chilean hierarchy did not go so far as to openly condemn the Integralists, as they had done with the CpS in 1973. Integralism was, after all, based on Catholic doctrine, whereas the CpS had Marxist sympathies. Furthermore, the CpS leaders were priests, and the movement might have become a challenge to the hierarchy themselves. The Integralists were led by laymen, so it was easier for the bishops to distance themselves from them without having to publicly condemn them. Both Church and government were anxious to avoid a rift - consequently there were concessions made on both sides after the bitterness of the raid on the Columbian Fathers' house and the Jaime Guzmán affair. The four arrested Chilean priests were not held in the main part of the public jail, but in an annexe reserved for VIPs, were never formally charged, and released after a short period during a Christmas amnesty. The Junta demanded the closure of COPACHI,

and Cardinal Silva agreed to this; he himself considered that the humanitarian work of COPACHI could be carried on by an organization more closely connected to the Catholic Church, and its political ties could be severed. From the ashes of the Comité pro Paz would rise the phoenix of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, about which I shall write more specifically in due course.

Another gesture of goodwill on the Church's part was the election in December 1975, as president of the Episcopal Conference, of Mgr. Juan Francisco Fresno Larraín, a known supporter of the Junta. The bishops no doubt hoped that they could exert some influence over the government through private contacts with its leaders, in the time-honoured Chilean fashion. As 1975 drew to a close relations between the Church and the Junta were uneasy, but not confrontational. On the political scene, however, relations between the PDC and the government became more bitter, as in December Eduardo Frei published his book El mandato de la historia y las exigencias del porvenir, which contained an outright condemnation of the government's economic policies and human rights record, and denounced the 'fascist' nature of the ruling élite (28). Eduardo Frei's international standing was such that the Junta could not prevent the publication of his book, but Pinochet was furious about it, and during 1976 a number of Chilean Christian Democrats were sent into exile abroad for their open opposition to the violation of human rights in their country.

It was these expulsions, coupled with a particularly unpleasant event which took place at Santiago airport in August 1976, which finally convinced the hierarchy that the time for private negotiations and cautious public calls for reconciliation was over, and that a clear and unequivocal public denunciation of the government's policies was called for. The incident at the airport involved three Chilean bishops (Enrique Alvear, Fernando Ariztía and Carlos González), who had travelled to Riobamba in Ecuador for a pastoral conference. The military government of Ecuador had arrested 17 bishops from various South American countries, amongst whom were the three Chileans, charged them with discussing 'subversive themes of a Marxist orientation' and expelled them from the country (29). The right-wing press and TV in

Chile seized the opportunity of denouncing these so-called 'leftish bishops' for what the media claimed was more clerical involvement in politics. When the three Chilean bishops arrived at Pudahuel airport they had a hostile reception from pro-government demonstrators, apparently led by DINA agents, who hurled insults and stones at them and jostled their companions. Far from assisting the bishops the police allowed the attack to take place, and even went so far as to arrest some of the bishops' own relatives and friends.

At last the hierarchy spoke out unequivocally against the government, and in two strongly worded statements condemned both the expulsion of the PDC leaders and the attacks on the bishops, again threatening excommunication for any Catholic who used violence against a prelate:-

The hierarchy as a group was coming to realize that abuses of power by the Chilean security forces were not isolated, transitory or unavoidable mistakes. They were part of a whole system of repressive state power present in Chile and several other Latin American countries in the mid-1970s. It took, however, a direct attack on themselves and the PDC to open their eyes to this fact. (30)

By this time Chile had endured almost three years of repression.

1977 - The Elimination of all Political Opposition to the Junta

At the end of January 1977 the Chilean Junta closed down Radio Balmaceda, (the PDC radio station), which had been focusing its broadcasts on repressive aspects of the government's political and economic policies. This had been part of an anti-government campaign by the Christian Democrats following General Pinochet's announcement that the military would remain in control of the State indefinitely, in order to protect national security. On March 12, 1977, Pinochet further announced the dissolution of all political parties, a measure aimed specifically at the Christian Democrats.

This action by the Junta against the PDC prompted the bishops to issue their most outspoken denunciation yet of the régime. Their

pastoral letter entitled Our National Coexistence issued on March 25, 1977, began with a quotation from Gaudium et Spes, the official document of the Second Vatican Council:-

Es de justicia que la Iglesia pueda, en todo momento y en todas partes, enseñar su doctrina sobre la sociedad y dar su juicio moral, incluso sobre materias referentes al orden político, cuando lo exigen los derechos fundamentales de las personas. (Gaudium et Spes, 76), (31) (It is right that the Church should be able, at all times and in all places, to preach her doctrine on society and pass moral judgements, even on matters touching the political order, whenever basic personal rights make such judgements necessary).

The bishops in this document raised the question of the legitimacy of the military dictatorship to govern the country, and challenged the government's claim that it based itself on principles of 'Christian humanism'. In this context they also raised the question of the thousands of Chileans who had 'disappeared' since the 1973 coup - and urged the government to give its total co-operation to the courts in order to 'clarify once and for all the fate of each of those who had disappeared'. (32) Without making specific mention of the PDC the bishops criticised the government for eliminating intermediary organisations between the individual and the State; they also commented on the economic situation and urged wider consensus on an economic plan to benefit the whole country. The declaration ended with a call for an end to the state of emergency which had lasted more than three years, and to a cessation of government by decree - the country had no constitution 'ratified by popular vote', and the laws were not written by 'legitimate representatives of the citizenry':-

No existirán plenas garantías a los derechos humanos mientras el país no tenga una Constitución, vieja o nueva, ratificada por sufragio popular. Mientras las leyes no sean dictadas por legítimos representantes de la ciudadanía. Y mientras todos los organismos del Estado, desde el más alto hasta el más bajo, no estén sometidos a la Constitución y a la Ley. (Full guarantees of human rights will not exist so long as the country has no Constitution, either old or new, ratified by popular suffrage. Whilst the laws are not dictated by legitimate representatives of the citizenry. And whilst all the institutions of the State, from the highest

to the lowest, are not subject to the Constitution and the Law. (33)

Stung by the allegation that they were not 'legitimate representatives' of the people the government riposted that the bishops had strayed outside the realm of pastoral authority into the political arena, where they had no place. This fundamental disagreement as to the Church's rôle in expressing opinions concerning the rights of individuals within the State characterized the relationship between the bishops and the Junta. Not only did the Junta ignore the bishops' plea for more democratic and just participation of citizens in the government of their own country, but, in July 1977 Pinochet announced that a return to civilian rule would not take place until 1985, nor would the new institutional order allow for political parties or a popularly ratified constitution (34).

Each having questioned the legitimacy of the other's actions there was now no doubt that the Church and the government stood in opposition, especially as all political opposition had been suppressed by the government. Henceforward the hierarchy would publish ever more outspoken condemnations of government policies, and the acts of aggression at the hands of government agents which the lower clergy and the laity had been suffering since the coup would now extend to Church officials.

The Vicaría de la Solidaridad - its Work and its Significance in the Emergence of Opposition to the Authoritarian Régime

The Comité pro Paz (COPACHI), an ecumenical aid organization formed in October 1973 under the copresidency of Bishop Fernando Ariztia, Catholic auxiliary bishop of Santiago, and Lutheran Bishop Helmut Frenz, was finally disbanded in December 1975. Already by then the Greek Orthodox and Baptist Churches had withdrawn from the Committee, having become concerned that its activities were becoming too political, and Bishop Helmut Frenz had been informed that his Chilean residency permit had been revoked.

When the military allowed the formation of COPACHI soon after the coup, which had initially been accepted and even welcomed by the leaders of most religious denominations, it had not envisaged how swiftly the Committee would develop. It is likely that the military authorities anticipated that COPACHI would merely provide assistance in certain selected cases. From the beginning the régime wanted to present itself as ideologically motivated. It wanted to be accepted internationally as belonging to the western, Christian and civilized world. Thus it was difficult for it to oppose the formation of an aid organization which was supported by a wide spectrum of religious sects. However, far from becoming accepted by western governments as 'one of us', Chile after the coup became increasingly isolated once the news of brutality and repression became known world-wide, and it swiftly achieved the status of a 'pariah' nation. Probably international reaction against the military régime was exacerbated by the fact that until the coup Chile had enjoyed the reputation of being one of South America's most stable democracies.

It was very much owing to the spread of reliable information concerning the true nature of the military régime by COPACHI, via its international network of church links, that world opinion turned against Chile. Consequently, within a few months of COPACHI's formation, it was being harassed by the government and the pro-government media. During 1974 two newspapers, La Segunda and El Mercurio, strongly criticised COPACHI, accusing it of 'calumny against Chile' and of disturbing the peace; COPACHI workers were regularly arrested by the police and local projects such as soup kitchens and workshops were raided. Finally, in November 1975 there occurred the incident in which the police raided the house of the Columbian Fathers, seeking the COPACHI members who had aided four MIR activists to obtain asylum in foreign embassies. Strong official pressure was brought to bear on all the remaining ecumenical supporters of COPACHI to close it down.

General Pinochet wrote to Cardinal Silva urging the closure of the Comité pro Paz, accusing it of harbouring Marxist-Leninist supporters who were threatening to disturb the civil order of the

country. Although he denied this accusation the Cardinal agreed to close the Committee at the end of December 1975. One consideration which weighed with him was that there were still members of the hierarchy who were vehemently anti-Marxist and who were alarmed that COPACHI might indeed be used as a cover for left-wing activists. The Lutheran Church in Chile had already suffered a split - the German-speaking settlements in the south of the country were very firm supporters of the Junta, and broke away from the main Lutheran church, headed by Bishop Helmut Frenz, in protest at COPACHI's activities. Cardinal Silva did not want a similar schism to occur in the Catholic Church. However, immediately after he had closed down COPACHI the Cardinal set up a new organization, the Vicaría de la Solidaridad. The Vicaría was a solely Catholic organization and was under the aegis of the Santiago Archdiocese. This status had an important significance, dating back to the Constitution of 1925. When the Catholic Church was disestablished in 1925 it received certain privileges, one of which was personalidad jurídica de Derecho Público (public law juridical personality), which gave it a great deal of autonomy. Thus the Vicaría, from its inception, was both more accountable to the Church and less accountable to the State than COPACHI had been.

During the two years of its existence COPACHI extended the range of its services from legal assistance to prisoners and sacked workers, and economic aid to their families, to embrace a whole range of social services. Between October 1973 and December 1975 legal actions were initiated on behalf of 7,000 persons arrested and detained or 'disappeared' in Santiago alone, and 6,000 workers dismissed for political reasons were defended. In many cases compensation for unfair dismissal was obtained (35). As the effects of the government's economic policies began to tell on the poorer sections of society COPACHI supported, with financial and technical aid, groups of workers who set up self-help enterprises, small farming cooperatives, health clinics and soup-kitchens for poor children. When COPACHI was dismantled the same services were continued by the Vicaría, but the latter was a more professional organization, especially in its legal section. Although it was headed by the Cardinal and had its own Vicar, most of the Vicaría's helpers were laymen. After its inception in

January 1976 it grew swiftly and soon had regional offices in 20 of the 25 provinces. The hierarchy by 1976 were becoming more aware of the character of the régime (much of the credit for this must be given to the information concerning human rights abuses gathered and disseminated by COPACHI), and were beginning to speak out against repression with a more united voice. Official Church support for the Vicaría was, therefore, more unanimous than it had been for COPACHI.

The work of the Vicaría fell into three main categories:-

1. Legal defence of life and liberty.
2. Denunciation and communication of human rights abuses.
3. Promotion of social awareness, aid and training.(36)

From its earliest days the Vicaría employed professional legal experts who scrutinized the Pinochet government's methods and questioned their legality. In the case of 'disappeared' persons details were collected and indexed and petitions of habeas corpus were presented. The families of the 'disappeared' were legally represented by the Vicaría's lawyers. Legal action was taken on behalf of political prisoners, torture victims and persons who, having fled the country, wished to return but were unable to do so for administrative reasons. The Vicaría's lawyers amassed an enormous amount of factual information concerning the functions of the judiciary during the military régime, and regularly presented to the High Court an objective analysis of judicial negligence in dealing with human rights violations.(37)

Every year the Vicaría published an account of its work during the previous twelve months. It also printed a biweekly bulletin known as Solidaridad, which was distributed free to parishes and to the various small base communities and workshops which it supported. Solidaridad printed accounts of the progress of the Vicaría's projects and articles on problems affecting workers, peasants and students - and during the Pinochet régime it represented a counter to the distortions of the secular media. In three years the bulletin reached a circulation of 30,000 copies. Solidaridad ceased to be printed after the 300th edition, in May 1990. Another important publication was

¿Dónde Están? which detailed the steps being taken to obtain information concerning the whereabouts of disappeared persons.

The Vicaría has its own rural department to deal with peasants' problems. The emphasis has been on self-help - 'training for leadership' courses have taught peasants to run their own organizations. Legal advice has also been available for peasants evicted as a result of the ending of the agrarian reform programme. Credit and technical assistance programmes have provided practical help. In the shanty towns the Vicaría has continued and developed COPACHI's social work and has set up social and training programmes to deal with problems of hunger, unemployment, health, housing etc. In November 1973 COPACHI set up the first childrens' canteen at Hermida de la Victoria - the Vicaria opened up the canteens to everybody and began to develop them into training centres. Discussions began on other practical ways of dealing with hunger and unemployment, and committees were formed to organize joint ventures such as communal food stores and wholesale purchase of supplies. Other initiatives which the Vicaria has supported have been workshops for the unemployed - noteworthy during the Pinochet years were the ones which produced patchwork embroideries, arpilleras, which took the form of visual political protests.

From the variety of tasks undertaken by the Vicaria de la Solidaridad since 1976 it is obvious that it is not merely an organization which has offered protection against the abuses of authoritarian power, but one which has supported popular organizations and sought new methods of resistance and defiance against such abuses. In the words of Vicar Christian Precht the Church's intention has been:-

...to support the ways the people organize themselves. The ability to unite forces is the great strength of poor people. It is this which has allowed them to overcome such immense troubles in recent times. I know that some people are troubled by the organization of the poor, and look on it with a great deal of wariness. But it is the best resource they have, their only non-violent weapon, and that is why we support it.
(Solidaridad, May 1983). (38)

In many ways the indirect effects of the Vicaría have been as important as its direct effects. Its example in setting up human rights organizations has been followed by other groups, such as La Comisión de Derechos Juveniles, El Servicio de Paz y Justicia, La Comisión Chilena de Derechos Humanos and La Comisión de Derecho del Pueblo, all of which have been founded since 1978. The political parties realized that the issue of human rights constituted a legitimate point of opposition to the military régime and saw the possibility of using the human rights organizations for political ends. After 1977 all political parties were illegal, but political activists found a way of functioning within the various human rights groups. This was especially true of the left-wing parties, which had been forced underground since 1973.

Many of the Catholics who volunteered to help first of all COPACHI and then the Vicaría were left-wing sympathizers who had formerly been active in the MAPU and in the MIC (Christian Left Party). They welcomed the opportunity to support these new Church organizations, especially since in the past they had been critical of what they considered to be a too-close affinity between the Church and the privileged classes. Similarly, the people who have been helped by COPACHI and the Vicaría have tended to be supporters of the Left, since the first victims of oppression after the coup were Allende supporters. Thus, by helping the poor, the homeless and the oppressed in practical ways the Church has earned the gratitude and respect of a section of the community which formerly felt alienated from religion, and in some instances 'lapsed' Church-goers have returned to the fold.

As the Christian Democrats became more and more disenchanted with the Pinochet régime they too turned to the Church's human rights organizations and there they cooperated with members of left-wing parties with whom they had formerly had no contact. This cooperation led to mutual understanding between the political parties and helped to reverse the polarization of left- and right-wingers which was so evident during the Allende administration. It was also a cause for concern within the Pinochet ranks, and led to constant government surveillance and harassment of the Vicaría.

One of the principal weapons of the military régime was social fragmentation. Victims of state terrorism felt neglected and isolated and their families felt helpless. In many instances the defence lawyers supplied by COPACHI and the Vicaría were the only contact which prisoners had with the outside world. Despite the very low success rate of lawyers in obtaining the release of political prisoners the very fact that legal appeals were constantly being presented on their behalf gave these prisoners and their families hope.

It was this feeling of 'solidarity' which was such an important product of the Vicaría's work. Instead of social fragmentation, instead of terror fed on silence and disinformation, instead of hopelessness and despair, the Vicaría sponsored unity and cooperation between different social and political groups, supplied constant and objective information and denunciation of injustice, and fostered new initiatives amongst the most neglected sectors of society. It did not in itself constitute a political response to the Pinochet government, nor did it try to do so, as it was subject to the restrictions of the Church which had no desire to form any kind of political front. But it acted as a kind of 'dyke' against repression, and behind that dyke the political and social organizations which were shattered after the 1973 coup were able to regroup in readiness for a more democratic form of government in the future.

