CHAPTER 2

CHILE'S REVOLUTIONARY GENERATION

[On September 11, 1973, the day of the military coup,] all we had was a pistol and a plastic bag with bullets, this was all our firepower. We left, trying to hook up with people, there was a curfew, but we went out, something we would never do now, but we did it. The lights went out at one or two in the morning. . . . We went to the main avenue with our little pistols and all our little things to try to do something, and then we realized that nothing was going on and we returned. . . .

That was where the romance ended, and we began to understand that politics was something more than simply wonderful ideas, ideals, . . . and we suffered a great deal, because if for the older [leaders] a coup wasn't possible, for us it was completely unimaginable.

—Eduardo Reyes, Chilean socialist

■ Among the most closely observed attempts at a socialist project in recent history was the 1970–1973 Popular Unity government in Chile, in which Chilean Socialist Party leader Salvador Allende became the first democratically elected Marxist president in world history. Allende's election captured the attention, the imagination, and the hope of a universal left community of thinkers and activists, and the bloody demise of the Popular Unity government similarly served as a catalyst for debate, analysis, and reflection.

For Eduardo Reyes, then a leader of the Chilean Young Socialists, and for many of Reyes's generation, the military overthrow of the Popular Unity government cut deeply into the very core of everything for which he stood, into what had been the basis for his daily activism and existence, into the shared beliefs, values, and motivations of Reyes and his closest companions. For the Chilean revolutionary sixties generation, the dramatic and brutal coup d'état marked the end of the "romance," the euphoric il-

lusion that Chile was well on the road to becoming a revolutionary socialist society.

There is an abundant literature on Chilean politics of the 1960s and 1970s, and interpretations of the downfall of the Allende government vary enormously. This chapter will provide an overview of that period and then focus on the ideological and strategic debates, practices, and transformations within the Chilean left in the post-1973 period. In tracing the period from the 1960s to the 1990s, I argue here that the Chilean left experienced a series of shocks that transformed its political culture from a culture based on the perception of a set of collective ideological visions that the left believed could bring socialist transformation to Chile, to a culture fragmented by a legacy of internal conflict, fear, and defeat. The 1960s represented the pinnacle of Chilean left political culture, a period in which the left perceived that, united, it had the means to lead the country toward a revolutionary socialist society. Under the 1970–1973 Allende government, that perception was shattered and replaced by a multiparty left in power but fraught with ideological and strategic contradictions. With General Augusto Pinochet's 1973 overthrow of Allende, the Chilean left physically unraveled, its leaders and militants assassinated, imprisoned, tortured, and exiled.

Despite such repression, members of the Chilean left struggled to reconstruct their parties, analyze their own performances during the Allende years, and rethink socialist visions for Chile.[1] In the decade following the coup, many Chilean left thinkers and activists, influenced largely by European debates and experiences, worked to "renovate" socialism.[2] Among the most serious theoretical reflections was a rethinking and appreciation (or a "revaluation") of the meaning of democracy. Left leaders also engaged in an exploration of the role of the political party and of political party alliances. At the heart of these debates was a questioning and, for many, a gradual renunciation of Leninism. In addition, Chilean left intellectuals produced several analytical works on the effects, both visible and latent, of authoritarianism on Chilean culture and society. Sociologists such as Norbert Lechner and José Joaquín Brunner argued that the most enduring legacies of the Chilean dictatorship would be the insecurities and fears generated by the erosion of historic collective identities, which, they suggested, would produce a constant societal demand for political predictability, political certainty, and political order.[3]

Nevertheless, beginning in 1983, the attempts of political party leaders on the left to reconstruct an ideological, "counterhegemonic" project be-

came overshadowed by day-to-day tactical struggles.[4] The focus on tactical maneuvering and on building an alliance with the dominant Christian Democratic Party (PDC) limited much of the rethinking of a democratic socialist vision that had taken place during the dictatorship. An essential revaluation of democracy among important sectors of the left had taken place, particularly regarding the question of political compromise in order to preserve democratic institutions. Yet there was far less attention to the question of popular participation, or the "deepening" of democracy, in the postdictatorship period. Moreover, there had been little exploration of the relationship between socialism and the market or the appropriate role of the state in the economy and society. While left thinkers had produced major critiques of neoliberalism and its impact on Chile, few had seriously contemplated alternatives to neoliberalism for their country. In the Concertación campaigns to elect Patricio Aylwin in 1989 and Eduardo Frei Jr. in 1993, many left leaders embraced a discourse of modernization without an examination or critique of the relationship between modernization and democracy.[5]

In spite of impressive electoral and political gains, today's Chilean left continues to be plagued by shared memories of the chaos and drama surrounding the Allende years and the penetrating reach of the repression that followed. Through the 1990s, left leaders have been jockeying for a share of political power, with comparatively little attention to what might be considered "left visions" of Chile's future. The left also faces the challenge of framing positions within a dominant Chilean culture that emphasizes the will of the individual rather than collectivity, within a universal context in which socialist models have, for the most part, disappeared.