CHAPTER IX

1978-1981 Towards a 'Constitution of Liberty'

By 1978 Chile's economic recovery seemed to be assured, and the laissez-faire policies of the 'Chicago Boys' appeared to be succeeding. The State's economic and social activities had been ruthlessly cut back and the private sector was now the dominant force in capital accumulation. Massive unemployment, which never fell below 10% of the workforce, reduced the power of organized labour. Chile was now an open economy, so cheap commodities could be imported from abroad, and local manufacturing industries were no longer protected by tariffs. At the end of 1978 Chile's average tariff stood at a mere 10%, lower than it had been during the 19th century laissez-faire era. (1)

The world banking community was impressed by Chile's economy and was eager to lend money to private Chilean firms. The western banks were awash with money from revenue-rich OPEC countries and were actively pressing loans on selected third world countries. Foreign money flowed into Chile - but it was money loaned by private international banks to private Chilean banks and businesses, and it was not used to finance State projects. The bulk of the money was used to buy newly 'privatized' State enterprises at bargain prices, and to finance a consumer spending spree in imported luxuries and a speculative property boom.

With the success of their economic plan the power of the 'Chicago Boys' increased. Yet this very success was a cause of concern in some quarters. The likelihood of General Pinochet remaining in power during the rest of his life-time was threatened by the triumph of the 'Chicago Boys', and Pinochet decided that some kind of political alternative to the Chicago model was necessary. This was all the more urgent as the secret police organization, DINA, which was a personal fiefdom of Pinochet and which had been a counter-weight to the power of the Chicago economists, was forced to disband after the scandal of the 1976 Letelier assassination in Washington. A campaign by the USA for the extradition of Manuel Contreras, the head of the DINA, reached a peak

in 1978. As long as the DINA was powerful it constituted a rival source of expertise to the Chicago economists, since it was not simply an instrument for repression, but a society made up of extreme nationalists with various kinds of specializations, including economists.

General Pinochet was determined to eliminate any potential threat to his own personal position. He was in complete control of the Junta, apart from some marginal opposition led by General Leigh. Nevertheless he required some political force to counter-balance the 'Chicago Boys', who were becoming dangerously important. Enormous economic power was by 1978 concentrated in two business empires, BHC and Cruzat-Larrain, which had close links with the 'Chicago Boys' and had grown fat on acquisitions in the banking, insurance and business worlds, made possible by the laissez-faire and privatization policies of the military government. During 1978 and 1979 there emerged an anti-Chicago, anti-big business opposition, known as the duros (as opposed to the 'Chicago Boy' blandos), which contained many of the extreme right-wing nationalists who had belonged to the DINA. The emergence of this opposition suited Pinochet, as it made him appear to be above politics, and consolidated his position as Head of State.

On the one hand the blandos were pleased that Pinochet's power was increased, as they still needed him to help them to carry through the social and economic revolution which they were determined to complete, but on the other hand the emergence of an opposition gave them a feeling of insecurity, as Pinochet had intended that it should. The blandos were also worried that their social revolution should depend so much on Pinochet's personal position, and they began to be concerned about what might happen if he were to die. They consequently put pressure on the President to introduce institutional reforms which would outlive his personal rule.

These institutional reforms were the so-called 'seven modernizations', covering labour, social security, education, health, agriculture, regional policies and the judiciary. But the first and most crucial of them was a bid to institutionalize the labour market in a way favourable to the new model, while simultaneously 'liberalizing' the political climate and weaning Pinochet away from the worst excesses of repression and towards

a Hayekian 'Constitution of Liberty' as a model of political control. (2)

Details of a new constitution were published in October, 1978 by the Ortúzar Commission. This was a body which had been convened by the Junta in 1973, shortly after the coup, to draw up proposals for a new constitution, but had proceeded very slowly due to the Junta's subsequent lack of interest in surrendering power. On October 4, 1978, the Permanent Committee of the Bishops' Conference published a comprehensive working document entitled Humanismo Cristiano y Nueva Institutionalidad which was a critique of the Ortúzar Commission's constitutional plan. This working document outlined the Church's teachings on subjects such as the involvement of Christians in politics, human rights, the Doctrine of National Security, poverty, the rôle of the universities and the labour question. It is such an important document, dealing as it does not only with universal doctrines, but with specifically Chilean problems, that it deserves some elaboration here. The government and the pro-government press received it with hostility, as much for what it said as for who had written it. Once again the Church authorities were told that they were speaking out of turn, and were not qualified to make statements on matters concerning the running of the country.

Humanismo Cristiano y Nueva Institutionalidad

This 103-page document was drawn up by the Permanent Committee at the request of the full Bishops' Assembly, and was directed at the Christian community to stimulate reflection and prompt believers to weigh up their responsibilities as members of society. The first topic which the bishops dealt with was Iglesia y política (Church and politics). They asserted that it is quite legitimate for Christians to take a serious interest in politics, since they are citizens of the world and ought to enter fully into the development of societies and nations. Reducing faith to the level of the individual conscience has been the work of 'liberal indifferentism', against which the teachings of the Church have constantly cautioned the faithful. The nature of the Church's interest in the realm of politics is not party political

or ideological, nor is the Church concerned with obtaining power through politics. The Church's rôle is that of una inspiración moral libertadora (a moral liberating inspiration).

What had altered in the Chilean situation was that, political parties and free discussion having been suppressed, the actions of the Church had made an unexpected impact. 'Cuando el silencio es muy grande, hasta los murmullos resuenen' (When silence is profound even whispers seem loud).

Dealing with the 'political crisis' the working document described the 'essentially provisional' nature of emergency régimes which are formed as a result of such crises. As soon as possible these régimes should give way to democratic government, once the circumstances are appropriate, and those best qualified to judge whether the time is ripe are not only the 'emergency authorities', but also the 'intermediary groups' whose profession it is to serve the public good, i.e. the political parties. These principles are universal, but have an immediate implication in the case of Chile. The bishops went on to condemn unjust authoritarian régimes who denounce, repress and persecute as subversives those who strive to find ways of returning gradually to a form of democratic participation which is in keeping with republican traditions and civil rights. A period of crisis, and the need for an authority to deal with the emergency caused by such a crisis, does not rob the State of its essential purpose. Measures must be taken to resolve the crisis, but at the same time the rights of individuals, families and institutions must be respected and promoted.

There is a deep human need for equality and participation within society. Many models of democratic societies have been put forward and tried, but none has proved entirely satisfactory and the search is still open. In the opinion of the Chilean bishops another essential ingredient of a just society is liberty, and the best way to combine equality, participation and liberty is in a democratic régime with representative participation which protects not only civil, but also economic and social rights.

Far from writing in an abstract or universal manner the bishops made specific mention of certain areas of Chilean society which gave them cause for concern. The first of these special considerations was the Doctrine of National Security. Whilst acknowledging that every nation requires security, the bishops condemned the Doctrine of National Security, which had been elevated almost to a philosophy, and which repressed anyone who disagreed with it and denigrated those who were not openly in support of it. The way in which society was depicted as a battlefield where the enemy is within and always ready to resort to subversion was a doloroso escandalo for the Chilean nation.

Another specific scandal in Chilean society was poverty. A government which allowed twenty per cent of its citizens to live in a state of misery, a system which did not strive for full employment and encourage thrift and the redistribution of wealth, could not be said to be inspired by Christian humanism.

As regards the situation in the universities, where military officers had been installed as rectors and the choice of subjects available for study had been curtailed, the bishops emphasized the importance to the life and culture of society of academically free and autonomous universities. They pointed out the problems which result when the universities submit to ideologies, political parties and economic interests.

A further subject which the bishops examined was the question of workers and workers' organizations. Thanks to these organizations 'the fruits of the common good' had been spread amongst an ever-widening strata of the population, fostering social integration, and they were necessary for the promotion of justice and peace.

This long document led the bishops to the firm conclusion that a democratic system must be established in Chile. This new democracy must be legitimate and based on a constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly, in which the citizenry were justly represented. The most convenient system was government by the majority, with

guarantees for the minority groups, so that the human rights of all citizens were respected. The statement concluded that:-

New, institutionalized democracy is the name of peace in Chile....It is the beginning of the great task of rebuilding a community which, matured by sorrow and experience, may be capable of resuming the great spiritual and civic tradition of Chile. (3).

1980-1981. Consultation and Constitution

Sadly, the new constitution, when it came, was far from being the democratic document drawn up by a representative group of citizens and aimed at rebuilding Chilean society which the hierarchy had called for. Rather, it was a document which was intended to reinforce General Pinochet's personal power, and emanated from three consultative bodies over which he had direct influence - the Ortúzar Commission, the Council of State, and the Junta itself. Membership of these three bodies consisted entirely of supporters of the military régime, many of them specifically nominated by Pinochet.

Entitled The Constitution of Liberty (a plagiarism of Friedrich von Hajek's book of political philosophy), Chile's new constitution was designed to uphold the basic tenets of Pinochet's two ideologies, the Doctrine of National Security and laissez-faire economics. A noteworthy feature of the constitution was that it was not to come into effect until, at the latest, March 1989, and during this transition period Pinochet would act as Chile's legal President. Thereafter the Junta would nominate a single candidate for the Presidency, now extended from a six to an eight-year term. No doubt Pinochet would be that candidate and thus, exceptionally, he would be eligible for a second eight-year term of office after the first had expired. Chile faced the prospect of 24 years of Pinochet rule (1973-1997), by which time he would be 81 years of age. There would be no curb on Pinochet's power during the transitional period; under the 29 'transitory' articles he would be able to declare a state of emergency, personally select the mayors of municipalities, order individuals to be arrested and held without trial for up to 20 days, banish people for up to three

months without giving any proof of wrongdoing and send into internal exile anyone suspected of actively expressing opinions likely to undermine the family or foment class conflict.

The ability of ordinary citizens to freely discuss political ideas and select representatives in government was drastically curtailed. Journalists faced professional disqualification if they published anything which the government considered 'subversive'. Elections to a new Congress were to take place in 1990, and until a new law on political parties came into effect political activity was illegal and Marxist parties remained banned. This new law would control the internal organization of the political parties and declare illegal any political views which were not regulated by the law. A new National Security Council would be created, with veto powers over any political activities which it considered subversive to national security. This National Security Council would be controlled by the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, whom no President could remove, once appointed, and it would thus give the armed forces a potential permanent veto on political developments. There would be a new Senate, the President being empowered to appoint 25% of its members. The President also had the right to decide on what basis the Senate and Congress were to be elected. Anyone who publicly opposed these proposals or expressed totalitarian ideologies was liable to disenfranchisement for 10 years for a first offence, with increased penalties for repeating the offence (4).

A plebiscite, or more correctly a 'consultation', was declared, to take place on September 11, 1980, when the Chilean people were to be invited to accept or reject the terms of this new constitution. Having been denied their basic civil rights for the last seven years Chileans were now being invited to voluntarily waive them for a further seventeen. The new constitution represented, in effect, the status quo, but written down and given the appearance of legitimacy by the consulta. The government had been encouraged by the success of a previous plebiscite, held on January 4, 1978. On that occasion Chileans had returned a vote of 75% in favour of their government, when asked to support it after it had been condemned in the United Nations

General Assembly. But, as in 1978, the organization of the voting procedure in 1980 was completely undemocratic. A state of emergency prevailed, there were no electoral registers and no freedoms of speech or assembly. Opposition political leaders were silenced (many of them were in gaol or in exile), the communications media were almost totally controlled by the government or their supporters, the universities were under military control and there was no regulation of the officials who conducted and scrutineered the ballot.

A few weeks before the 1980 plebiscite the Bishops' Conference issued a statement in which they urged the government authorities to honour five basic conditions which should be observed if the plebiscite was to be fair and valid from a moral standpoint. These conditions were:-

1. That the significance and legal consequences of acceptance or rejection of the constitution would be clearly stated.
2. That there would be no multiple questions requiring a single 'Yes' or 'No' answer.
3. That there would be equitable access to the media for different currents of opinion.
4. That there would be the possibility of a free, secret and safe ballot.
5. That every stage of the voting procedure would be subject to independent scrutiny.

These requirements seem so obvious that it is hard to believe the protests with which they were greeted. The press, having printed the text of the bishops' statement, declined to give it any further publicity. There were many Catholics who refused to see in the statement anything more than another unwarranted intrusion by the Church into the world of politics. There were strong objections to the statement being read out in churches, and these objections were made not by groups traditionally hostile to the Church, but by members of families who had deep-rooted connections with Chilean Catholicism. These Catholics wished to limit the practise of their faith to participation in the sacraments. They would not accept that the Church is the 'Mystical Body of Christ', and that the act of communion symbolises not just union with Christ in the eucharist, but union with

the clergy in the performance of rites, and union with their fellow co-religionists in their daily lives. In yet another sphere society was polarized into two camps - those who accepted and those who rejected the right of the Church, represented by the bishops, to make moral judgements on political questions.

'Divide and rule' is a potent formula for political success. The voters accepted the new constitution - 67.06% voted 'Yes', 30.17% voted 'No', and there were 2.77% 'spoilt' votes (which were added to the 'Yes' total) (5). The plebiscite had required a simple acceptance or rejection of a question which had, in effect, called for three separate answers - approval of the terms of the constitution, approval of the norms of the transitional period lasting until 1989, and approval of the election of General Pinochet as President during this transitional period. The alternative to voting 'Yes' was represented as chaos, as no other proposals for governing the country had been allowed. This multiple question and single answer provided an equilibrium between the groups who supported the military régime. The blandos gained acceptance of the validity of democracia protegida (protected democracy) as the future political system of Chile, and also of the current Chicago economic model. The duros lost the economic argument, but gained the assurance of a continuance of military rule, at least for another nine years. The overall victor was General Pinochet who looked forward with confidence to retaining power as de facto dictator of Chile, probably for the rest of his life.

The losers were the people of Chile. Their country lost even more international esteem. All the so-called 'western, Christian democracies' condemned outright the plebiscite and its outcome. Chile was more internationally isolated than ever before. The undemocratic results of the plebiscite were obvious to all. There were no constitutional guarantees for the 30% of the population who had had the courage to vote 'No', and many of those who had voted 'Yes' had done so out of fear.

The Catholic Church was a loser also. The stance taken by the bishops had divided the Catholic community and, anxious not to create

a permanent rift, Cardinal Silva was obliged to compromise. When the new constitution came into effect in March 1981 the government asked the Cardinal to mark the occasion with a Te Deum, and this he agreed to do, despite wide-spread opposition in Catholic circles. Thus, General Pinochet seemed to gain on all domestic fronts - economic, military, legal, political, and even, it would seem, religious. Internationally he might be castigated as a cruel and ruthless dictator, but at home he had succeeded in acquiring the respectability of constitutional status.

CHAPTER X

The Rejection of Pinochet

We now know that when, in accordance with the 1980 Constitution, the Chilean electorate were called to another plebiscite on October 5, 1988, to accept or reject Pinochet as their President for a further eight years, they rejected him decisively (the results were 'Yes' 43%, 'No' 55%). This defeat was a shock to Pinochet and his close circle of supporters, but by this time they were out of touch with the mood of the country and were deceiving themselves that they could induce the electorate to vote 'Yes' by using the familiar 'stick and carrot' formula. The majority of voters refused to be either threatened or bribed into voting for Pinochet, and the international observers who were present in Chile on October 5, 1988 to witness the conduct of the plebiscite, were impressed by the responsible way in which the Chilean people responded to this opportunity to exercise their democratic rights. The Catholic Church had played a part in this electoral outcome. Without going back to the days at the beginning of this century when churchmen actively campaigned on behalf of candidates of the Conservative Party, or stood as candidates for Congress themselves, and without the kind of behind-the-scenes support which it gave to the Christian Democrats before the 1964 election, the Church was able to exert a positive influence on the electorate by supporting some of the groups who had been working for the restoration of democracy in Chile. The bishops continued to issue statements denouncing violence, whether it emanated from the State or from the opposition, and they emphatically declared that they would not tire of doing so. Four such statements were:- Happy are the Peacemakers, July 13, 1986, Justice or Violence, April 7, 1986, Without Fear and full of Hope, March 11, 1986 and We shall not be silent or grow weary, January 15, 1986. There were also, however, several initiatives taken by the Church which marked a very definite contribution to the overthrow of despotism, without representing an active participation in party politics. Amongst these initiatives I would like to examine the Church's 'option for the poor' in the Basic Christian Communities (CEBs), the 'National Accord'

sponsored by Cardinal Fresno in 1985, the valiant uninterrupted publication by the Jesuits of their magazine Mensaje throughout the whole of this period of repression, and, in the next chapter, the visit to Chile of Pope John Paul II in April 1987.