As subsequent chapters will illustrate, individual left leaders continue to be engaged in processes of reconstituting their political identities in a society that is painfully conscious of, yet unreconciled to, many of the realities of its past. Nevertheless, in these processes, this study has found, individual left leaders consistently draw from their ideological grounding in the 1960s for essential referents to today. Such referents may appear in individuals' discourse as signifiers of contrast between past and present identity ("I'm not the revolutionary that I once was"), as symbols of inspiration for a transformed politics ("My involvement in Catholic Action made me what I am today"), or as strong ideological attachment to a past referent ("I've always been an Allendista"). For this reason, an understanding of the historical and political contexts in which this sixties generation came of age is necessary.

THE REVOLUTIONARY GENERATION

In a certain sense, the Chile of the 1960s was a child of a world struggling to come to terms with the contradictions of modern capitalism. In the advanced industrialized countries, young people, working people, women, and minorities challenged, in disparate ways, the very premises of societies based on imperialism and material gain at the expense of class, race, gender, and community harmony. In much of the Third World, particularly in Africa and Southeast Asia, revolutionary independence movements successfully challenged colonial domination. In the Catholic world, archdioceses, local parishes, and Catholic-based political movements wrestled with the meanings of the Vatican Council II and its promotion of a preferential option for the poor.

In Latin America, the new directions in the Catholic Church had a profound influence on popular struggles for democracy and social justice. Christian-based communities proved to be a new foundation for organizing on behalf of local needs, and they provided grassroots support for many of the Catholic-based New Left parties and movements that emerged in the region in the 1960s and 1970s.

Yet it was the Cuban Revolution that influenced political discourse and political behavior in ways unparalleled in the hemisphere. In some Latin American countries, such as Argentina, Uruguay, and Guatemala, the Cuban example inspired revolutionary guerrilla movements. In Chile, the Cuban Revolution informed left discourse and debate that questioned the feasibility of a peaceful transition to socialism, as well as the need for a prolonged "bourgeois democratic" phase to oversee capitalist industrialization and modernization.

Chile in the 1960s was a country with an urbanized population and an educated and organized workforce. It was a country extremely affected by fluctuations in the global economy, particularly the world market price of copper, which accounted for approximately 80 percent of Chile's export revenues.[6] As in much of Latin America, in Chile industrialization and modernization depended upon state intervention and upon foreign capital and technology, and the country struggled incessantly with debt, inflation, and an increasingly stagnant rural economy.[7] From the 1950s through the 1970s, successive Chilean governments attempted distinct "revolutionary" economic programs to correct for such negative trends.[8]

The Chile of the 1960s possessed a solid, multiparty, democratic political system that featured a strong left.[9] Since the 1930s, the Chilean left, namely, the Chilean Socialist (PSCH) and Communist (PCCH) parties, had

won representation in both the executive and the legislative branches. From 1938 to 1952, the left had formed coalitions with centrist parties that brought its representatives into the cabinet. In 1958, PSCH presidential candidate Salvador Allende came a mere 33,449 votes short of victory. In the 1961 elections for Congress, the left-dominated Popular Action Front (FRAP) coalition won 27.5 percent of the House and thirteen out of forty-five seats in the Senate.[10]

The strong showing of the left in government represented a national political culture in which the Chilean left could lay claim to a firmly established collective identity, rooted in the struggles of Chilean working people. Late-nineteenth-century capitalist expansion in the extractive sector in Chile brought proletarianization and an organized and highly class-conscious working class, a powerful Marxist labor movement unique to Latin America.[11] In Chile's northern mines, the combination of difficult working conditions, collective geographic isolation, and employment in foreign-owned companies generated early radicalization. At the turn of the century, the Chilean nitrate workers formed the political base for the founding of the Socialist Workers Party (POS), later to become the Chilean Communist Party.

The miners proved extremely effective in organizing both workers in the transport sector that serviced exports and rural workers in close proximity to the mines. Charles Bergquist, in an analysis of the early Chilean labor movement, argues that from 1880 to 1930 the ability of the nitrate workers to organize, to ally themselves with and mobilize other working-class sectors, and to build a radical labor movement caused a major crisis for the state in the 1920s. This crisis forced a restructuring of the state that moved the entire political debate to the left over the coming decades.[12]

Powerful links developed between unions and political parties. Unions depended upon parties as sources of financial support during strikes and as sympathetic interpreters during the arduous negotiation periods. Parties mobilized unions for support in the electoral process and for backing both inside and outside the state. Although the 1925 Chilean labor code attempted to restrict mass organizing through laws that barred organizing in plants with fewer than twenty-five workers, union-official salaries, collective bargaining, and the formation of labor federations, the net effect was to politicize the labor movement. Writing in 1972, Regis Debray affirmed the ties of the workers' movement to political parties: "Chile is the only country in the continent . . . in which those parties which are referred to as 'workers' parties because of their ideology, are actually organically workers organizations by extraction and social base."[13]

As noted above, the Chilean Communist Party was born in the nitrate mines as the Socialist Workers Party (POS), led by printer and journalist Luis Emilio Recabarren.[14] The POS successfully established branches in working-class sectors of Santiago and other cities throughout the country, and in 1906 Recabarren was elected to Congress (though he was not allowed to serve). After an initial period in which the PCCH adopted a maximalist, Comintern position calling for an immediate struggle for socialism, the party moved in the early 1930s to the antifascist, Popular Front strategy of the post-1935 Comintern, a position that characterized the PCCH for many decades to come.[15] In fact, between 1933 and 1973, the Chilean Communists altered their positions on class and party alliances very little, advocating a broad-based alliance among the middle and popular classes and center-left political party coalitions that would seek representation within a bourgeois democratic framework. This stance endured in spite of the ten-year Permanent Law in Defense of Democracy, which outlawed the PCCH from 1948 to 1958.