All these initiatives took place amidst a complicated series of economic changes. The Chilean economic miracle of the late 1970s contained a fatal flaw - new productive investment was very low. Foreign loans to Chilean private borrowers continued to flow into the country, however, and by 1982 Chile's total foreign debt was 17.2 billion US dollars. This money had not been used prudently to build up new industries and create more employment. The inevitable economic collapse came in 1982 and was due to a combination of factors. The policy of de-regulation advocated by the 'Chicago Boys' had led to the formation of huge conglomerates, such as BHC and Cruzat-Larraín, within which private banks could lend money recklessly to companies belonging to the same group (some of the companies existing only on paper). The Chilean peso had been pegged to the US dollar in June 1979, so that when the dollar subsequently rose it dragged the peso with it and Chilean exports became uncompetitive. Copper prices fell in 1982 to their lowest level for 50 years. At the same time, a world recession led to a reluctance by foreign banks to lend any more money to Chile. The peso was devalued and then floated, but its value dropped 50% in a few weeks. At the beginning of 1983 the Chilean banking system finally collapsed, and the government took over direct control of nine major banks and financial groups, including the Banco de Chile of BHC and the Banco de Santiago of Cruzat-Larraín. The 'Chicago Boys', who had been so closely involved in the 'economic miracle', were discredited - some of them being briefly imprisoned.

The cost of the slump was borne overwhelmingly by the poor. Many firms went bankrupt, so that the streets of the cities were filled with street-vendors, many of them former middle-class professional and business people who could find no other source of work. Unemployment grew to almost 30%, if one did not exclude the 8% of the unemployed who were engaged on the Minimum Employment Programme (PEM), a public works programme which paid the equivalent of 40 US dollars a month.

Inevitably there were popular protests and demonstrations, which were staged at regular intervals from May 1983. The government responded to the protests by bringing the military out onto the streets to intimidate the population into submission. In each protest there were a few deaths and many more wounded. Armoured cars patrolled working class areas and tear-gas and water cannon were used to clear demonstrators from city centres. Mass arrests became common, with the security forces surrounding entire neighbourhoods and once again using sports stadia as detention centres (1).

The secret police organization DINA, disbanded in 1977, had been replaced by the CNI, essentially only a regrouping of DINA personnel under a new commander. Both the CNI and the intelligence unit of the carabineros (DICOMCAR) used repressive measures against suspected opposition activists. Victims were kidnapped, submitted to humiliating tortures and sometimes murdered. Invariably these murders went unpunished, although a particularly gruesome multiple murder which occurred in March 1985 caused a public outcry. The mutilated corpses of José Manuel Parada, a research worker at the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, Manuel Guerrero, a teachers' union leader and Santiago Nattino, a designer, were found in a field near Santiago airport. All three had been members of the banned Chilean Communist Party. Judge José Canovas, who was put in charge of a public enquiry, was allowed in this case to proceed with his investigation. He ordered the arrest of two policemen and a restriction on the movements of twelve others for suspected participation or complicity in the murders. The scandal was such that General César Mendoza, the police chief and member of the Junta, resigned and DICOMCAR was disbanded.

The Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (CEBs)

Sharing the sufferings of the poor in the shanty towns were the priests, nuns and lay workers who were running the Basic Christian Communities. The CEBs were not a new phenomenon in Chile. They dated back to the late 1950s and early 1960s when the Chilean bishops were worried both by the masses' ignorance of Catholic doctrine and by the spread of Communism among the lower classes. At the same time that the

bishops, with the assistance of the Jesuits at the Centro Bellarmino, were working to prevent the election of a Marxist President in Chile they were developing their Pastoral Plan to evangelize the poor. In another part of Latin America Fidel Castro was taking Cuba down the path of Marxism-Leninism, and there was concern in the Vatican that Cuba might merely be the beginning of a Communist take-over in Latin America. Pope John XXIII consequently called upon bishops and superiors of religious orders in Europe and North America to divert 10% of their personnel and resources to assist in a major missionary initiative in Latin America. The foreign priests who subsequently arrived in Chile boosted the numbers of clergy by over 27% and helped to bring about the Gran Misión in 1963.

The Gran Misión reached the most distant corners of the land and the most neglected of its people. Further stimuli towards the setting up of the CEBs were the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), with its emphasis on diversity in ministries and involvement of the laity, and the Medellin Conference of Latin American bishops in 1968, where a CEB was described thus:-

It is the first and fundamental ecclesiastical nucleus, which down on that grass-roots level brings richness and expansion to the faith - and to religious worship, which is its expression. This community, which is the initial cell of the Church and the radiating centre for its evangelizing efforts, is today the most potent factor for human advancement and development. (CELAM, 1970: 201) (2)

The idea behind the CEBs was to break down the traditional type of parish, which was too large and impersonal, into smaller groups. The parishes exhibited the typical hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, with the parish priest at the head, the wealthier and more upper class parishioners in positions of authority and the poor and illiterate left, ignored, at the bottom of the heap, as much 'marginalized' in the Church as they were in society. Those associations which did exist in the parishes, such as the Apostolate of Prayer and the Legion of Mary did not attract the poorer parishioners, who were in any case inhibited by the presence of the more articulate and affluent parishioners. The plan was that the basic

communities would consist of groups of about 20 or 30 people from poor districts who would come together to discuss and learn more about aspects of their faith. Typical areas of discussion would be the study of the Mass, preparation for the sacraments, study of the Gospels, instruction on marriage and mothers' groups. Very often the groups would be led by nuns or by lay persons who had been specially trained. There was no set programme and the groups would vary from one parish or diocese to another.

Father Roger Vekemans SJ, who came to Chile from Belgium in 1956 to spearhead the offensive against Marxism, saw clearly that there was a need for a restructuring of society as a whole and set up a series of 'base organizations of Christian inspiration' known as CONCORDE. There was a social as well as a religious element in these groups. Poor people would discuss their situation in society and the nature and causes of inequality, poverty and misery. They would come to discard the fatalistic acceptance of their low status as being somehow due to their own ignorance or idleness and would become conscious of their value as human beings. Practical help in the form of loans from the DESAL organization encouraged self-help and the creation of workshops, co-operatives etc. However, after Eduardo Frei won the 1964 Presidential election the Christian Democrats wished to organize their own social programme, and Frei refused to allow Fr. Vekemans to operate his base organizations as a private network without any government affiliation. Similarly, during the Unidad Popular Government of Salvador Allende, community-led organizations flourished in the shanty towns. The CEBs did not disappear during these years, but 'did not attract significant numbers of people, due to the expanding activities of social and political organizations associated with (political) parties.' (3). But after the 1973 military coup the only neighbourhood groups which survived in working class areas were the Catholic CEBs.

I have already described the creation and work of the Comité pro Paz and its successor the Vicaría de la Solidaridad. These were organizations which were set up as a direct result of the military coup to help victims of oppression to leave the country and to give legal,

financial and medical aid and advice to those who were persecuted, and to their relatives and survivors. The CEBs exist in the 25 Chilean dioceses as well as the offices set up by the Vicaría, and have been revitalized by the influx of new members.

For the first time in its history the Chilean Catholic Church is beginning to penetrate the culture of the poor, and urban workers and slum dwellers are identifying with the Church now much more than ever before. (4)

The paradox is that, when the bishops formulated their Pastoral Plan in the 1960s, they were eager to devote themselves to evangelizing the poor and to developing a new kind of Church which would be less linked to the upper and middle classes and unaffiliated to any political party. Instead of concentrating on this task they were drawn back into the political arena by their determination to combat Marxism, and were obliged to throw in their weight behind the Christian Democrats. It was not until a decade had passed, and a ruthless military coup had left thousands of people helpless and bewildered, that the Church was able seriously to begin to fulfil its mission to the poor.

It is impossible, though, to separate the spiritual needs of the masses from their material and social needs. By coming together and discussing their problems the members of the communities inevitably sought means of helping one another in practical ways - their most urgent needs were most likely to be food, shelter, electricity, water, health services, transport etc. As a group they had more power to press for improvements in their daily lives than they would have as individuals. The leaders of the Christian Communities were likely to be young, progressive priests, many of them foreign, and nuns who had given up their traditional rôles as educators (often of middle and upper class children), and had found a new zeal in working amongst the poor. These priests and nuns became involved in the problems of the needy to the extent that they participated in hunger marches and demonstrations against torture. As a consequence they were themselves persecuted and condemned by the military authorities who accused them of being Marxist agents. And so it happened that the CEBs, which were

originally founded to counter the spread of atheistic Communism by strengthening the religious faith of the masses, were themselves accused of being Marxist organizations.

Strong bonds of affection have been forged between the priests, nuns and lay deacons working in the poblaciones, and the inhabitants of these slum districts. Cases of injury and harassment perpetrated by the security forces against these religious leaders are too numerous to detail here, but one death, that of Father André Jarlan, a much-loved French priest who was killed in September, 1984, sums up what I have been trying to convey. Fr. André was reading his Bible when he was killed by a bullet which penetrated the flimsy wooden walls of his house in La Victoria, a poor Santiago neighbourhood. The bullet was fired by security forces who were shooting indiscriminately into houses to intimidate local residents during a day of protest. In an editorial in Mensaje the following month Father Renato Hevia SJ wrote the most moving tribute to 'Fr. Andres':-

On taking charge of his people, on dedicating his life to working selflessly for others, with no political pretensions or financial considerations, and on becoming the living spokesman of the Word of God, the priest almost belongs to those to whom he ministers and symbolises a way of life which many would like to see everyone follow.

Fr. Andres had thrown himself into his work among the poor of La Victoria, among the working-class youth and those who are looked-down-upon, numerous as they are in our Chile of today - the redundant, the drug-addicts, the prostitutes, the homeless. In this undertaking he felt that not only they, but the entire neighbourhood were his responsibility. He wanted to help them to feel worthy, useful. To feel human, hopeful despite the depths of their misery. The single message placed next to his bier said 'Thank you, Andres, for having confidence in the ability of working-class youth'. Many are the priests and nuns who have joined their lives to the poorest among us, to help them to be conscious of their poverty and their dignity, and to join them in their struggle for advancement and liberation. No surprise, then, that if so many of the poor die there should be a priest among them. And a foreigner, because they are the ones who in their greatest numbers and with the utmost generosity have helped to share the joys and sorrows of those who live on the fringes of society.

Just as there was resentment directed at the hierarchy by right-wing 'Integralist' Catholics, so there was a degree of incomprehension and dismay felt by the clergy and lay deacons working amongst the poor when they observed Church officials taking part in ceremonies attended by members of the military government. For their part the hierarchy had to warn the clergy in the CEBs not to become too closely involved in political questions. The highest authority in the Church, Pope John Paul II, gave a clear message to the clergy when he said Mass in the shanty town of La Bandera on his visit to Chile in 1987. He told them that they must not

... allow interests of an ideological or political nature, foreign to the Gospel, to contaminate the purity of their work of assistance and sanctification. (5)

There was an almost intractable dilemma inherent in the situation of the priests and nuns working in the CEBs - how to spread the Word of God and strengthen the faith of poor people, how to help them to become better human beings, how to share their sufferings, knowing that those sufferings had been caused by the inhumanity and institutionalized violence of the civil authorities, and at the same time how to stay aloof from political debate.

The people of La Victoria did not respond to the death of 'their' priest with violence - they lit candles, miles of candles, along the centre of the streets and alleys, as a silent testimony of grief and protest. But during the funeral mass the police threw tear gas grenades into the local church, and only the personal intervention of the Cardinal prevented the government from banning a memorial service in Santiago cathedral, which became a mass demonstration of the poor against the régime. (6)

This, then, was the contribution of the CEBs to Pinochet's downfall. The devotion and sacrifice of the priests, nuns and lay workers helped to bind together the 'marginalized' into groups whose strength lay in their numbers and their realization that their existence as human beings really mattered. When they were given the

opportunity on October 5th, 1988 to say 'No' to Pinochet they did not hesitate to do so.

The National Accord for the Transition to Full Democracy

In 1983 Cardinal Silva Henrígues, the 8th Archbishop of Santiago, reached retirement age after 22 years as Primate of Chile - the longest incumbency since that of Archbishop Valdivieso in the nineteenth century. He was succeeded by the Archbishop of La Serena, Juan Francisco Fresno Larrain, a conservative bishop who had positively welcomed the overthrow of Allende in 1973. The appointment of Archbishop Fresno was in line with the more conservative policies of the Vatican following the election to the Papacy of the fervently anti-Communist Pope John Paul II. Two years later Archbishop Fresno was created Cardinal.

There was hope among the supporters of the military régime that the appointment of Archbishop Fresno would bring about better relations between the Church and the government, but this did not prove to be the case. In fact, the grouping together of political parties in the National Accord, which was sponsored by Fresno, was a significant factor in uniting the political parties into a formidable opposition bloc.

All political parties were dissolved in 1977, but this does not mean to say that they disappeared altogether. In a country with a long tradition of democratic activity, such as Chile, politics enter into everyday life and cannot be eradicated by decree. The parties went underground and fragmented, many of their leaders were killed, 'disappeared', or went into exile after the coup, but during the campaign for the 1980 referendum on the new constitution there was a more relaxed atmosphere and it was possible to hold public meetings and organize demonstrations. The Christian Democrats were prominent among the opponents of the new constitution, but the campaign was a united effort and drew in left-wing parties as well.

1983 was the year in which several organizations demonstrated opposition to the Pinochet régime following the economic collapse. The trades unions joined together in a loose alliance without party loyalties known as the National Workers Command, and an opposition coalition of political parties known as the Democratic Alliance was formed. The dominant party in the Democratic Alliance was the PDC. Allied with them were the Radical Party and five other small parties: the Social Democrats, Republican Right, Popular Socialist Union, Socialist Party (Briones), and the Liberal Movement. The Alliance's 1983 platform for a return to democracy included the resignation of Pinochet, the creation of a provisional government and a Constituent Assembly, the dismantling of the CNI secret police and the repeal of the 1980 Constitution. Church-sponsored talks between the Alliance and the régime broke down in September 1983, and when the National Accord was published in August 1985, the demands of the 1983 manifesto had been considerably modified.

The initiative behind the Accord came from José Zavala, the president of the Social Union of Christian Businessmen, and Cardinal Fresno himself. Both of them were worried about the political polarization of the country. They sought advice from two ex-ministers, Fernando Leniz Cerdá, who was the first Economy Minister after the military coup, and Sergio Molina Silva, who had been a Finance Minister in the Frei government. Together they drew up a draft of the Accord which was then discussed with the parties of the Democratic Alliance, and also the right-wing National Party and National Union Party. Later the leaders of the Christian Left and the MAPU were invited to examine and comment on the text.

The Accord was not a politically neutral document; it proposed a future political and institutional framework for society which would favour the interests of centre and right-wing elements. Furthermore, it was drawn up by an élite group which seemed to be a throw-back to the old days of Chilean parliamentary politics.

There were three sections to the Accord: (1) Constitutional Agreement, (2) Economic and Social Order, and (3) Immediate Measures. Below is an abbreviated translation of the text:-

(1) Constitutional Agreement: The re-establishment of democracy makes it indispensable that all Chileans should have the right to express their ideas and safeguard their freedoms in a constitutional system which includes, as a minimum, the following:- election by popular vote of a National Congress, a procedure for constitutional reform, the direct election of a President of the Republic, the existence of a Constitutional Court with adequate representation of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial powers, constitutional guarantees of free expression of ideas and of organization of political parties, and regulation of the 'States of Constitutional Exception' which inhibit freedom of speech and movement.

(2) Economic and Social Order: Priority goals will be the overcoming of extreme poverty and marginality, the creation of opportunities for stable and productive work, and the achievement of a high and sustained rate of growth. To achieve these objectives there must be a national determination to equitably share sacrifices and rewards. This means austerity in consumption, solidarity and social discipline. The right to private property in terms of both material possessions and liquid assets, including the means of production, must be given constitutional guarantees. The tax system will not be used as a mechanism of expropriation. The role of the State will be to coordinate and orientate the running of the economy ...in this way a mixed economy will take shape. In labour relations conflicts should be resolved through negotiated settlements...labour organizations should be strengthened with rights to petition, strike, hold meetings etc.

(3) Immediate measures:- An end to the States of Exception, full restoration of all public liberties, complete autonomy for the universities, a Government commitment that Transitory Article 24 will not be applied, an end to exile and the restoration of nationality to those who have been deprived of it. The formation of electoral registers, an end to the ban on political parties, approval of an electoral law to elect a President of the Republic, senators and deputies by direct, personal, free, secret, informed and impartially controlled ballot, with a guarantee of freedom of propaganda and free access to the media of communications. A plebiscite to legalize the proposals set out in this document. (7)

The Accord had a mixed reception. The parties who signed it were the Democratic Alliance, plus the National Party and the National Union Party (both right-wing parties) and the Socialist Party (Mandujano) - eleven parties in all. 'Supporting' the Accord were the Socialist

Bloc, the MAPU, the Christian Left Party, the Social Democrat Movement and the extreme right-wing Movement of National Action. Outside the Accord were the Democratic Popular Movement (MDP), the dominant force in which was the Communist Party and which also included the revolutionary MIR, plus two ultra right-wing parties - the Independent Democratic Union and National Advance. In view of the fact that it gave constitutional guarantees safeguarding private ownership, limited the role of the State and indicated that private enterprise was the real spur to progress, it is not surprising that the most radical section of Chile's left wing (the MDP) refused to support the Accord. What was significant, though, was that it had been signed by the National Party and the National Union Party, as these were the parties which represented the majority of Chile's right-wing voters - the landowners and industrialists who had welcomed the 1973 military coup. This indicated that the business community was becoming disenchanted with Pinochet's régime now that the economic bubble had burst.

Not surprisingly, President Pinochet himself was totally opposed to the ideas of direct elections for a new President of the Republic, and a gradual return to a liberal democracy which were proposed in the Accord. Members of the Junta were more cautious and even welcomed certain features of the Accord, such as its endorsement of the principles of private ownership and free enterprise. At the other end of the social spectrum the disadvantaged groups - the poor, the unemployed, the homeless - did not feel involved in the proposals of the Accord, since it did not offer them any tangible relief, merely urging them to wait patiently until the beneficial effects of a stronger mixed economy had time to trickle down to their level. The signatories of the Accord did not expect immediate results and agreed 'to maintain permanent links with the object of improving and implementing its contents'. This was the beginning of a campaign to achieve a return to full democracy in Chile - not immediately, but at least by the time that the transitional period of the 1980 Constitution came to an end in 1989.

On Christmas Eve 1985 Cardinal Fresno was received in audience by President Pinochet, and transmitted to him the Church's offer to mediate between Pinochet's government and its opponents, via the Accord. The President delivered a very public snub to the Cardinal by abruptly changing the subject, (the Cardinal was later said by his advisers to be 'desolate'). This appeared to be the coup de grâce as far as the Accord was concerned, but during 1986 there were further developments. In April the Civil Assembly (Asamblea de la Civildad) was formed. This was an organization representing 230 professional, business and trade union groups which specifically defined itself as an opposition group. Its manifesto Chile's Demand called for an immediate return to democracy with an economic programme to benefit the poorest.(8) A general strike called by the Civil Assembly in July 1986 was 80% successful, a better result than any previous protest. In August, to mark the first anniversary of the signing of the Accord, the original signatories (with the sole exception of the National Union Party) launched a national campaign to press for direct and free elections.

In September 1986 a new 87-point political pact was drawn up by the supporters of the Accord. This pact, known as the Bases to Sustain a Democratic Regime, proposed changes to the 1980 Constitution to allow free elections (the original Accord had tried to work within the Constitution). What appeared to be a hopeful move took place in November when two members of the military Junta - General Rodolfo Stange, the new police chief, and Admiral José Toribio Merino, the naval commander-in-chief - agreed separately to meet three political representatives from the Socialist, National and Christian Democratic parties and to receive from them copies of the new pact. This was the first official contact between members of the Junta and of the opposition in 13 years of military rule. No statements were made after the meetings, but the fact that they took place at all was a positive development.

A further stimulus towards unity between the opposition parties was given by Pope John Paul II when he visited Chile in April 1987. He agreed to meet representatives of all the parties except one -

National Advance, an ultra-extreme right-wing party dedicated to absolute loyalty to Pinochet. The Pope, by agreeing to meet members of the Communist Party which was still illegal in Chile under Article 8 of the Constitution, gave a degree of legitimacy to that party. In his speech the Pope quoted from the findings of the Second Vatican Council, that the Church is not tied to any political party but has authority to speak out on temporal matters, including politics, and reminded his audience of the importance of Chile's rich Christian tradition. Any political system which was to govern Chile would have to work towards a state of national reconciliation in a spirit of tolerance, dialogue and understanding. (9). After the Pope's departure from Chile political leaders, including Socialists and Communists, gathered outside the Papal Nunciature in Santiago and publicly signed a letter in which they agreed to repudiate violence. The only party to refuse to sign was the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), which had always been dedicated to the violent overthrow of the military government.

President Pinochet himself angrily rejected the possibility of free elections to choose the next President in his speech to mark the 14th Anniversary of the coup on September 11th, 1987. He declared that such an election would be 'irresponsible'. Pinochet always depicted the alternative to his own autocratic rule as being chaos, but by now it was obvious that the opposition parties had achieved a great deal of unity. The PDC and the centre-left groups had already announced that they would work together to persuade their supporters to sign on to the recently-opened electoral registers, and now five left-wing parties, including the Marxist wing of the Socialist Party, added their support for the campaign for registration. The single candidate for the Presidency, to be chosen by the four armed services commanders-in-chief, had still not been selected, nor had the date of the plebiscite to accept or reject this candidate been announced, but it was widely expected that Pinochet himself would be the candidate, and by the terms of his own constitution the plebiscite had to be held before February 1989. The opposition parties' aim was to swamp the electoral registers with their own voters and force the military commanders to the negotiating table by convincing them that Pinochet

could not win. There had already been indications that the members of the Junta were not convinced that Pinochet should be their candidate - they feared that his unpopularity was such that he would be rejected by the electorate and the armed services themselves would be harmed in the process.

Eventually, however, the demands for free elections were refused, a date was set for the plebiscite - October 5th, 1988 - and Pinochet was selected as the single candidate. The electors would have to say simply 'Yes' or 'No' to his candidacy. The parties opposing Pinochet's election now numbered 16 and included the major political parties from the left, right and centre, with the exception of the Communist Party and the MIR. They were grouped together in an organization known as the 'National Command for the No' whose spokesman was Patricio Aylwin, one of the founder members of the PDC, and its current president.

The 'Yes' campaigners had, it would appear, every advantage in the lead-up to the plebiscite. They had had plenty of time to prepare and had the backing of the government. Despite the fact that campaigning only started officially 30 days before the day of the plebiscite, President Pinochet and his ministers had been appearing for months on television engaged in vote-catching activities, such as handing over the deeds to fortunate new house owners. The President was seen more and more in civilian clothes, occupied in philanthropic deeds. The 'Yes' campaign also had an enormous financial advantage and spent freely on advertising in the press and on television.

When the 30 days officially allocated to campaigning began on September 4th, the 'Yes' and the 'No' campaigns were each allocated 15 minutes television time - deliberately scheduled late at night to lessen their impact. Whereas the 'Yes' slots were lurid and heavy-handed in their depiction of the alleged chaos and bloodshed which would result from a Pinochet defeat, the 'No' programmes were witty, cogent and attractive, even though they were produced on a shoe-string budget. The artistic creativity suppressed by 15 years of censorship came into play and the 'No' programmes quickly acquired appreciative audiences.

Despite serious incidents of intimidation by government agencies against opposition demonstrators, and actual killings carried out by unidentified men in civilian clothes who drove around during demonstrations or anti-government protests, shooting at participants and bystanders, (these killers were widely suspected of being under police protection) (10), the optimism of the 'No' campaigners increased as plebiscite day approached. They felt that they were succeeding against all the odds, and had managed to turn the disadvantage of campaigning for a negative concept into something positive. As their posters proclaimed, a 'No' vote was a 'No', not just to Pinochet, but to dictatorship, repression and unemployment. For the time being it was also a 'No' to party squabbles and divided opposition, and this was the achievement of the 'Campaign for the No'.

The Contribution of the Jesuit Monthly Magazine Mensaje to the overthrow of Pinochet

In its August, 1973, edition Mensaje warned that a military coup would lead to a right-wing dictatorship, and after the coup it spoke out on subjects such as the erosion of civil liberties and the impact of the military government's economic policies on low-income families. Mensaje printed the texts of the statements of the Episcopal Conference and, as the bishops became more critical of the military régime, so the magazine increased its coverage of examples of government repression in areas such as the judicial system, press censorship, the 'disappearance' of persons who had been detained without trial, and the suppression of workers' rights.

Similarly, as government interference with the freedom of the press increased, so Mensaje's importance as an independent organ of opinion was augmented and its circulation grew rapidly. It became a valued source of news, both in Chile and abroad, and acted as a counter-weight to those media of communication which were biased in favour of the Junta. After the Vicaría de la Solidaridad was formed in 1976, Mensaje published the Vicaría's accounts of human rights violations, which were issued annually. It became more and more a voice

of opposition to the government, not only in its own outspoken editorials and articles, such as the monthly Comentario Nacional and Sociedad sections, but in the 'Letters to the Editor' where ordinary members of the public could express their views.

Friction between the government and the magazine was inevitable and on December 4, 1985, the editor, Father Renato Hevia SJ, was arrested and sent to gaol to await trial for having allegedly:-

...insulted the Head of State, attacked the Corps of carabineros, discredited the Constitution, called on the people to rise against the government, incited the Armed Forces to rebel against their regular orders, spread doctrines which were illicit under the 1980 Constitution, and discredited the Powers of the Law. (11)

These 'crimes against the State' were said to have been committed by Father Hevia in editorials and articles signed by him since 1983, but were specifically in respect of editorials printed in the first three editions of the magazine in 1985, when a state of siege was in force.

Father Hevia had indeed been extremely outspoken in these editorials in which he condemned the severity of the measures which the government was allowed to use under the terms of the state of siege, measures such as the silencing of the media, the imposition of a curfew, the detention of thousands of citizens and the banishment of hundreds of them to remote corners of the country.

We are losing sight of being a nation and turning into a conglomeration of interests in which the strongest impose their conditions on the weakest,

said Father Hevia in the January/February, 1985, edition of Mensaje. In his May, 1985, editorial, entitled Complicity in the War, he was writing after the mutilated corpses of the three Communist trades unionists had been found near Santiago airport. His revulsion at this crime, together with many other similar incidents, led him to condemn the inaction and seeming indifference of many Chileans to the escalation of institutionalized violence in their own country. He compared Chile to Hitler's Germany, where the Nazis were not the only

ones who were guilty of genocide - those who did nothing to prevent it were also guilty. Father Hevia did not, however, incite Chileans to armed revolt, but encouraged them to follow the examples of Christ and Gandhi and adopt 'an attitude of peace' which involved the rejection of apathy (but also of revenge), and the active expression of demands for justice and peace.

During a state of siege one of the principal measures taken was the prohibition of most of the independent publications. Mensaje, since it was an organ of the Catholic Church, was not subject to this prohibition, but the Ministry of the Interior went ahead with the summons against the magazine's editor, thus risking national and international protests.

The size and scope of these protests were enormous and the incident became a focus for a demonstration of solidarity with Father Hevia, not just by Chilean Church authorities, but by workers' representatives, professional groups, press organizations, foreign diplomats, the United Nations, whose human rights correspondent was in Chile at the time, and the Papal Nuncio, not to mention the hundreds of ordinary citizens who either wrote to or visited the prisoner. The Episcopal Conference declared that Mensaje had 'done no more than defend those same principles that the Church defends in society'.

In the face of such protests the government did not persist with its imprisonment of Father Hevia, who was released after 15 days in gaol. The publicity which the imprisonment had caused prompted Father Hevia to thank the government in his next editorial for having challenged Mensaje so publicly. The support which the magazine had received had given more authority to its voice than it could ever have achieved by itself.

Over the years Mensaje presented well-considered analyses of the state of Chilean society and explained the implications and conditions of the referenda of 1980 and 1988, and the terms of the 1980 Constitution. As the date of the 1988 referendum - October 5th -

approached, articles in Mensaje reflected the growing optimism of the supporters of the 'No' option. It pointed out, for example, the positive effect of the bishops' 1987 statement that:-

...it is our special wish that there will remain not a single Chilean Catholic who has not registered in the electoral lists and who does not vote when the moment to do so arrives. (12).

By the time the electoral registers closed on August 30th, 7,300,000 potential voters had enrolled, representing 90% of the electorate. This was a triumph for the various campaigns for civic education, especially the Civic Crusade which was linked to the Catholic Church.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the topics covered by Mensaje in the 15 years which elapsed between the military coup in 1973 and the plebiscite in 1988. By the time that full democracy was restored in 1990 the magazine had spent almost half of its 39 years of existence acting as the voice of the oppressed and keeping a channel of communication open during a period of repression unparalleled in Chile's history.

CHAPTER XI

Pope John Paul II's Visit to Chile, April 1 - 6, 1987

The Pope's visit to Chile was the first papal visit ever made to that country and it generated a great deal of interest and excitement both in Chile and in the world at large. It had been planned many months in advance - the Pope himself had announced in October 1985 that he intended to visit Chile and Argentina 'during the first quarter of 1987' - and in the intervening period events in Chile and elsewhere had occurred which added a special significance to the visit and aroused expectations of a political outcome which were probably over-optimistic.

The prime purpose of the visit was expressed by Pope John Paul II shortly before he set off from Rome:-

The object of this journey is to give thanks to divine providence that it was possible to avoid war between the two countries at the end of 1978, and to secure peace, with the mediation of the Holy See...for this same reason, before going to Chile and Argentina, I shall pass through Montevideo (Uruguay), where this mediation commenced. (Pope John Paul II, Rome, 29.3.87).

The Pope was referring to an act of Vatican diplomacy which had been initiated several years earlier. In the Palacio Taranco in Montevideo, in January 1979, the Foreign Ministers of Chile and Argentina, in the presence of the Pope's special envoy Cardinal Antonio Samoré and of representatives of the government of Uruguay, had signed documents which set in motion the historic mediation of the Vatican between their two countries. In these documents they promised to renounce the use of force to settle their territorial squabbles and asked the Pope to mediate a peaceful settlement.

The century-old dispute between Chile and Argentina concerning the Beagle Channel zone had seemed to be leading to armed conflict towards the end of 1978. Pope John Paul II became alarmed and sent Cardinal Samoré to South America to try to prevent a war. Once the

two countries had agreed to Vatican mediation the diplomatic negotiations lasted for six years, during which time Cardinal Samoré died and was replaced as mediator by Monsignor Gabriel Montalvo. The Peace Treaty itself was signed in the Vatican on May 2, 1985, the three signatories being Pope John Paul II and Foreign Ministers Dante Caputo of Argentina and Jaime Del Valle of Chile. By the terms of the Treaty Chile retained the three islands, Picton, Nueva and Lennox in the Beagle Channel and Argentina was given sovereignty over a vast area of sea. Five months after this signing ceremony the Pope made the announcement of his intended visit to both countries in eighteen months' time, so that he could see for himself that the peace terms were being adhered to.

The Political Background to the Papal Visit

On the wider political scene, during 1986, it seemed that the days of authoritarian right-wing rulers were numbered, and there was intense speculation as to who would be the next to go. Both President Duvalier of Haiti and President Marcos of the Philippines had seemed to be in firm control of their countries - like Pinochet they had ruled with the minimum of public support, their power depending upon the armed forces and secret police, but they were both forced to flee their countries in the wake of popular uprisings. The parallel between Chile and the Philippines was particularly apt, as the Filipino Catholic Church, under its primate, Cardinal Jaime Sin, had been a fierce opponent of President Marcos. Another similarity was the changing attitude of the United States which was beginning to turn against its former right-wing protégés. All at once Pinochet appeared vulnerable, and the various groups which opposed him began to scent victory.

1986 was a year of escalating violence and bitterness in Chile. By his curt refusal to even discuss the National Accord for a Return to Full Democracy with Cardinal Fresno, on Christmas Eve, 1985, President Pinochet gave the green light to those opposition groups who were advocating mass mobilisation. As General Gustavo Leigh, the former air-force member of the Junta, said:-

Pinochet has thrown away the only lifebelt on offer. He'll have to be dragged by force to the negotiating table and mass mobilisation is the only way to do it. (1)

Dismay was felt in the United States, the European Community and the Vatican, who had all supported the Accord. Meanwhile, political opposition parties from the centre-right to the revolutionary left began to talk about a general strike, 'at the latest by April or May'.

During April, 1986, student demonstrations protesting against military intervention in the running of the universities were ruthlessly suppressed by riot police, and in May, Labour Day saw the greatest display of military force in Santiago since the coup in 1973. Troops in combat gear used tear gas and water cannon to prevent trades union and political opposition groups from conducting a demonstration in the city centre. Combat troops and secret police raided working class and slum areas and indiscriminately rounded up men and boys between the ages of 16 and 60. A plea by Cardinal Fresno that the raids, which he described as 'an offence against personal dignity' which 'violated the rights of the poor', be stopped was met by President Pinochet with an order for even more raids and detentions. An estimated 5,000 men were held for questioning in football stadia.

(2)

At the beginning of July a two-day national strike was called by the National Civil Assembly, and once again armed combat troops used force against civilians. The Church accused the security forces of confronting the protest strikes with 'excessive methods' which caused more damage than they were trying to prevent. Reports began to come in of a particularly inhuman act against two young student protesters who had been beaten up, doused with some inflammable liquid, set on fire and then dumped in a field outside Santiago. One of the victims, Rodrigo Rojas aged 19, died. The other, Carmen Gloria Quintana aged 18, survived but was horribly mutilated. Altogether nine people died during the two-day strike, and fifteen opposition leaders were gaoled on state security charges.

The Chilean Bishops' Conference declared public support for the gaoled opposition leaders and called on President Pinochet to 'return to civilians the political, administrative, social and cultural tasks which are rightfully theirs'. In a declaration entitled Blessed are the Peacemakers! they condemned the 'violent confrontations and cruel acts such as have been previously unknown in our country'. 'When the Vicar of Christ comes to our country what will he find?' they asked. They listed five causes of violence:-

1. The vastly prolonged suffering of so many of our brethren, suffering caused by hunger, cold, poverty, earthquakes, floods, delinquency, unemployment, difficulties in obtaining health care and education, debt, forced entries, breakdown of family life, exile, alcoholism and drug abuse.
2. Lack of participation in decision making, caused by the vertical exercise of authority.
3. The military character of the régime i.e. the militarization of civil life.
4. The behaviour of the police forces who use unnecessary or wartime measures against the civil population.
5. Political terrorism of various kinds by which a minority impose their will on the majority using all means, even criminal ones, at their disposal which help them to achieve their ends.