The PCCH was never recognized as a party of theoretical richness. The Chilean Communist Party, however, represented both an extremely disciplined left political organization and a bedrock of Chilean working-class and popular culture. Among the Chilean Communist Party's ranks of the 1960s were some of the most popular performers in the country, including singers Violeta Parra, Victor Jara, and the group Quilapayún. The Nobel laureate, poet Pablo Neruda, was also a Communist and a foreign diplomat. Through their songs and ballads, such artists gave popular expression to worker and peasant struggles for social justice. An estimated seventy thousand young people joined the PCCH over the course of the 1960s.[16] Artists, actors, writers, musicians, and others of enormous talent contributed to a rich Chilean left culture, which, in turn, became a highly visible part of the Chilean national cultural fabric.

Unlike the homogeneous, highly unified, and disciplined organizational and ideological PCCH, the Chilean Socialist Party has been characterized historically as heterogeneous and factionalized. The PSCH was founded in the aftermath of the short-lived Socialist Republic of 1932, a twelve-day progressive nationalist experiment led by the idealistic military leader and subsequent PSCH cofounder Marmaduke Grove.[17] In 1933 the newly founded PSCH joined several smaller revolutionary parties, aggregating, as Kenneth Roberts describes, "left-wing masons, populists, and democratic socialists under the same flag as revolutionary Marxists, Trotskyists and anarcho-syndicalists."[18] In contrast to the Chilean Communist

Party, the PSCH opposed alliances with the Third International or any of the socialist internationals. The Chilean Socialist Party embraced a strong nationalist and Latin American identity, often advocating Marxism-Leninism as a general interpretive framework while emphasizing the particularity of Chilean class dynamics. The PSCH leadership represented a peculiar brand of national populist figures who found strong resonance within the Chilean polity and society in both the middle and the working classes.[19] Again in contrast to the Chilean Communist Party, throughout much of the pre-1973 period the PSCH adopted a revolutionary doctrinal program that dismissed the possibility of socialism through bourgeois democratic means. Between 1934 and 1957, internal party struggles over class and party alliances and the means toward socialist transformation formally split the PSCH several times.

In 1957 Socialist Party leader Eugenio González, together with others of his generation, reunited the PSCH under a Workers' Front program, eschewing alliances with the petite bourgeoisie and other middle sectors and their political party representatives, while moving toward an uneasy alliance with the "proletarian party," the PCCH.[20] While the PSCH continued to house several competing factions, the radicalized Workers' Front position was strengthened by the narrow loss of the left FRAP coalition in the 1958 presidential elections, as well as by the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

Allende's loss to Christian Democratic leader Eduardo Frei in the 1964 presidential elections further fueled those within the PSCH who believed revolutionary transformation through existing political institutions was impossible. The Socialists proclaimed the victorious Christian Democratic Party no more than "a new political vehicle" for imperialists and the national bourgeoisie.[21] In 1967, at its XXII National Congress in Chillán, the PSCH passed resolutions claiming that "revolutionary violence is inevitable and legitimate" and that "peaceful or legal forms of struggle (reivindicative, ideological, electoral, etc.) will not lead by themselves to power."[22] Moreover, sectors within the PSCH successfully passed resolutions establishing it as the vanguard of the working class, democratic centralism, careful selection of cadres, increased internal discipline—in short, the Leninization of the party.[23] Thus, while the Socialist Party continued to be an active participant in Chile's electoral process, internal party positions questioned the legitimacy of such a strategy.[24] From the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, several Chilean New Left movements and parties emerged, primarily as splits from the Socialist, Communist, and Christian Democratic parties. In

1964, twenty-three young Socialist militants left the PSCH and, together with a handful of young Communists, founded the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR).[25] The MIR denounced the "revisionism and reformism" of the leading left parties, advocating armed struggle as an appropriate path toward revolution in Chile. When asked for this study his opinion of the Frei government in that period, former Mirista Osvaldo Puccio remembered his utter disdain:

> It was the worst. It was a government without results and in my very ideologized opinion, it was part of the Alliance for Progress that the Americans had invented to stop the Cuban Revolution. It was a very antipopular government, with a, well, now that I am older, I see that it did have a progressive content, even a popular content. Now, what I was saying when I was seventeen, eighteen years old is not so disastrous in comparison to what some senators of the Republic were saying.

While quite small in number, the MIR had a clear appeal for young left militants, and Mirista positions echoed an important faction within the PSCH. In fact, several PSCH members practiced a *doble militancia*, appearing as militants in both the MIR and the PSCH.