The bishops' hope, expressed at the end of Blessed are the Peacemakers!, was that:-

When on the first of April the Holy Father kisses for the first time the soil of Chile, he will see with joy a people who has known how to overcome its problems and can receive in peace the messenger of peace. (3).

But the violence which had never been far from the surface during the whole of 1986, and which had already erupted with particular vehemence during May and July, was felt again in September as the 13th anniversary of the military coup approached. Then, on September 7 an incredible event occurred - there was an assassination attempt on the President. He narrowly escaped serious injury, but five of his

bodyguards were killed in the armed ambush, and twelve others were injured. An immediate state of siege was imposed and once again the death squads resumed their dawn raids. Members of the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front had already claimed credit for the attack, but under the powers conferred by the state of siege Pinochet extended his revenge to political opponents and to journalists. Nor did he stop short of implying that the Church had been involved in the assassination attempt. In the pretence that they were searching for arms caches, army troops invaded parishes in the poor La Victoria and Davila slums of Santiago and arrested three French priests, Fathers Daniel Caruette, Jacques Lancelot and Pierre Dubois, (Father Dubois had been in Chile for 28 years!). Despite Cardinal Fresno's defence of the priests who, he said, were 'acting in communion with their Archbishop', they were expelled from the country. In his state-of-the-nation speech, delivered on September 11, President Pinochet criticised priests who 'confuse their pastoral function with political activity', whilst in La Victoria more than 20 priests and nuns began a three-day hunger strike to protest against the expulsions, which one chaplain called 'a declaration of war against the Church'. (4)

Relations between the President and the Church at this point were so bad that questions began to be raised about the wisdom of the Pope's visit which was only six months away. But preparations for the visit were well advanced. The Chilean Church had formed a committee, the Comisión pro Visita del Santo Padre, under the chairmanship of Monseñor Francisco José Cox, and a plan of the visit had already been submitted to the Vatican early in 1986. The government, too, had set up a planning committee headed by the Chaplain to the Forces, Monseñor Joaquín Matte, and construction of new roads and open-air altars was well under way. Despite the open acts of hostility towards the Church shown in the expulsion of the three French priests and in the government's attempts to implicate the Vicaría de la Solidaridad in the attempt on the President's life, Cardinal Fresno was seen in the rôle of appeaser when he went ahead with the traditional Te Deum on Chile's National Day, September 18. The sight of President Pinochet, the members of the Junta and their wives in Santiago Cathedral caused

much bitterness amongst many Catholics, particularly the poor, and the clergy and lay preachers who worked in the poblaciones.

Although neither date nor candidate had yet been chosen for the forthcoming plebiscite to select Chile's next president, it was widely expected that Pinochet would be the candidate, and by the terms of the 1980 Constitution the date would have to be some time before February 1989. Thus the timing of the papal visit fitted in well with the preparations for what was officially described as a 'return to democratic rule'. Much emphasis was placed on the Pope's mediation in the Beagle Channel dispute and President Pinochet announced that he was looking forward to thanking him in person. Preparations for the plebiscite were under way and new electoral registers were being drawn up. Political parties (other than the Communists) were being allowed to re-form, subject to certain conditions, and lists of names of exiles who were to be permitted to return to their homeland were published in the press. As the date of the papal visit grew nearer the government launched a television campaign in which President Pinochet was portrayed alongside the Pope, whilst a commentary referring to the 'man of peace' could have referred to either of them. This disingenuous tactic was condemned by a spokesman of the PDC, Ricardo Hormazabal.

Various groups seized on the imminence of the Pope's arrival to further their own ends. A group of Chilean exiles attended the Pope's last public audience before he left the Vatican for Chile. They chanted slogans and handed to the Pope a letter in which they referred to the hunger strike currently being carried out by political prisoners in Chilean gaols, petitioned for an end to exile and expressed their concern at the constant attacks which had been directed at the Church in Chile. Although many exiles were being allowed back into Chile, about 1,500 were still formally banned. One of them was Clodomiro Almeyda, who had been Salvador Allende's Foreign Minister. Quite unexpectedly Señor Almeyda arrived in a taxi at the Santiago law courts on March 24, 1987, having walked over a northerly mountain pass from Argentina. He made no secret of the fact that he had timed his visit carefully:-

My actions are linked to the Pope's visit. It is an element that creates a favourable juncture in which to carry out this risky operation. (5).

Only days before the Pope's arrival a new newspaper - La Epoca - appeared on the newsstands and was eagerly snapped up. It was the first independent newspaper to be printed since the coup, and the government only allowed its publication after a two-year battle through the courts. The world's press corps began to descend upon Chile, hoping for some dramatic news story, and the government started to complain in advance that the press was going to manipulate the news in a manoeuvre 'tipica de desinformación marxista'. (6). The Comisión Nacional Visita Santo Padre had taken precautions to record the papal visit accurately - television rights had been accorded, not to the National Channel, but to Channel 13, the television station of the Catholic University. Everything was going to be transmitted live and a video back-up would be made. There was thus going to be a unique opportunity for free speech in Chile, and Pinochet's supporters were understandably nervous. The attempt on his life, which had so nearly succeeded in September 1986, had shown suddenly that he was a mere mortal. There was an expectation of dramatic possibilities in the air, the time seemed ripe for change. The hierarchy, however, sounded a note of caution:-

This trip is not political, but politics is part of life, and to analyse the life of a people the Pope will have to touch on political themes, above all where ethics are concerned. (Monseñor Cristian Precht, Vicar General of Santiago) (7)

What the Pope Said in Chile (8)

The Pope delivered no fewer than twenty-six speeches during his six-day visit to Chile, and in addition held a private and confidential conversation of 42 minutes' duration with President Pinochet. Most of these speeches are long and complex and show that the Pope had a thorough grasp of the situation in Chile - although certain unscheduled and spontaneous outbursts from the people of Chile appeared to take him by surprise. Whilst he often used the word 'sé' (I know) when speaking

to individuals such as Carmen Gloria Quintana, the 18-year-old student who had been burnt and left for dead by an army patrol the previous July, the sight of her painfully disfigured face affected him deeply and he said to her 'I understand it all'. Even so, despite the fact that he had specifically asked to meet Carmen Gloria, the Pope did not openly condemn the outrage, which was still only officially an 'alleged' crime, and Carmen Gloria is reported to have said later that her case was 'too political' for the Pope to become involved with it.

Although the Pope, speaking to journalists on board his aircraft en route to Chile, said that the Chilean system was 'dictatorial and transitory', his speeches were careful not to give any impression that either he or the Church as a whole was going to do anything to destabilize the government. He stressed from the outset that his visit was non-political, the theme throughout the six days was one of reconciliation and solidarity, and the hope which he brought was the hope of a better spiritual rather than material life. His proclamation of the dignity of all men, who have been created in the image and likeness of God and are destined for eternal life, was stated in his first speech upon arrival and would be repeated later in other speeches. More than once he would emphasize the importance of the individual and of the whole person, physical and spiritual. His Holiness was careful to point out that the hope and the will which he was able to bring to ordinary Chileans was the hope of being able to endure their difficulties with more fortitude, and the will to continue to construct a new society. Thus continuity, with improvements, was what the Pope was advocating, not violent change.

The Pope's blessing from the Cerro San Cristóbal on the evening of his arrival was directed to all corners of the country and was watched on television by millions of Chileans (out of a total population of twelve million there are ten million Catholics). He included in this blessing a special prayer for all those who were suffering in body or in spirit, the men, women and children of the poblaciones marginales, the Indian communities, the workers and their managers, those who had suffered harm through violence, the young, the sick, the elderly, those who were in exile and looked with longing at

their own country from afar, and those who had yielded to evil and had given offense to God and to their fellow men. The message of peace and reconciliation could not have been more clear.

Reunion with the Chilean Hierarchy, 2.4.87

The Pope's speech to the Chilean bishops gave a valuable insight into his definition of the social doctrine of the Church and indicated how far he was prepared to allow Catholic bishops, clergy and lay organizations to take an active part in promoting human rights in a country such as Chile, which was ruled by a military dictatorship.

En route from Rome to Montevideo, where he spent several days before arriving in Chile, the Pope was asked by reporters whether he planned to press human rights issues in Chile. He was asked to compare the position of the Church in Chile to that of the Church in the Philippines. Could the Chilean Church defend human rights and liberty in the way that Cardinal Jaime Sin of the Philippines had done? The Pope's answer was explicit:-

It not only can, but must, since the defence of human rights pertains to the pastoral mission of the Church. There are those who would wish to separate us from this mission and order us to return to our sacristies. But the defence of liberty is not a political act, because the Church has a Messianic mission, just as Christ had. (9)

In his address to the bishops, among whom he included himself since he referred to nosotros (us), John Paul II spoke of the great responsibility which falls upon them, that of helping to bring about the communion of men with God and of men with one another. This pastoral mission takes priority over the Church's social mission and is a unifying factor within the Church. He congratulated the Chilean hierarchy on their perception that Christ's Truth has relevance for all the activities of man in society, and urged them not to cease from preaching the social doctrine of the Church. He also stressed that the Church's mission is to all men and that the solution to the social problem is not to be found in class-struggle. The bishops could contribute to the avoidance of violence and hatred in Chile by

defending the legitimate rights of the individual, who is created in the image and likeness of God. They should state their 'preferential love for the poor' - but not for the poor exclusively, and they should stress that poverty applies to spiritual, as well as material, deprivation.

Taking a step further his emphasis on the needs of individuals rather than classes, the Pope stated that the Church's interest in politics is based on its mission of safeguarding the transcendental needs of the whole person. He declared unequivocally that the Church must not become involved in party politics and quoted the teachings of the Second Vatican Council:-

La Iglesia no se confunde en modo alguno con la comunidad política, ni está ligada a sistema político alguno. (Gaudium et Spes, 76). (The Church must not be confused in any way with the political community, nor is it linked to any political system).

The Church's responsibility is to provide a service to the whole community, it must not interfere in an area which does not belong to it. Similarly, politicians must not try to use religion to justify their own particular policies.

John Paul II, coming as he does from a country, Poland, which has suffered from the domination of other countries at various times during its history, and was subjected to the tyrannical dictatorship of the Soviet Union for over forty years, is sensitive on the subject of interference. Just as he does not consider that it is right for the Church to interfere in party politics, similarly he does not consider that there should be outside interference in the domestic affairs of a nation. This theme was taken up at once when the Pope arrived at Merino Benitez airport at the beginning of his Chilean visit by President Pinochet, who told him in no uncertain terms that the threat of Communism was a real one in Chile, which was 'attacked and besieged by the foreign expansionist action of the most extreme materialist and atheist ideology humanity has known'. 'You, Your Holiness, can understand that as few can', the President added, in a reference to the Pope's Polish nationality (10). And in fact, from

the Pope's remarks to journalists on the plane taking him from Rome to Montevideo, it is clear that he did not consider the dictatorship of Pinochet to be as entrenched in Chile as was the Communist dictatorship in Poland, where the struggle for freedom was 'more hard and difficult' (11). For one thing Pinochet himself was a Catholic, and for another he had already pledged that Chile would return to full democracy by 1990.

The Pope, in his address to the bishops, referred to the political situation in Chile and stated that every nation has the right to self-determination. Outside influence must not try to force upon Chileans a form of government which is unacceptable to them. But equally it is necessary that within every country there should exist effective means of enabling citizens to participate freely and actively in the decision-making process, and in the election of those who are to run the country according to democratic principles. It is also necessary that respect for human rights is assured, not only for reasons of political expediency, but by virtue of the profound respect due to each individual who is one of God's creatures, endowed with unique dignity and destined for everlasting life. An offence against a human being is an offence against God, who is the just arbiter of actions and intentions. The Pope expressed the hope that the time was not too far distant when the people of Chile would be able to participate fully and responsibly in the decisions which affect the life of the nation.

Meeting with 'el Mundo de los Pobres' - the World of the Poor, 2.4.87

Pope John Paul II's first meeting with the poor people of Chile took place in the shanty town of La Bandera, to the south of Santiago. It is in such districts that priests, nuns and lay workers have seen at first hand the plight of the poor and become impatient for change. Before the Pope's arrival in Chile equivocal views had been expressed by local Church organizations in La Bandera who, whilst being glad that their neighbourhood had been chosen, feared that the mass security

operation surrounding the visit, and control by the Church hierarchy, would combine to prevent their voices from being heard.

We want to hear the Pope's words, said José Luis, a local lay Church organizer, but we also insist on our right to take along our banners and placards, because he has to see what our lives are really like, not the show that's being put on. And if he is there then surely no-one can stop us. (12)

When the Pope did begin his address to a crowd of pobladores, estimated at 300,000, he very quickly dispelled any ideas that he might be bringing them any material aid and began his speech on a very firm note:-

Al igual que los apóstoles Pedro y Juan cuando subian al templo para orar, así también yo tengo que deciros que no traigo 'oro ni plata' (Acts; 3.6), pero vengo en nombre de Jesucristo a anunciaros el amor de predilección del Padre, que ha querido revelar la esperanza del Reino a los pobres. (Like the apostles Peter and John when they went up to the temple to pray, so also I have to tell you that I bring neither 'gold nor silver', but I come in the name of Jesus Christ to announce to you the preferential love of the Father, who has wished to reveal the hope of the Kingdom to the poor.)

Once again the Holy Father used the word 'hope', but it was the hope of reward in the next world, the hope that was held out by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount - the kind of hope that the Liberation Theologians feel is inappropriate to the needs of people who, in some cases, are so poor that they are not able to live as human beings. The Pope assured the crowds that he knew all about their poverty and sufferings, but directed a sharp word of criticism towards the more fortunate members of society:-

...here, as in many other places, I have seen with dismay the poverty of many in contrast to the opulence of a few. He went on to praise the family, 'the fundamental cell of the whole of society', which teaches men to appreciate the true values of the world, the values of human relationships which are not based upon materialist considerations, 'Man is worth more for what he is than for what he has', (Gaudium et Spes, 52).

John Paul II had strong words of warning for the priests, nuns, deacons, catechists and lay workers who were listening to him - they must continue to preach the Word of God, taking as their model Jesus

Christ who deliberately chose poverty as a way of life. They must be careful to keep their teaching within the official guide-lines of the Church, and not allow themselves to stray into the realm of politics:-

... be faithful to your vocation and to the mission which you have received, and do not allow interests of an ideological or political nature, foreign to the Gospel, to contaminate the purity of your work of assistance and sanctification.

Similarly the Comunidades Eclesiales de Base should be extensions of the family unit, meeting places where the Word of God is preached, which have grown naturally out of groups who have met together to learn more about their religion and to discuss their problems. They must not begin to be inward-looking, or take on a political character of any description, and must always acknowledge the authority of the hierarchy.

Finally, the Pope exhorted his listeners to help each other, in the words of Pope Paul VI in his encyclical Populorum Progressio, 'Let individuals, social groups and nations offer the hand of friendship to one another, the strong helping the weak to arise'.

This was the kind of homily which the Pope might have addressed to poor people in any Latin American country, and it did not take into account the special circumstances of life in Chile. When he had finished it was the turn of the pobladores to speak publicly and speeches were made by Luisa Rivera from the población 'Violeta Parra', Ximena Cornejo from 'José Mario Caro' and Mario Mejías from 'Peñalolén'. These three described what life in Chile constituted for them, and were greeted with loud applause. 'We want a dignified life without dictatorship,' said Luisa Rivera. The Pope was clearly taken aback by the force of their remarks and their blunt references to political murder, torture, hunger, repression of all sorts, unemployment and homelessness. (13). He embraced the speakers and told them 'Your words have moved me deeply.'

When the shanty-town dwellers started to make their declarations the Televisión Nacional channel stopped its transmission, although Channel 13 carried on. Monseñor Cox deplored this fact several weeks later in a speech which he delivered when he accepted the prize for 'Freedom of Expression' from the Chilean Press Association. Having stated that during the Pope's visit Chile experienced a special climate of opinion in which, in the presence of an exceptional person Chileans expressed themselves in an exceptional way, and people from the lowest to the highest sectors of society, from the shanty-towns to the Catholic University, had had freedom of speech, the Monseñor regretted that the National Television Channel had cravenly chosen not to transmit the testimonials of the pobladores. He also went on to reveal that one of them, Mario Mejías, was later brutally beaten up by 'unidentified civilians' for having spoken to the Pope in the way that he had done. (14)

Unfortunately, despite the restraint shown by the Pope in his speech, violence broke out after he had left La Bandera and about 20 policemen and 70 civilians were injured.