The Chilean Catholic Left became another crucial source of the country's New Left. The two most important Catholic Left groups of the period were the Unitary Popular Action Movement (MAPU, founded in 1969 and split in 1972 into the MAPU and the MAPU-OC, or MAPU–Worker Peasant Party) and the Christian Left (IC, founded in 1971), both of them products of splits, primarily from the Chilean Christian Democratic Party. MAPU and IC leaders were among the most influential left political thinkers and politicians in the country, quick to rise to the vanguard of the pre-1973 revolutionary left (and, many years later, to the leadership of the left during the 1980s transition from authoritarian rule).

Youthful energy and revolutionary zeal characterized these Catholic and secular New Left parties. As subsequent chapters will reveal in greater detail, among the young leaders of these parties, best exemplified by the MAPU, were what this study characterizes as thinkers and political entrepreneurs. The thinkers were those who focused on advancing revolutionary ideas but lacked the political know-how, machinery, and support to bring them to fruition. The political entrepreneurs were adept at building revolutionary coalitions as representative organizations to house their ideas, yet they had little or no experience in governance. Together the two groups symbolized a

new breed of political actors and organizations that combined intellectual brilliance with a heady drive and little political experience.

The 1960s were years in which democratic rights were vastly expanded in Chile, particularly in the countryside. In 1958 the government passed laws making the vote compulsory and guaranteeing the right to a secret ballot, electoral reforms that would dramatically weaken landowners' control over much of the rural vote. A 1962 electoral reform law further weakened the rural oligarchy. In 1970 Chile granted illiterates the right to vote.

In addition to expanding voters' rights, in 1962 Chile passed historic legislation to legalize unionization in the countryside and to transfer land to the rural poor. The Christian Democratic administration (1964–1970) strengthened agrarian reform laws, and over the course of the next decade, the implementation of agrarian reform upset what many have held as the historic compromise responsible for Chilean political stability.[26] Crudely presented, this compromise was seen as rightist party rule in the rural areas in exchange for progressive legislation, left-wing gains in Chile's cities, and a "three-thirds" balance in national electoral politics among the left, right, and center. The combination of such electoral and agrarian reforms encouraged the Socialist, Communist, and Christian Democrat Parties to wage intensive organizing and vote-getting campaigns throughout the Chilean countryside, and their efforts proved successful.

In this period of massive recruitment drives and mobilizations, political party loyalists, another of the cognitive ideal-types presented in this study, proved particularly important to their parties. Party loyalists sustained the party machines, organized at the base levels, and focused on battles in the universities, shop floors, and neighborhoods to win support. In an era that predated mass public opinion polling, the "sound bite," and technological expertise in attaining the right media image in Chile, party loyalists were politically invaluable.

The 1960s thus bore witness to an explosion in popular political participation, from dramatically increased voter participation to increased mobilization in both the cities and the countryside. Chilean left discourse was full of the revolutionary potential of "*el pueblo*," "the people," the masses of workers and peasants, the urban and rural poor who possessed the capacity for mobilizing to demand transformation of the Chilean state and society. There was no real disaggregation of the popular sectors, in either sociological or politico-ideological terms.[27] In an enlightening essay on the evolution of the Chilean left, Chilean sociologist Tomás Moulián argues that by the mid-1960s, Marxist ideology had become a basic referent not

only for left political parties but for many sectors of Chilean society.[28] Moulián bases this argument on the content of debates being waged in university classrooms, union halls, neighborhood meetings, and, importantly, in the Catholic Church. By the late 1960s, Moulián contends, Marxism had "expanded its influence among intellectuals and consolidated its position as a 'popularized philosophy.'"[29] The left dominated many of the country's leading civil society organizations, including the Chilean Labor Confederation (CUT), student federations, newly organized peasant unions, artist groups, housing movements, and other popular class- and community-based associations. The PSCH and the PCCH possessed lively presses and radio stations, all of which enjoyed wide circulation. Thus, while the 1970–1973 Popular Unity administration would reveal unwieldy internal differences in ideology and strategy within the governing left coalition, the Chilean left managed to maintain a powerful collective identity in Chilean society. This would be demonstrated in the electoral arena and elsewhere throughout the Popular Unity period.

The Chilean left was not immune to many of the world debates and struggles of the 1960s, from the civil rights and antiwar protests in the advanced capitalist countries, to revolutionary struggles in Algeria, Cuba, and Vietnam. Moreover, in spite of Khrushchev's revelations and in spite of the Soviet rollback of progressive movements in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, the perception of rapid industrialization processes taking place in the Eastern bloc made state-planned, "real socialism" models appealing.[30] The strength and sophistication of mass movements for change imbued many sectors of the Chilean left with the sense that revolutionary transformation was a logical product of historical forces as well as a desired goal for the country.

Cuba drove home to the Chilean left a heightened sense of the "moral imperative" of revolutionary struggle. According to Moulián, much of the imagery surrounding the Cuban struggle, conceived in "epic" terms as the ultimate self-deliverance or sacrifice on behalf of the revolution, appealed to the deeply rooted Catholic sentiments that were so much a part of Latin American culture.[31] Cuba symbolized the weakness of capitalism on moral as well social or distribution grounds. The idea of Cuba as a moral imperative consistently surfaced in interviews with leaders of the Chilean left, from the Catholic to the secular left. Cuba and her leaders/heroes were the primary international referent for Chile's sixties left generation.