Meeting with CEPAL (Comisión Económica para América Latina de Naciones Unidas), 3.4.87

Obviously aware that it would be unwise to offer false hopes to the poor people who gathered in their thousands to listen to him at La Bandera, the Pope was careful not to put too much stress on their material deprivation. He emphasised instead the value of their spiritual possessions and the importance of the support and solidarity which accrue from belonging to a family, a community such as a población, a CEB, or a Church. However, the following afternoon, when he addressed a gathering of CEPAL, his words were much more trenchant and he put strong emphasis on the enormity of the problem of poverty, not only in Chile, but in the world as a whole, and he stated clearly that the Church has divine authority to speak out on social questions. He pointed out that the economic crisis which took place between 1981 and 1985 had been the most serious crisis in the last 50 years, that the poorest sectors of society were the ones most affected, and that

severe poverty tends to be self-perpetuating. He was sure that his audience knew the facts of the crisis, but he urged them to look beyond the concise language of figures and statistics and discover the human face of poverty and marginalization.

His Holiness called for a combination of aid from both public and private sources, from developed countries, from institutions and from individuals, and he referred to the stated doctrine of the Catholic Church on economic affairs - 'the principle of subsidiarity'. The State must not supplant the initiative and responsibility of individuals, but must subsidize them and help to distribute aid to all sectors of society, without regard to differences of ideology or politics.

The urgency of the problem of poverty was summed up in the Pope's phrase 'Los pobres no pueden esperar!' (The poor cannot wait). Their situation calls for special treatment, extraordinary measures, direct aid; those who have nothing cannot wait until a gradual improvement in prosperity trickles down to them through the layers of society as a whole. Unemployment is an affront to the dignity of man, and the study of means of creating new sources of work should be given unquestioned priority. Stable and justly rewarded work brings, more than any subsidy, the possibility of breaking that circle known as 'the repetition of poverty and marginalization'. This possibility, however, can only be realized if the worker reaches a certain minimum level of education and culture and has the possibility of passing these on to his children. And here we come to the nub of the whole problem - education, which is the key to the future and the way to integration for those on the fringe of society. The Pope exhorted countries, intermediate groups, individuals, institutions, and private enterprise to concentrate their best efforts on the promotion of education throughout the region.

Finally, His Holiness added a few words concerning the important work being carried on by the Latin American Centre for Population Studies (CELADE), an offshoot of CEPAL. He was aware that the growth in population seemed to add to the problems of the region, but he

referred to the words of Pope Paul VI to the Food and Agriculture Organization in 1970:-

Certainly, faced with the difficulties which have to be overcome, there is a great temptation to use authority to diminish the number of those who have to be fed, rather than increase the amount of food to be shared out. Nobody has the right to manipulate human life without giving offense to God and harming the whole of society. Life must at all costs be defended against 'solutions based on destruction':- ¡No a la anulación artificial de la fecundidad! ¡No al aborto! ¡Sí a la paternidad responsable! (No to artificial methods of birth-control! No to abortion! Yes to responsible parenthood!)

The fervour of John Paul II's statement on the sanctity of human life gives another insight into his own experience of life in Poland, and the very words 'solution' and 'destruction' are symbolic. When he became a bishop, the ruins of Auschwitz lay within his diocese - he had, in fact, lived near Auschwitz for most of his life - and from this experience springs:-

...his passionate belief in the value of the individual, and his absolute intolerance towards those who wish to manipulate or otherwise 'monkey with' the physical gift of human life. (15)

Far from being a hindrance to development, the growth of population should become a potent force towards economic, social and cultural life, said the Pope.

Meeting with Young People, National Stadium, Santiago, 2.4.87

One occasion where the Pope misjudged the effect of his words was at the rally of 80,000 young people in the National Stadium in Santiago at 8 o'clock in the evening of the Pope's first full day in Chile. The day had begun with a private meeting with President Pinochet at 8.10 a.m. and had already included the huge open-air Mass in La Bandera, the meeting with the Chilean hierarchy, and another massive open-air ceremony at the airport in Valparaíso, where a crowd of 360,000 had heard the Pope re-emphasize the importance of the family.

An unruly element in the crowd of young people in the National Stadium was manifesting itself even before the Pope arrived, and instead of singing hymns, which is what was expected of them as they waited for the Holy Father, the youngsters chanted anti-Pinochet slogans and stamped their feet. When he arrived the Pope could not refrain from making a reference to what had happened in the National Stadium during the 1973 coup and he called it 'this stadium, place of competitions, but also of grief and suffering in past times'; at these words a wave of cheers swept through his audience.

The Pope took as his theme for this speech to young people the words of Christ to the daughter of Jairus:- 'Contigo hablo, niña, levántate' (Mark 5, 41) (I am speaking to you, child, rise up). He was not urging them to rise up in defiance of authority, but to take an active part in the construction of a more Christian society, rather than remain indifferent in the face of injustice. To do this they must put aside feelings of hatred and avoid being seduced by violence and the thousands of reasons that seem to justify it. Love is stronger than hatred, even though it may not appear to be so in the light of specific incidents.

John Paul II urged his audience to make three promises. This is something that he often does when addressing young people on his many foreign tours, but this time the response was not what he expected. Young Chileans replied 'Yes' when they were asked if they were willing to renounce the idolatry of riches, materialism, easy money, power and dominion over others in order to follow Christ in the Way of the Cross, but asked if they would renounce sex and pleasure they replied robustly, but honestly, 'No'.

This same candour appeared when selected young people went up to the Pope and, just as the shanty-town dwellers of La Bandera had done earlier that day, gave the Holy Father accounts of their experiences, their hopes and their disappointments. These young people had been chosen because they belonged to less privileged groups of society; their testimonies had been seen beforehand by Cardinal Fresno and Monseñor Cox, but when they began to speak out before the Pope they

were much more frank than had been expected. 'We are not free to express ourselves, and when we do so we get repression and blows', said one boy. Once again the National Television channel did not transmit this part of the ceremony.

There was much criticism in the Chilean press about this rally. The organizers were accused of selecting a group of Chilean youths to address the Pope who were not representative of Chilean youth as a whole, since there were many middle-class young people living comfortable, satisfied lives who were not invited to speak. Cardinal Fresno must have agreed with some of these criticisms because, when the papal tour was over, he asked for the resignation of Father Juan Andres Peretiatkowice from his post of Vicario de Pastoral Juvenil.

Eucharist of Reconciliation and Beatification of Sister Teresa of the Andes, O'Higgins Park, Santiago, 3.4.87

The violence which erupted in O'Higgins Park, where a huge crowd of 850,000 people was awaiting the Pope's arrival to celebrate Mass and perform the ceremony of beatification of Sister Teresa of the Andes, was described by the foreign press as the ugliest scene ever witnessed by the Pope during his foreign tours. It has to be said that many of the foreign reporters and photographers who converged on Chile for this tour had been hoping for just such a sensational story, and this incident received more press coverage than any other. The violence seems to have started among a section of the crowd who, hot and tired after waiting for hours in the sun for the Pope to arrive, were angered when the press corps moved into their special stand and threatened to block their view. Some members of the crowd began to throw stones. There was further anger when an armoured police car drove up to deal with a suspicious black box, which was thought to be a bomb, and the crowd surged forward, pushing over a crush barrier. The Papal Guard, which was made up of young people, were unable to contain the crowd, so a cordon of carabineros was formed to push the barrier into position. At this point the disturbance turned into a confrontation between the crowd and the police. Fires were started, stones and bottles were

hurled, ambulances were attacked and eventually the police retaliated with water-cannon and tear gas.

Fortunately nobody was killed, but over 160 people, including 26 policemen, were injured, some seriously. The Pope had arrived by this time, and he delivered his prepared speech, although he had to stop several times as the tear gas drifted up towards him. His opening words of reconciliation were at the same time appropriate and prophetic:-

Quedan la fe, la esperanza, el amor; estas tres. La más grande es el amor. (1 Cor. 13; 13). (And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love).

The religious ceremony in O'Higgins Park was entitled Eucaristía de Reconciliación, and the Pope in his speech referred to external and internal reconciliation. External reconciliation was the peace treaty which had been signed between Chile and Argentina and which had prevented war between the two countries, and internal reconciliation meant the search for the 'common good' of the country, and required the renunciation of all forms of violence and terrorism, from whatever source they sprang, which threw countries into chaos. Reconciliation, as proposed by the Church, was the genuine path of Christian liberation, without recourse to hatred, class struggle, reprisals or inhuman dogma which did not treat other men as brothers and children of the same Father, but as enemies which had to be defeated. Violence was neither Christian nor evangelical, nor did it solve difficulties which arose between individuals or between countries.

As the Pope said these words those who had been injured in the violence which preceded his speech were being treated by Red Cross teams in the park, or in hospital. But it is easy to dwell on the disruptive element and to forget that the majority of the enormous congregation, to which could be added the millions who were watching on television, wanted to hear the message of peace and reconciliation, and the phrase which stayed in their minds was the impromptu exclamation which the Holy Father uttered three times above the noise

and tear gas in O'Higgins Park:- ;El amor puede más! (Love achieves more!).

Meeting with Leaders of Political Parties, Industry and Unions, 3.4.87

A meeting between the Pontiff and leaders of the political parties (with the exception of National Advance) had already been scheduled for later in the evening, after the ceremony in O'Higgins Park. A midnight press conference was held after this meeting and leaders of left-wing parties took the opportunity of disassociating themselves from the rioting, which was carried out by unidentified groups. These groups could have belonged to the extreme left or could have been made up of right-wing provocateurs; equally they could have formed spontaneously. Other groups of demonstrators had appeared at previous papal ceremonies and had been dealt with, on the whole leniently, by the police without the use of excessive force.

I have already mentioned this meeting between the Pope and the leaders of the Chilean political parties in the previous chapter. It is important to note that the leaders of industry and of the trades unions were also present. The Pope once again spoke of the political neutrality of the Church, but stressed that its Evangelical mission gave it the right to speak out on matters which concerned the well-being of men in society. He told the political community that they were the representatives, and the servants of 'the human person'. After reminding his audience that any contribution to the development of Chile had to take into account the rich Christian tradition of that country, John Paul stated that this 'spiritual and human patrimony' would, if it was respected, lead to reconciliation in a spirit of tolerance and understanding. He asked his audience to surrender their individual interests, allowing the consideration of the greater good of the nation to prevail. For this same reason he exhorted them to renounce violence in favour of 'love, mutual confidence and hope'.

'Te invoco, Señor, desde el confín de la tierra' (Psalm 61, 2). (From the ends of the earth I cry unto thee, Lord). These were the Pope's opening words in his homily at Punta Arenas, the most southerly city in Chile. It was an appropriate place in which to speak about peace, in particular the peace agreement between Chile and Argentina which the Pope had mediated. The dispute between the two countries had concerned this southerly territory, and if war had broken out fighting would certainly have taken place in this region.

Stressing that mankind can make a positive option for peace in the thousands of small incidents which make up our daily lives, Pope John Paul II selected three areas in which world peace is threatened - the arms race, ideologies which preach violence and use torture as a means of subjugation, and the abuse of the environment. The arms race, said the Pope, besides putting peace in jeopardy, is a scandalous waste of money when there is so much poverty in the world. The use of torture is condemned by the Second Vatican Council in Gaudium et Spes, 27. Torture, either psychological or physical, is an infamous degradation of human civilization, which dishonours its perpetrators more than its victims and is contrary to the honour which we owe to the Creator. As regards the environment, the Pope stressed that the Church is not opposed to scientific or technical progress, but this progress must not take precedence over the needs of mankind or lead to the destruction of nature.

The reference to torture was the only one made by the Pope during his visit - at least publicly, as his conversation with President Pinochet remained confidential. This was a disappointment to many people who were hoping that the Pope would give more prominence to the condemnation of human rights' abuses. In a certain way, however, the Pope had made an astute choice of location for his reference to torture. For the first time in his tour his audience included high-ranking military officers, who were thus forced to sit and listen to denunciations which they would have preferred not to hear. Society in the remote city of Punta Arenas is very different from society in

Santiago - the military are there in large numbers, and men in the armed forces often marry local girls, so civilian and military spheres often converge. Furthermore, the Bishop of Punta Arenas, Monseñor Tomás Gonzales, has been one of President Pinochet's most outspoken critics.

Meeting with Mapuche Indians, Temuco, Pampa Ganadera, 5.4.87

The Pope, as I have pointed out, did not attempt to openly denounce either President Pinochet or the Chilean government during his visit, but in a diplomatic way he did make his opinions known. On April 5th he travelled to Temuco where he met a group of 50,000 Mapuche Indians, representatives of the 250,000 Mapuche who still live in Araucania. These are the descendants of the original inhabitants of Chile, who are now to be numbered amongst the poorest of the poor in that country. Pinochet had pronounced that the Mapuche no longer had the status of an indigenous people and that their land could be seized by the State. John Paul II, however, gave unstinted support to their cause, and in doing so delivered a decided snub to the President. The Pope's message to the Indians was very clear - they must actively defend their right to their own culture, identity and land. They had not only a right, but a duty, to pass on to future generations the values of their nation - love of the land, love of freedom and unity of the family. They had been the victims of injustice and indifference in the past, and just as priests such as Fray Diego de Medellín had formerly protested to the King of Spain about the way they were abused, so now the Church wished to give them positive support in their demands that their legitimate rights be respected. He urged them not to be seduced by tempting solutions to their problems, such as hatred, violence or the unjustified abandonment of their land for a life in the cities which would turn out to be even more precarious and difficult.

Liberation Theologians have criticized the traditional attitude of the Catholic Church towards the poor, which is that if they endure their sufferings in this life with fortitude they will be justly rewarded in the next world. Pope John Paul II has also come in for

his share of criticism for being too conservative, but he made a statement to the Mapuche Indians which indicated that he, also, considers that men are entitled to live with dignity in this life, which is a preparation for the next. This statement links up with the sentiments he made known in his speech to CEPAL two days earlier:-

No se trata sólo de la esperanza en el cielo, sino también en esta vida, que es camino para la eternidad. (It is not just a question of hope in Heaven, but also in this life, which is the path to eternity).

Stressing that the use of violence was not the way to achieve justice, the Pope urged the Indians not to yield to the temptations of either passive conformity whereby they would allow others to make decisions for them, or violent non-conformity which might lead to confrontation. He urged them to remember that 'el amor vence siempre' (love always wins), and to let their love of their land and their traditions show itself in positive activities, initiatives and displays of solidarity in favour of their nation and their just claims.

There is a difference in tone between this speech to the Mapuche Indians and the Pope's speech two days earlier to the poor slum dwellers of La Bandera, and once again the reason for this can be found in the Pope's own nationality. Poland is a country whose independence has been constantly threatened or destroyed throughout its history, and the Pope himself has experienced life in his own country under the harsh domination of Germany and the Soviet Union. He is a passionate believer in a nation's right to its own identity, and his words of encouragement to the Indians had more to do with their status as a nation subjugated by another nation, than with their poverty.

He can also identify with their lives as peasants and labourers, as he himself was forced to work as a labourer during the Nazi occupation of Poland. He is fully aware that the work of peasants is poorly paid and denigrated by society, which is prepared to pay labourers in other spheres better wages than peasants who work the land. The Pope urged the Mapuche not to yield, but rather to grow

stronger in the face of their difficulties, seeking all the time to find legitimate means to overcome them.

Conclusion of the Pope's Visit and Pastoral Letters Issued by the Bishops' Conference

When the Pope made his final speech on Chilean soil he said that he prayed that each and every Chilean would be able to confront the problems facing their country in a calm and positive spirit and with the willingness to find solutions to their differences by means of dialogue, agreement, solidarity, justice, reconciliation and forgiveness. He urged them to trust in God, and once again used the phrase 'El amor puede más'. (16)

There was a press conference on the plane which was taking the Pope back to Rome at the end of his South American tour, and journalists asked his opinion about the violence which he had experienced in O'Higgins Park. What did he consider to be the task of the government, the opposition and the Church in dealing with the violence in Chile? His answer was brief and not very specific - he said that the Chilean bishops were nearer to the actual situation and were acting in unison, and that it was not his intention, nor was he competent, to suggest technical solutions to political problems:-

Los obispos chilenos estan más cerca de las situaciones concretas, pero todos mantienen la misma linea, la misma actitud, los mismos principios. Todos, como se ha podido ver en mis alocuciones, en mis homilias. Sobre la situación política, no es mi intención, no es mi competencia entrar en soluciones técnico-políticas. (17)

Once the Pope had left Chile, and the various sectors of society began to mull over his words, there was bound to be a divergence of views and a feeling in some quarters of unfulfilled expectations. However, Pope John Paul II had stressed the positive aspects of life in Chile and during his visit there was a feeling of unity and optimism in the country which had not been felt for many years. In some ways his visit was as important for what it allowed to be said, in meetings, in the press, on television, as for what he said himself. Enormous

numbers of Chileans turned out to see the Pope, psychological barriers were broken and dialogue was opened up. The Pope, with his great personal magnetism and his actor's ability to sway his audiences, assumed the dimensions of a prophet and fulfilled, for a few days at least, the need of the nation for a charismatic leader. When he left there was a feeling that it was time to make a fresh start, and this feeling prompted statements and actions which would not have been made before his visit.

The president of the Bishops' Conference, Mgr. Bernardino Piñera, accompanied the Pope on his visit to Argentina, which took place after the Chilean visit, and said on his return to Santiago that the visit of the Pope had opened up lines of communication between the Church and the government which could lead to better relations between the two. He asserted that the government had, in the past, made the mistake of looking at the Church only through the eyes of a restricted group of clerics - the military chaplains who, however worthy, did not understand the complete picture. For example, they had difficulty in understanding the Church's social role. In consequence the government received a distorted impression of the Church's work in the country as a whole. Mgr. Piñera said it would be better if the civil authorities could consult the 'real Church' in Chile, and by this he meant the bishops and their staffs. Asked whether, in their private conversation, the Pope and President Pinochet had discussed the possibility of a better dialogue between Church and government, Mgr. Piñera replied that the question would have to be put to the Pope and the President themselves. He went on to describe the task of the Church in Chile in the wake of Pope John Paul's visit as one of working towards reconciliation and a peaceful solution to the problems and tensions which existed in the country. (18)

Bishop Joaquin Matte, the most senior of the military chaplains, replied that their rôle was to administer to the religious and moral needs of the armed forces and their families; their pastoral mission had never included interpreting to any government whatsoever the beliefs and opinions of the Chilean Church. This reply prompted Mgr. Piñera to publish a clarification of his original statement. He

pointed out that there exist within the Church several groupings, most of them legitimate and worthwhile. It is unwise, however, to view the Church through the eyes of only one of these groups, as to do so gives rise to a distorted picture. In his opinion, the government had made the mistake of cultivating one sector of the Church rather than the whole Church. The clergy performs many functions within the Church - he specified some of them: -chaplains in the armed services, or in hospitals or prisons, parish priests in working-class districts or shanty towns, teachers and youth leaders. Each of these groups has a specific task to fulfil, but in doing so they do not necessarily see all the aspects of the Church's work, only those which affect themselves. It is only the hierarchy which has an overall view, and which co-ordinates the work of the various sectors, from priests through to deacons and lay workers. It would be a positive step, and one which would correspond to the call for reconciliation made by the Holy Father, if the government could establish links with the Church at the level of the Episcopate.

Mgr. Piñera was making a most important statement here. He was highlighting the fact that there were, in essence, three streams of Catholicism in Chile. At the level of the poor, the unemployed, the marginalized sections of society there were the worker priests, the parish priests and nuns who shared the deprived lives of their parishioners and for whom social change was a matter of urgency. At the level of the middle classes there were the clergy, many of whom were essentially anti-Communist and who supported the Pinochet government because of its stand against Communism, and since the Pinochet government was a military government, this group of priests included the military chaplains. Finally, there was the hierarchy who had the responsibility of holding the Church together, helping the poor and at the same time keeping up a dialogue with the government, and also acting in unison with the Pope in interpreting Church doctrine. The Bishops' Conference is the highest body of the Chilean Catholic Church, and its decisions carry more weight than those of any other group or individual, including the Archbishop of Santiago, so Mgr. Piñera, as president of the Conference, was an important spokesman. He obviously felt that a gulf had opened up between the Church and the

government, leading to a lack of understanding, and it is significant that his first gesture on returning to Chile after accompanying the Holy Father on the last leg of his South American tour was to try to bridge this gulf. This would be a very positive step towards the reconciliation which the Pope had called for.

Mgr. Cox, the Secretary of the Comité Nacional Visita Santo Padre, made a similar observation. In an interview published in El Mercurio on April 12, 1987 he said that he had found his weekly meetings with government officials during the months of preparation leading up to the Pope's visit extremely valuable - a dialogue of this sort had been needed, and he hoped that it would lead to the creation of a permanent office to deal with Church/government relations.

In the light of the Holy Father's message to them that they should strive with all their might to effect the union of men with God and men with one another, the Chilean bishops met together in Episcopal Conference in May, 1987, and on May 23rd they issued a pastoral letter entitled Los desafíos de la reconciliación (The challenges of reconciliation). In their statement the bishops noted that, in response to the Pope's call for reconciliation between men and God, there had been a great effort on the part of individuals and families to live better lives. They hoped that this would be the beginning of a profound social reconciliation and called on all Chileans, including those who were not Catholics, to take the next step - if their reconciliation with God was sincere it should lead to reconciliation with one another.

The bishops went on to urge that there should be an end to the climate of hatred and aggression which had prevailed, that the level of dialogue should be raised and insults and vilification abandoned. The Pope had been able to tell people truths about themselves without giving offence and had been listened to with respect. In order to work together for the good of their country Chileans should show respect for one another. Social justice was a prerequisite for national harmony. 'Los pobres no pueden esperar!' said the Pope in his speech to CEPAL. All Chileans should share the sacrifices which must be made in the

present situation of reduced prosperity. Those who were well provided for should give an example of sobriety and sensitivity to the poor. Employers must try to create jobs and pay just wages to their employees out of respect for their human dignity.

The politics of economics must contain a much greater social dimension. 'El desarollo integral de las personas es la media y meta de todo proyecto de desarollo', (The overall development of people is the measure and goal of any development plan), said the Pope in his 1987 Message of Peace. Social reconciliation would be difficult if great efforts were not made to level out the inequalities which existed. The Pope had spoken about an integral economy (una economia solidaria) and the creation of work (una cultura de trabajo), ideas which should be carefully studied and implemented.

Referring to the Pope's statement about the need for the full and responsible participation of citizens in the decisions which affect the nation, the bishops called on the authorities to open up swiftly the path to true democracy. Politicians of all parties should overcome partisan interests, bearing in mind the greater good of the nation and respecting the rights of man. Mindful of the Pope's warning that the Church should not become involved in party politics, the bishops offered to help in any way possible to open up dialogue between all sectors of society in the interests of national unity, 'sin entrar en campos que no nos corresponden' (without becoming involved in matters which do not concern us). (19)

Once the excitement of the Papal visit to Chile had died down, the country's main topic of interest became the forthcoming change in the system of government which had been incorporated in the 1980 Constitution. A plebiscite was to be held - probably in September or October 1988 - to confirm or reject a single presidential candidate. The electoral registers had been open for several months, but the bulk of the population had been slow to register. This may have been due partly to their preoccupation with the Pope's visit, partly to a national inclination to procrastinate, and partly to certain difficulties which ordinary people were encountering - for example,

the government had decided that a special identity card had to be obtained for registration purposes, and the registration offices were only open from 9 o'clock until mid-day, Monday to Saturday. These restrictions were costly in time and money to working-class and unemployed people - by contrast, the armed forces and their families, and public servants (all of whom were likely to vote 'Yes' to the official candidate), were given special facilities for signing the electoral registers. Another reason why many working-class people had failed to register was the fact that they belonged to the Communist Party, which was entirely opposed to the plebiscite.

By July 1987 only 750,000 people in the whole of Chile had registered as voters. If that rate of inscription continued it was estimated that by September 1988 a maximum of 4 million adults would have registered - leaving a further 4 million unregistered. Furthermore, the government could choose to close the registers early. In an effort to redress the balance the Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference issued a Call for inscription in the electoral registers on June 10, 1987, with the aim of making Chileans aware of their social responsibilities. The bishops' hope was that not one single Catholic should refrain from registering, and they called upon employers and social organizations to give consideration to helping citizens to fulfil their civic obligations. The bishops recalled the words of the Second Vatican Council, which stated that free voting was a right and a duty:-

'Let all citizens remember the right, and at the same time the duty, which they have to vote in freedom in order to promote the common good.' (Gaudium et Spes, 75).

Another Episcopal Conference was held on August 10 to 13, 1987, and a declaration entitled Al servicio de la paz (At the service of peace) was subsequently issued. Once again the bishops' theme was the forthcoming plebiscite, and they set out the requirements which a plebiscite or election must fulfil in order that its results should have moral authority. They referred to their earlier statement of June 10, 1987 concerning the electoral registers, and again called upon citizens to register as soon as possible so that they could participate

in the decisions affecting the future of their country. Certain conditions must be fulfilled if a plebiscite or election is to be morally acceptable:-

1. The number of those people who are able to participate in the suffrage must be sufficient for it to be considered a true expression of the will of the country.
2. All sectors of opinion must have equitable access to the television and other means of communication, and to the various forms of political publicity, so that voters receive sufficient information to help them to exercise their vote - the government had already stated that television time would be equally divided, half for themselves and the other half for all the rest of the opposition!
3. The conditions under which voting takes place must exclude all possibility of duress.
4. The collection and scrutiny of the votes must be performed in such a way that the absolute correctness of the process could be verified by everyone.

The bishops were trying to ensure that the next plebiscite would be carried out in conditions which were more democratic than in the plebiscite of 1980. Their reference to the fair distribution of television coverage amongst all sections of opinion was particularly appropriate as, despite a certain relaxation of media censorship since the Pope's visit, the main media channels were still monopolized by the government. The Church also started a campaign of civic education so that the electorate should receive sufficient information to allow it to make a free choice when the time came to vote.

In their August 1987 statement the Episcopal Conference referred to the repeated complaints which they were receiving about torture. Physical and psychological pressure was being exerted on people arrested and accused of acts of terrorism and other crimes. On the 'plus' side, however, they were able to stress the growth in agricultural production, suggestions put forward to augment the pay of the lower-paid, the closure of detention centres operated by the CNI,

the invitation made to the International Red Cross to inspect prisons, the work achieved by the Commission for Human Rights which the government had set up, and the continued flow of returning exiles.

Statements made by the Junta and the Government

The official spokesman of the Chilean government concerning the papal visit was Francisco Javier Cuadra, the Secretary General of the Government. Asked about measures which could be taken to achieve the national reconciliation which the Pope had called for, Minister Cuadra was careful not to commit the government to any new course of action, and said that:-

...reconciliation must take place on a higher plane than the political one and has a preferably religious, moral, human, and consequently social dimension. (20).

He recalled that on several occasions, and not only during his visit to Chile, the Holy Father had stated that the root of all evil lies in the social, economic and political structures of a nation, and above all in men's hearts; hence the Pope's phrase 'el corazón de la paz es la paz del corazón' (the heart of peace is the peace of the heart). The General Secretary also seized upon the Pope's reference to 'the rich Christian traditions of the Chilean nation' and his repeated condemnation of violence. In an interview published in El Mercurio on April 12, 1987, Francisco Javier Cuadra refused to admit that the Pope's references to reconciliation and violence had any special relevance to the Chilean situation - he said that the Pope had dedicated the year 1984 to the theme of global reconciliation, and that he had spoken of reconciliation when he was in Chile only because it was a constant theme in his speeches to all mankind. When the interviewer, Blanca Arthur, insisted that there were people in Chile who were worried by the violence which they had seen during the Pope's visit and by the apparent polarization of society, the Secretary General burst into a condemnation of Communism, the bête noire of the Pinochet government and the official justification for its policies of repression.

In a later interview the Secretary General was asked about Mgr. Bernardino Piñera's remarks concerning the government's partial view of Church affairs, due to its contacts with only one sector (the military chaplains), and he explained that since the Constitution of 1925, when there was official separation of Church and State, there had been no special constitutional links between the government and the Catholic Church, because from that time onwards the government had maintained relations with all the religious sects in the country. There were relations between the government and the Catholic Church on several levels, such as the diplomatic links between Chile and the Vatican, constant contact between members of the Church and government authorities, and the Office of Special Affairs which was part of the President's General Secretariat. (Not long after this interview Francisco Javier Cuadra was removed from office by President Pinochet in a cabinet re-shuffle, and in July 1987 was himself nominated to become the new Chilean ambassador to the Vatican).

Disappointing as were the statements of the Secretary General of the Government, which were taken to be the official view of the government itself, the remarks of the individual members of the ruling Junta de Gobierno, made on separate occasions soon after the Pope had left, were more optimistic that reconciliation was a possibility.

General Fernando Matthei, the commander-in-chief of the Air Force, said that now was the moment for all Chileans, military and civil, to extend the hand of friendship to one another, bearing in mind that it is possible to disagree over some ideas but that at the same time citizens can live in peace and construct a new democracy for their country. General Matthei went on to declare that from now onwards he did not wish to express a single word which could cause division amongst Chileans, only words which would unite them, and if he had made divisive statements in the past he wanted them to be totally forgotten. Chileans should carefully examine their consciences, look to the future with confidence, and whilst not forgetting the past, treat it as a closed book - otherwise there was no future for them. He did not mean by this that past events should be deleted from the history books, but

that they should be recalled so that the mistakes of the past were not repeated. (21)

General Matthei declared himself to be in agreement with Admiral José Toribio Merino, the naval commander-in-chief, over the question of the political parties who were re-forming - that, once these parties had decided on their policies, their supporters and their spokesmen, the government should sit down and hold unrestricted discussions with them. Admiral Merino, however, made a specific point of excluding Marxist parties from these discussions since, in his view, Marxists were criminals ('los partidos marxistas no son partidos: son criminales'). Asked whether the political climate in Chile would show any change as a result of Pope John Paul II's visit, the Admiral said that there was no doubt that the country would look at its problems from a different viewpoint, and those people who were interested in having a stake in any future government ought to consider the Pope's teachings very carefully. However different party doctrines and ideas might be, so long as there was a basic Christian morality and ethic there was a viable solution. (22)

Lieutenant General Humberto Gordon, a third member of the Junta and the Army representative, also expressed a wish to forget past differences and to 'wipe the slate clean'. The Pope's visit would, he said, hold great significance in the life of the nation. (23)

The director general of the police, General Rodolfo Stange, declared that the words of Pope John Paul II were of such impact to all Chileans that they should obey them and apply them at all times to their daily lives. General Stange was speaking at a luncheon which had been organized by the Comisión Nacional Visita Santo Padre to thank the police for their effective work during the Pope's visit. Mgr. Cox expressed the gratitude of the Commission and of the Bishops' Conference for the way in which the police had behaved and asked General Stange to convey this message to all members of his police force.

The fact that this luncheon was held at all and that a spokesman of the Roman Catholic Church was actually thanking the head of the Chilean police force and making a presentation of a bound copy of the Pope's speeches during his Chilean visit, seems surprising. But the police had acted in a restrained fashion during the papal visit - unfortunately the international press had been very eager to photograph scenes of disturbances and had conveyed a biased impression. Foreign Minister Jaime del Valle complained about 'disinformation', and said that the world press had given a totally false impression of the Pope's visit. More than 500 journalists had descended on Chile for the visit, and the event which received the most publicity was the riot in O'Higgins Park. What many journalists did not point out about the police action here, said the Foreign Minister, was that the carabineros acted to assist the Papal Guard (which was made up of young Chilean Catholics) to quell a riot, and that the police did not start the violence.

Reactions of various Opposition Parties

Those opposition politicians who expected Pope John Paul II to publicly denounce the Pinochet régime in strong terms were disappointed that he did not do so and that the papal visit did not yield immediate dramatic results. Although he had spoken throughout the visit against violence and for reconciliation, the Pope only denounced torture once, and that in fairly general terms in his speech at Punta Arenas. He visited the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, where he was presented with a book containing the photographs of 758 prisoners who had 'disappeared', and he said that he would carry their names in his heart, but he did not make a public speech at the Vicaría, or mention their work in any of his other speeches. It had been expected that when the Pope and President Pinochet met for a private conversation the subject of human rights would be examined, but that conversation has remained completely confidential.

Not unsurprisingly, the political parties who showed the most inclination to follow the Holy Father's call for reconciliation and non-violence were those which belonged to the Democratic Alliance

group. Their president, René Abeliuk, officially asked Mgr. Bernardino Piñera, the president of the Bishops' Conference, that the good offices of the Church be employed to bring about a meeting between the political parties, so that they could start the dialogue which the Pope had called for. The Christian Democrat Party issued a separate statement in support of dialogue, and the Radical Party put forward two proposals - one was that all Chileans should work together to achieve democracy, and the other was that a law should be introduced to provide a 'reconciliation pension' to be granted to all victims of terrorism and violence. The Social Democrats also stated their support for dialogue and an end to violence, and called for more tolerance on the part of those Chileans who tend to treat people who have a different point of view to their own as enemies.

The vice-president of the Christian Democrats, Juan Hamilton, deplored the attitude of the Secretary General of the Government, Francisco Javier Cuadra, who was not prepared to admit that the Holy Father's visit had changed anything in Chile. On the other hand, the individual members of the Junta de Gobierno had shown themselves in favour of reconciliation and had demonstrated a willingness to open up a dialogue with the opposition. Juan Hamilton declared that the country could not be the same after the papal visit as it had been before, and although the time was premature and it was difficult to judge the effects of the visit, in his opinion the Pope's message had fallen on fertile ground and ought to bear fruit:-

...el país no puede ser el mismo antes que despues de la visita del Santo Padre y es prematuro y dificil anticipar los efectos de esa visita, pero a mi juicio, el mensaje ha caido en terreno fertil y debiera dar frutas de paz. (24)

This statement by Juan Hamilton is a fair and balanced assessment of the papal visit. Chile was not the same country after the Pope had left, but it was not easy to weigh up how much it had altered. The timing of the visit was opportune. Changes were already taking place on the political scene, but Pinochet's tyrannical rule had lasted so long and he seemed to be so firmly in control that many politicians who opposed him could easily have become discouraged. At this crucial

juncture John Paul II arrived and stepped from his aircraft like a modern deus ex machina. He represented that external force which had the power to break a stalemate by introducing an entirely new element. His support was likely to help to tip the scales in favour of his chosen contender. President Pinochet recognized this and attempted to insinuate himself into the aura of popularity which surrounded the Pope. He even contravened protocol by leading the Pope out onto a balcony of the La Moneda Palace in an unscheduled public appearance. When the Pope took his leave of the President at the end of the visit, however, it was noted that relations between the two were cool and the Pope prevented Pinochet from kissing his ring when he bent to do so. A small gesture, but a humiliating one which nobody else could have delivered. By contrast, the Pope's manifest approval of the united stance taken by the Chilean bishops in defense of human rights enhanced their status, and gave more authority to their subsequent pronouncements.