The combination of dramatic electoral and agrarian reforms, a strong left showing at the polls, and the perception of Cuba-inspired revolution-

ary movements spreading throughout the region visibly shook the Chilean right. To counter a potential Allende victory in the 1964 presidential elections, the right supported Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei. Yet the Chilean right was quickly disillusioned by the agrarian reform laws and other progressive legislation backed by the Frei administration. As many analysts have asserted, the 1960s marked an across-the-board ideologization of Chilean politics, a polarization of the political left, right, and center that ran from the country's political class to the Chilean voters, roughly a third of whom tended to vote for the right, a third for the center, and a third for the left.[32] It was a time when the right began to reformulate an offensive strategy, when the center attempted but failed to lead the country on a non-Marxist path toward social change and community harmony, and when the left was convinced that it was close to capturing the political power necessary to initiate revolutionary transformation. Capitalist ideology competed with the ideas of nationalization, redistribution of wealth, and workers' control of the state. While such ideas polarized society, it was far from clear that strategies for their implementation were defined or agreed upon by their proponents.

THE POPULAR UNITY VICTORY

In reflecting upon the September 4, 1970, electoral victory of Salvador Allende and the Popular Unity coalition, Moulián writes of a double meaning to the evening's celebration in the streets, a combination of carnival and drama that would serve as a metaphor for the three-year Popular Unity period:

> On the night of September 4, 1970, the crowd took over the major avenues to dance and shout, to hug one another and to share their triumphant hopes together. The human wave which engulfed The Alameda (the major avenue of Santiago) was not some amorphous mass, some heterogeneous collection of dispersed individuals, but a people, a community expressing its happiness: everyone reflected this in their faces. But they all knew that their act was not only an act of catharsis or a communal rite expressing happiness for a long-awaited triumph. They knew that happy and festive march was not only celebratory in character; it was also the first move in a battle mobilizing as an act of happiness but also as a demonstration of force.[33]

Allende was elected with 36.2 percent of the vote. He was not the first Chilean president elected with a minority of the popular vote (in 1958 Jorge Alessandri won with 31.5 percent, for example). Yet neither did this showing represent a clear mandate for revolutionary transformation, though the left claimed that it did, interpreting the vote for left Christian Democratic candidate Radomiro Tomic, who garnered 27.8 percent of the vote, as a vote for social change to be added to the Allende vote.

The largest political party members of the Popular Unity coalition were the Chilean Socialist and Chilean Communist parties, followed by the Radical Party (Chile's historic center party, which was replaced in size and significance in the 1960s by the Christian Democratic Party), the MAPU, and a handful of other small left groupings. In 1971 the IC also joined the Popular Unity coalition. In 1972 the MAPU divided into two parties, the MAPU and the MAPU–Worker Peasant Party (MAPU-OC), yet both remained in the Popular Unity coalition.

As Moulián suggests, from 1970 to 1973 battle lines would be drawn, lines defined by ideology and class—but not limited to left-right polarities. Rather, some of the most painful memories recounted in this study center upon internal left struggles, upon the incapacity of the left to formulate a cohesive program, upon sympathetic popular mobilizations that became combative against the opposition and escaped from the control of the political leadership, upon government paralysis in the face of rampant inflation, severe shortages, brawls in the streets, and vicious debate in the halls of Congress. The urgency, volatility, and immediacy of the political moment was reflected in several memories of the UP period, including those of current ambassador to Austria and former MIR militant Osvaldo Puccio:

> I remember having bought a pocket radio and having worked out my own system, so that I could tune into a frequency which allowed me to listen to the news every fifteen minutes. And it wasn't a personal neurosis, it was just that every fifteen minutes there was the possibility of listening, that no more than fifteen minutes would pass, and at least you *believed* you were listening.

Urgency also characterized the UP platform. The platform was, indeed, a revolutionary one, calling for a complete restructuring of the state and property relations.[34] The specific undertakings of the UP program, however, were necessarily vague, for, as indicated above, there were fundamental disagreements within the coalition over how such a program would be im-

plemented and on what timetable. Allende himself saw his six years as preparing the ground for a subsequent transition to socialism.[35] In the simplest of terms, the splits can be seen in three general areas. First, recognizing that political mechanisms as they stood would be obstacles to the transformation of society, the UP platform called for an overhaul of the state. The official UP program, advocated by the radical sectors within the UP, endorsed creating such institutions as a unicameral legislature, to be known as the People's Assembly, the outcome of a democratization process that would incorporate the desires of mass social and workers' organizations at all levels. Moderate sectors within the UP, on the other hand, feared that such an assembly would quickly alienate centrist support within the state.

Second, the UP program outlined a reorganization of the economy. This involved a division of the economy into three productive areas: the Area of Social Property (APS), which included nationalization of natural resource enterprises, banking and insurance, public goods and services, foreign trade, strategic industrial monopolies, and those industries determined to be inefficiently run; the Area of Private Property, which would continue to make up the majority of all enterprise activity; and the Area of Mixed Property, which called for joint development in manufacturing and industry. A corollary to this program called for thorough implementation of the 1967 Agrarian Reform Law. The radical left of the UP supported the intensification of the APS and the immediate expropriation of large landholdings. The moderate wing, which included the Communist Party and Allende himself, favored gradual implementation of the APS and agrarian reform.

Third, the UP platform called for "the mobilization of the people of Chile toward the conquest of power."[36] This went to the heart of many of the divisions over class and party alliances. The moderate wing claimed it was suicidal not to engage concrete middle-class and national bourgeois support for the UP program; the revolutionary faction within the UP claimed that popular-class mobilization and incorporation into the UP program was the only path and that no distinction should be drawn between the national and the international bourgeoisie. The split within the Popular Unity coalition became, on the one side, a strategy favoring an alliance between the organized working class and a vaguely defined middle class, represented by the Christian Democratic Party, and on the other, a strategy favoring an uncompromising "popular power" alliance, also vaguely defined. The moderate wing was led by the president, a minority within the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Christian Left, and the MAPU-OC, while

the radical wing was composed of the majority of the Socialist Party leadership, the MAPU, and the MIR (although the MIR was not officially a member of the Popular Unity coalition).

Internal divisions over the means of transformation irreparably crippled a government already opposed by powerful domestic and international interests. President Allende faced a Christian Democratic Party that would be successfully courted by the Chilean right and the United States government to block the Popular Unity platform. The United States engaged in what are now well-documented covert operations to devastate the Chilean economy and to contribute decisively to political disorder. Opposition to the Popular Unity government would turn for the first time in several decades "to the barracks" to end the Chilean democratic regime.

THE TRAUMA OF DEFEAT

It is almost impossible to overstate the impact of the September 11, 1973, military coup d'état on the Chilean left. In response to my request that interviewees reflect over the course of their lives and name the two or three strongest influences on their political evolution, the first response was unanimous: "the coup d'état." This nearly reflexive response served as shorthand for the array of meanings that individuals came to assign to the coup, from the immediate impact of the event on personal security and livelihood to the ways in which the coup ended a vast number of assumptions about what was possible for Chilean society.

The orchestration of the coup itself was violent and swift.[37] While there were pockets of resistance in a handful of factories, campuses, shantytowns, and in the presidential palace, La Moneda, itself, these were isolated struggles. On the night of the coup, as Eduardo Reyes and others have recounted, small groups of left militants ventured into the streets, armed with very little. Most quickly realized that such action was suicidal. Chileans were not to mount a defense of the Allende government.

Both leaders and militants of the Chilean left who had not been arrested went into hiding, and many began to plan for their escape from the country.[38] The large-scale repression and horror of the early years of the Pinochet regime are well known. The postauthoritarian government-appointed Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the government's subsequent National Corporation of Reparation and Reconciliation together documented 3,129 human rights violations resulting in death under the dictatorship.[39] In the first two years alone, an estimated one in every ten

families experienced arrest, torture, and/or exile.[40] The meaning of the Popular Unity defeat represents perhaps the most critical dimension in this study of political identity formation and transformation. As the personal accounts provided and analyzed in this study will demonstrate, the very language that individuals employ to reconstruct Allende's death, the military coup, and the coup's immediate aftermath reveals a good deal about individual processes of defining political identity.

PINOCHET'S PROJECT

Chilean sociologist Manuel Antonio Garretón periodized the initial years of the Pinochet regime into two phases: the first, from 1973 to 1978, he termed the reactive phase; the second, from 1978 to 1982, the reorganizing phase, he termed the refounding of state and society.[41] In the reactive phase, the military regime unleashed a massive repression campaign, geared to render past structural relations between the state and society expressed through its political institutions nonexistent. On the economic front, after initial uncertainty, the military removed obstacles to the market in order to embark on a path to recovery and growth.[42] In the reorganizing phase, Pinochet reordered traditional Chilean social and political structures based upon an extreme neoliberal model of the economy. By drastically reducing public spending, lifting price subsidies and tariffs, liberalizing the financial system, and opening the economy to international capital and consumer goods, the regime transformed social conditions for most sectors of society, from the urban and rural poor to the national bourgeoisie.[43] While the neoliberal model was by no means monolithic through Pinochet's seventeen-year dictatorship, the model virtually deindustrialized the country, signifying the decline and impoverishment of Chile's working class.[44] Emphasis on capital-intensive agribusiness caused further pauperization of the Chilean peasantry. The model on the whole reconstituted the Chilean ruling class, primarily the financial sector.[45] Moreover, Pinochet's neoliberal model enjoyed the support of the international financial community, particularly financial sectors in the United States.

At the level of political institutions, the Pinochet regime oversaw the writing and implementation of the new 1980 constitution, granting legitimacy to the regime and to the military's intent to ensure a gradual transition to what was officially termed a "protected democracy," in which the military would retain a powerful tutelary role.[46] In essence, Pinochet dis-

mantled social and political structures and institutions and their expressions in the state, relationships that had developed since the turn of the century. Furthermore, he replaced the legal and democratic institutions through which traditional political opposition had operated for decades with a new and highly restrictive set of labor codes, decrees, and an authoritarian constitution. For the political opposition to Pinochet, the new "legality" presented a particularly difficult set of questions and challenges.