I do not wish to attach too much importance to the political impact of the Pope's visit to Chile, particularly when he himself had stressed the evangelical message he was bringing. 'Yo no soy un evangelista de la democracia, sino del Evangelio' (I am not an evangelist of democracy, but of the Gospel), he said, on his way back to Rome, adding however that 'human rights belong to the Gospel, and if democracy is synonymous with human rights, then democracy belongs to the Gospel also'.(25) It is worth mentioning that 18 months after John Paul II left Chile Pinochet was rejected in the referendum and the first decisive step was made in the country's return to democracy.

I would like to point to a parallel with another papal visit to a South American country, that which was made to Paraguay in May 1988. The President of Paraguay, Alfredo Stroessner, was even more entrenched as dictator than Pinochet had been, since he had been in power since 1954. In Paraguay, also, the Catholic Church, led by the Archbishop of Asunción, Monseñor Ismael Rolin, had become increasingly involved with the political and social problems of the population - problems such as unemployment, low pay, censorship, repression and the lack of democracy. The previous year the Church had organized a 'national

'dialogue' in an attempt to bring together political parties, trades unions and student groups in order to discuss a transition to democracy. The 'dialogue' had failed because of a boycott by the official Colorado Party, and subsequently persecution of Church members by government authorities had increased. President Stroessner, like President Pinochet, had tried to manipulate the Pope's visit to place himself in a favourable light; the poster campaign which showed the Pope, with the words 'Messenger of Peace', accompanied by other posters showing Stroessner with the slogan 'Peace in Action 1988-1993', was almost identical to Pinochet's television campaign in Chile. In each case the propaganda was a failure and the status of the President was diminished. Chile waited until it could get rid of its dictator by democratic process. Paraguay was more ruthless and in February 1989, less than nine months after the Pope's visit, Stroessner was ousted by a military coup.

THE FINAL CHAPTER

¡En Fin en Democracia! Democracy at Last!

There was no mistaking the note of jubilation in the statement which the Chilean Bishops' Conference issued the day after Pinochet's defeat in the 1988 plebiscite.

En la trascendental jornada de ayer, Chile ha demostrado una vez más sumadurez y su cultura cívica....El gobierno, junto con el país, ha reconocido el veredicto de las urnas. No ha habido violencia. Han prevalecido el respeto y el orden. Se ha confirmado la antigua tradición democrática de nuestro pueblo. Por ello le damos gracias a Dios.

In the all-important events of yesterday Chile has once more demonstrated her maturity and her sense of civic responsibility....The government, together with the country, has recognized the verdict of the polls. There has been no violence. Respect and order have prevailed. The ancient democratic tradition of our country has been confirmed. For that we give thanks to God. (1)

The bishops were pleased, both that Pinochet had been rejected, and that the size of the 'No' option was such that the wishes of the electorate were left in no doubt. It had been a cause for concern to the bishops that there might have been a very close result, with perhaps a margin of no more than three points either way, 'which would be the equivalent of a collision between two trains'(2). For this reason, in August 1988, they had made a last-minute appeal for a 'consensus candidate', who would not polarize the country into opposing factions. This was a veiled appeal to the Junta not to select Pinochet as the sole candidate in the plebiscite. Not only was their appeal ignored, but the bishops were accused on the one hand of political ingenuousness, and on the other hand of imposing an 'ecclesiastical veto' on a certain candidate, and of using 'moral coercion' to influence the voters, thus interfering with their freedom of choice.(3)

The decisive outcome of the plebiscite dispelled the bishops' fears of continuing confrontation between supporters and opponents of General Pinochet. The vote was obviously a personal rejection of

Pinochet. He himself was reluctant to accept the verdict of the ballot boxes, but other members of the Junta made statements which showed that they regarded the defeat as a private matter between the candidate and the voters, and not one which involved any further negotiations on the part of the armed forces.

By the terms of the 1980 Constitution, if Pinochet were to be rejected in the referendum he would have the right to remain in power as President until the end of his eight-year term of office. He would convene elections for President and Congress in time for a new administration to take over the government of the country in March 1990. He himself would not be eligible to stand again as a Presidential candidate, but would retain his command as head of the Army, and wield a great deal of power in the National Security Council. The constitution guaranteed a special status for the armed forces in the future running of the country, irrespective of whether the next President was a supporter or an opponent of the military régime.

The opposition nominated the 70-year-old president of the Christian Democratic Party, Patricio Aylwin, as their candidate in the Presidential election. Aylwin had been the spokesman of the 'Command for the No' in the 1988 plebiscite. After the success of the 'No' option the coalition of opposition parties had formed themselves into the 'Association of Political Parties for Democracy'. This Association, consisting of 17 political parties ranging from the centre-right to the Marxist left, was the broadest coalition in Chile's history and brought together politicians who had been rivals in the last Presidential election - that of 1970. But the experience of working together to defeat Pinochet, initially in the Acuerdo sponsored by Cardinal Fresno in 1985, then in the campaign to defeat Pinochet in the 1988 referendum, had helped to heal old wounds and united former enemies in the face of a common foe.

The government appointed 40-year-old Hernan Büchi as their candidate for President - after a great deal of wrangling and indecision. Büchi was a former Finance Minister and the architect of

many of President Pinochet's most unpopular economic measures. He was not likely to appeal, either to the poorer voters, or to those more affluent members of society who yet had reservations about the social effects of the Pinochet government's free-market economic policies. In point of fact, the economy had made a good recovery in the previous four years. Büchi had been appointed Finance Minister in February 1985 - the fifth such minister since the economic crash of 1982. Under his direction Chile's financial situation had steadily improved. New export industries had been set up, exploiting Chile's natural resources, and products such as timber, exotic fruits and factory-farmed salmon had reduced the country's former reliance on copper as its main export. By December 1989 inflation was down to 20% (low by Latin American standards), and unemployment was falling. The benefits of this new prosperity, however, were felt only by the better-off sectors of society, whilst 80% of Chileans earned less than they had earned 20 years earlier.(4)

December 14, 1989, was fixed as the day of the general election, when the Chilean people would have the right to vote for a new President, and also for a new Congress. As expected, Patricio Aylwin won the Presidential contest. In the end it was a three-cornered fight between himself, Hernan Büchi and Francisco Javier Errázuriz, a millionaire business-man who was supported by an alliance of smaller opposition parties and hardline Pinochet supporters. The results were:- Aylwin 55.2%, Büchi 29.4%, Errázuriz 15.3%. (5). Unfortunately, the Parliamentary results were less favourable to the Association of Democratic Parties, who won 22 of the 38 elected seats in the Senate and 71 of the 120 places in the Congress. They consequently could not rely on being able to muster the two thirds majority which they would require in order to make any changes in the constitution.

General Pinochet had the right to name nine non-elected members of the Senate before he surrendered his Presidential office on March 10, 1990. He had also, during the months which had elapsed between his defeat in the 1988 plebiscite, and the general election, made sure that his own supporters occupied senior positions in the municipalities, the

universities, the financial institutions and the judiciary. Furthermore, in a second referendum held in July 1989, he had succeeded in gaining public assent to a package of reforms to the 1980 Constitution, which included a reduction of the next President's term of office, from eight years to four. This meant that Pinochet would be in position as commander-in-chief of the Army during the whole of President Aylwin's term of office, and possibly for a further four years after that.

General Pinochet had made as much provision as he could to ensure future immunity from prosecution for human rights abuses for himself and his supporters. As far back as 1978, an amnesty law had been passed excusing members of the armed forces from investigation over any acts of violence committed by them since 1973. Before they handed over authority to the new President and Congress, the Junta approved a law which prevented members of the outgoing government being called to account for their actions by the new administration.

Truth and Reconciliation

1990 - the beginning of a new decade seemed to symbolize the beginning of a new era in Chile's national life. On March 11 a new Presidential term began, with a new Congress and Senate installed in the splendid new Congress building in Valparaiso. There was a great feeling of optimism in the country and relief that the change-over had gone smoothly, with very little violence. There was also a certain amount of apprehension that the outgoing President and his supporters had not completely withdrawn from public life, and were merely keeping a low profile until they had an excuse to intervene again in the nation's affairs.

The Chilean Catholic Church also had a new leader in 1990. Cardinal Fresno reached the age of retirement and was succeeded in April by the former Archbishop of Antofagasta, Archbishop Carlos Oviedo Cavada, who thus became the tenth Archbishop of Santiago. This appointment was greeted with general satisfaction by Chilean Catholics. It seemed entirely appropriate that they should have a vigorous new

Primate, who could give a lead to a new generation of young priests and help to heal old wounds. Cardinal Fresno had performed a great service in sponsoring the Acuerdo, but his appointment in 1983 had not been universally popular, due to his earlier support of the military coup. Controversy would continue to accompany accounts of his stewardship of the archdiocese of Santiago, and perhaps it was better that another Primate should take over the guidance of the Church in the new phase into which Chile was entering.

There was, naturally, a great desire among Chileans to make a fresh start as a newly-democratized country. A phrase which was often repeated was 'borrón y cuenta nueva' (let's wipe the slate clean). But there had been too much suffering during the previous 16 years, and there were too many unanswered questions - a veil could not simply be drawn over the past. Families of the 'disappeared' still lived in a kind of limbo, not knowing what had happened to their loved-ones. In the absence of any proof that their relatives were dead, they went on trusting that they were still alive. The record needed to be put straight, too, concerning the violent deaths of many opponents of the military régime, who had died whilst allegedly 'carrying out acts of terrorism', or in 'inter-necine gun battles'. Men and women who had been subjected to degrading and agonising physical and mental torture could not come to terms with their past whilst their anonymous torturers escaped detection. Those torturers themselves, some of them sadistic professionals, but others no more than pathetic victims of coercion, needed to be able to admit to their crimes in order to expiate them. There were still prisoners in Chilean gaols who were serving sentences for 'political crimes' against the former régime, and there were many Chileans living in exile who had still not received permission to return home.

President Aylwin wanted at all costs to avoid an atmosphere of vengeance. Consequently, in April 1990, he announced the formation of a National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, made up of nine members drawn from a broad spectrum of public life, including human-rights lawyers and former officials of the military government. (6) The President wanted the investigation to be swift and thorough,

and gave the Commission a maximum of nine months in which to complete their task. The meticulous documentation compiled by the Vicaría de la Solidaridad was going to be of invaluable help to the Commission. Perhaps anticipating such an investigation, the military government had ordered the Vicaría to hand over all their medical records early in 1989. The Vicaría had categorically refused to do so, and the Vicar, Bishop Sergio Valech, was prepared to face a prison sentence rather than comply with the government order. It was supremely important that the Vicaría should safeguard the anonymity of the people who had sought assistance from its medical and legal experts. If the Chilean judicial system had possessed the courage to uphold human rights during the military dictatorship, there would have been no need for the Vicaría to have compiled its records. But the country had been living an 'institutionalized lie', and the truth had to be recognized eventually.

A chorus of disapproval arose from ex-President Pinochet and his supporters when the formation of the Commission was announced. They hoped that they had made provision against any future punishment for human rights violations in the immunity laws which they had bequeathed to the new government. However, in June 1990, eleven bodies of executed detainees of the military régime were found in a communal grave near a former prison camp at Pisagua, in the extreme north of the country. The dryness of the desert grave had preserved the bodies, so that it was possible to identify them, and to ascertain that the eleven men had been bound and blindfolded before being shot. This was the first of a series of such discoveries in other parts of the country, which resulted from the discreet following-up by the Vicaría de la Solidaridad of information held in its files. The Vicaría had accumulated data concerning over 700 such deaths.

The scandal which followed these discoveries was so great that there was a general call for the perpetrators to be called to account, and for ex-President Pinochet himself to be made to accept the blame. As Archbishop Oviedo observed 'A head of state must accept responsibility for what happens under his mandate'.(7)

Conclusion

Now, at last, the families of the 'disappeared' are beginning to be able to face the truth and mourn their dead. The truth must also be told about the circumstances of other killings, so that victims who have been dishonoured as 'traitors' and 'terrorists' can have their reputations restored, and so that their surviving dependants can receive compensation. The Church has a vital rôle to play in the forthcoming sad period of revelations which Chile has got to face. The bishops' message over the past few years has constantly been one of reconciliation, and fortunately President Aylwin has stressed this aspect of his administration's policies. It is not easy to forgive, especially when the victims of oppression have mainly been humble and vulnerable people, and the oppressors have been their own public authorities. There are other victims, too, who may not even have been aware that they have become victims - these are the Chileans who prospered under an unjust régime, and who must now face the truth about their own motives and actions. All these groups will need counselling and advice.

Chileans now have the task of building a united nation. They have emerged from the ordeal of the last seventeen years sadder, but wiser. In the past they took a great pride in the fact that they maintained their democratic traditions whilst other Latin American countries lurched from one leadership crisis to another. Now they know that liberty and justice can be usurped by unscrupulous power-seekers, who, acting in the name of the 'common good' retain their hold over the people by fear and envy. Chile can no longer feel that she is immune from violent seizures of power. But now she has a President who is trying to put into practise the dictum of the hierarchy:- 'Solo con amor se es capaz de construir un país!' (A country can only be built with love!). (8)

I will give the last word on Chile to the Liberator himself. Writing in Kingston, Jamaica, on September 6, 1815, in reply to a letter from 'a Gentleman of this Island', Simón Bolívar gave his

opinion on the future of the new republics of South America. He had this to say about Chile:-

If any American republic is to have a long life, I am inclined to believe it will be Chile. There the spirit of liberty has never been extinguished; the vices of Europe and Asia arrived too late or not at all to corrupt the customs of that distant corner of the world. Its area is limited; and, as it is remote from other peoples, it will always remain free from contamination. Chile will not alter her laws, ways and practices. She will preserve her uniform political and religious views. In a word, it is possible for Chile to be free.(9)

Bolivar could not have prophesied the incredible advances in technology which have ensured that Chile can no longer 'remain free from contamination'. Nowadays events in one part of the globe can have drastic consequences in other places, merely by causing an economic ripple over which national governments have no control. But I like to hope that Chileans have learnt the lessons of their country's recent, tragic past and that they have preserved their 'uniform political and religious views'. I wish them well!

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AID	Agency for International Development (United States Department of State)
ANEC	Asociación Nacional de Estudiantes Católicos National Association of Catholic Students
ASICH	Acción Sindical Chilena Chilean Trade Union Action
CEB	Comunidad Eclesial de Base Basic Christian Community
CELADE	Centro Latinoamericano de Demografía Latin American Centre for Population Studies
CELAM	Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano Latin American Bishops Conference
CEPAL	Comisión Económica para América Latina de Naciones Unidas United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (United States Government agency)
CIAS	Centro de Investigación y Acción Social Centre for Research and Social Action
CNI	Centro Nacional de Información National Information Centre
CONCORDE	Coordinación de Desarrollo Popular Coordinating Commission for Popular Development
COPACHI	Comité de Cooperación para la Paz en Chile (Comité pro Paz) Committee of Cooperation for Peace in Chile
CpS	Cristianos para Socialismo Christians for Socialism
DESAT	Centro para el Desarrollo Económico y Social de América Latina Centre for the Economic and Social Development of Latin America
DICOMCAR	Intelligence unit of the military police (carabineros)
DINA	Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional Directorate of National Intelligence

ENU	Escuela Nacional Unificada National Unified School
FEBRECH	Federación de Obreros Chilenos Federation of Chilean Workers
FRAP	Frente de Acción Popular Popular Action Front
ILADES	Instituto Latinoamericano de Doctrina y Estudios Sociales Latin American Institute of Doctrine and Social Studies
MAPU	Movimiento de Acción Popular Unido Movement of United Popular Action
MDP	Movimiento Democrático Popular Democratic Popular Movement
MIC	Movimiento del Izquierda Cristiano Christian Left Movement
MIR	Movimiento del Izquierda Revolucionario Revolutionary Left Movement
MISEREOR	West German Bishops' Fund for Socio-Economic Development
PDC	Partido Democrático Cristiano Christian Democratic Party
PEM	Programa de Empleo Minimum Minimum Employment Programme
TFP	Sociedad para la Defensa de Tradición, Familia y Propiedad Society for the Defence of Tradition, Family and Property
UP	Unidad Popular Popular Unity