As Chilean sociologist Pilar Vergara argues, underlying Pinochet's recrafting of the state was a fundamentally *technocratic* conception of power. Within this conception, the state is the embodiment of the general interests of the nation above the interests of distinct groups and classes, and the preauthoritarian, democratic period is judged as institutionally conducive to stagnation and economic crisis.[47] In this new official political culture, technocracy becomes a substitute for politics, eliminating those institutions and norms of a representative regime. The public-administrative space, argues Chilean sociologist José Joaquín Brunner, becomes characterized by a broad "regime of exclusions."[48] Sectoral interests are seen as interferences that pose obstacles to the coherent development of program. When coupled with a neoliberal economic model, private capitalist interests become equivalent to the public interest.[49] Pinochet championed a neoliberal authoritarian ideology, which through the control of such channels as mass communication and the educational system, penetrated the Chilean social fabric and appealed to authoritarian sentiments deeply embedded within the Chilean social structure. "It is clear," states Vergara, "that in the search for conformity or the passive consent of the popular sectors, coercive mechanisms played a dominant role, yet it is erroneous to assume that [conformity] has been based solely on the use of force."[50]

Such interpretations of lasting transformations in Chilean political culture did not easily translate into clear strategies for the Chilean left political party opposition, an opposition devastated by the repression. From 1973 to 1975 the military regime eliminated the leaders of three consecutive internal Chilean Socialist Party directorates. By 1976 military intelligence had decisively penetrated the internal organization of the Chilean Communist Party, and in that year seventy-eight of the more than one hundred Communist Party members killed were midlevel officials. From the end of 1976 until 1978 security forces almost eliminated the PCCH's internal leadership.[51] Left party militants who remained in the country struggled to regroup as best they could. Former Communist Youth leader Raúl Oliva, who remained in Chile until 1976, described clandestine PCCH operations:

> We organized three to a cell, and those three could only have contact with two additional militants. We would meet in private homes for short periods to share information, commiserate. There was no real debate among us, just an attempt to follow party instructions if and when we could. My wife, who was also a Communist Youth organizer, and I didn't communicate with one another for eight months.
>
> Before the coup, I would say that between the PCCH and the Communist Youth there were 280,000 members. In 1975, I remember that there were more or less 5,000 of us.

Other left parties used similar cell structures, yet the Chilean security forces rapidly penetrated them. Former Mirista leader Patricio Rivas described internal organization and the trauma of everyday life:

> [In the days following the coup] I began to live a kind of day-to-day internal drama. It is much more difficult to stay quiet and live this way than to do politics. It was like opening a Pandora's box where I wasn't sure what vermin would come out. And funny things would happen in all of this. We changed our identities so many times, we changed the way we looked and at times wouldn't recognize each other. . . . We changed houses. . . . We changed cars. . . . But the tension destroys you.
>
> I was really in charge of internal coordination. And we set up our cell structure modeled after the Bolsheviks, one person in charge of three people. We began to organize Resistance Committees, all of that. . . . And we really perfected our communications system, our cell structure . . . and we were fine, Bautista [van Showen, a top Mirista leader] was the only one who had fallen, until March [1974].

During the first years of the dictatorship, the majority of the Chilean left continued to believe that the military regime would not endure. In its December 1974 message to party militants, the Communist Party leadership wrote: "A little more than a year of dictatorship has been sufficient to make clear that Pinochet and his cohorts cannot sustain themselves much longer. The Military Junta is strictly transitory."[52]

Despite this overly optimistic prognosis, the PCCH experienced acute demoralization among those who continued to remain in the country. By 1976 the infiltration of Chilean intelligence officials into the Communist Party had created a traumatic climate of paranoia and suspicion within the

party's ranks. In the words of Raúl Oliva and his wife, Alicia, "Either you were a traitor or a *desaparecido*":

> Given we knew someone was informing on us, it led us all into this sense that if you were caught you were either a traitor or you would soon be a *desaparecido*, and if you hadn't been caught, why weren't you caught yet? We were all so afraid, living under unreal circumstances, in addition to economic precariousness, and this traitor element was so strong. There was such uncertainty. It was a feeling we carried with us, a feeling that continued to drive us to questioning ourselves even after we had left Chile for exile.

Such trauma and doubt, even within the most organized clandestine left party, the PCCH, took an enormous toll on left organizers. Repression, including imprisonment and exile, proved a painful catalyst for individual political identity transformation.

PARTY ACTIVISTS IN EXILE

> One leaves with the idea of the (triumphant) return, each one of us swears it so on the border: if there were any doubt, leaving would be unbearable. We left *because* we will return, and that is the only way we can conceive of it. [It] is symbolized by Ulysses . . . : a Ulysses who after a thousand dangers returns to his native Ithaca to reassume his throne, his wife (who never stopped waiting for him), and even his old dog![53]

While it is difficult to estimate the number of Chileans who went into exile after the 1973 coup, reputable Chilean groups, such as the Chilean Commission for Human Rights, place the figure at between 200,000 and 250,000 political exiles and their families. Political exiles—whom I define as those who fled the country and who remained active in political activity abroad against the military regime[54]—were expelled from the country under various circumstances. Hundreds sought refuge in foreign embassies and were granted political asylum abroad, thousands crossed the Andes to Argentina and either remained there for some time or continued on to other countries. Between 1974 and 1978, through agreements between the military and the International Committee of the Red Cross, Decree Law 504, and a government amnesty, at least four thousand political prisoners

had their sentences commuted to exile.[55] This meant that many of those people were subjected to the trauma of arrest and torture before arriving in exile.

Until the early to mid-1980s, Chilean left party support and sustenance would depend upon political party headquarters established in exile. In addition to the PSCH and the PCCH, this was also the case for the smaller but significant parties of Chile's New Left, including the IC, the MAPU, the MAPU-OC, and the MIR. While the parties attempted to maintain a dynamic balance in leadership between those inside the country and those in exile, the vast majority of the left political party leadership was in exile. The exiled political elite represented a global network of approximately three hundred political leaders.[56] The most important nuclei of the exiled Chilean party leadership were Rome, (former) East Berlin, Moscow, and Mexico City. Rome became the headquarters of Chile's most significant multiparty coalition and base of solidarity in exile, Chile-Democrático. It was also the party headquarters for the MAPU-OC. During the dictatorial period, thinkers and political entrepreneurs of the MAPU-OC would play a vanguard role in "renovating" Chilean socialist thought, and, ultimately, in formulating the positions of what would become the dominant faction of the Chilean Socialist Party. Several prominent PSCH and PCCH members also resided in exile in Rome.

The second nucleus involved groups who resided in Moscow and East Berlin. The former was the headquarters-in-exile for the Chilean Communist Party, and the latter served as the headquarters-in-exile for the Chilean Socialist Party and for an important group of Communist Party thinkers.

The third nucleus of exiled political leaders was in Mexico City. These politicians and intellectuals were either sent by their parties to Mexico or made a conscious decision to remain in Latin America. Chileans in Mexico founded the Secretariat of Solidarity for Latin America, which worked to provide support for the Chilean opposition and which promoted models of interregional cooperation in order to strengthen the institutional bases of economic and political democratization. In addition, some of its members established an institute to analyze formally the history of the United States and its relations with Latin America.

From as early as 1974 members of the Chilean left within Chile as well as abroad began to produce think pieces analyzing the Popular Unity period and advocating particular strategies of alliance and activity against the dictatorship.[57] In October 1973 a Socialist Party internal directorate had been constituted, composed of a handful of existing members of the Cen-

tral Committee as well as new members co-opted from the party base and the Socialist Youth directorate (including Eduardo Reyes). In March 1974 the internal directorate released a document critiquing the party's failure to provide a coherent revolutionary project:

> The defeat of the people and the triumph of the counterrevolutionary alternative cannot be explained as the simple military defeat of the direct resistance to a coup. The political defeat of the popular movement was sealed before September 11, being determined by the degree of isolation of the working class and the absence of a real leading force capable of making use, with possibilities of triumph, of the latent revolutionary potential in the forces of the masses and in the instruments of institutional power within reach of the government.[58]

The internal directorate also criticized the PSCH for its inability to compromise with the Christian Democratic Party, recognizing that "tactical compromises are possible and necessary in a revolutionary policy."[59] Moreover, the directorate acknowledged that "all forms of struggle," including armed struggle, would be necessary to defeat the military regime. The directorate insisted that the PSCH become the true Leninist party it had professed to be, exercising hegemonic leadership and discipline while working to create a "broad anti-fascist front," including an alliance with the Christian Democrats against the dictatorship. The "March Document" proved quite similar to the analysis and proposed oppositional strategy that emerged from the Chilean Communist Party. The PCCH, which consistently presented a unified position, called for the party to build a mass antifascist movement against the dictatorship, a movement of alliances bridging parties from the center to the left. Interestingly enough, however, until the early 1980s, the Communist Party did not argue that armed struggle would be a necessary component to defeat the dictatorship.

The interpretation of the Popular Unity period by the Socialist Party internal directorate and that party's outline for a broad front strategy brought criticism from other shades of the ideological spectrum within the PSCH. To the "left" of the directorate were those who felt that the Popular Unity defeat was primarily a military defeat and that there could be no alliance with the Christian Democrats. To the "right" were those who felt that orthodox Leninism failed to distinguish the Socialist Party sufficiently from the Chilean Communist Party.

In contrast to the Chilean Socialist Party, the Chilean Communist Party consistently framed its 1970s proposals for a socialist Chile within the country's formal democratic institutions. Its initial analyses of the dictatorship claimed that Chileans could be divided between democrats and fascists, and in keeping with the Comintern position, the PCCH claimed that Chile had to return to democracy before it could become a socialist society.[60] The PCCH called upon the middle classes, the national bourgeoisie, and those "democratic elements" within the armed forces to join an antifascist front against the dictatorship.

Nevertheless, in an oddly paradoxical way, while Socialist Party and other socialist left intellectuals were beginning in the late 1970s to refute Leninism and to revalue the question of democracy, the Chilean Communist Party began quietly debating strategies that in 1980 would publicly move the party to a "popular rebellion" position, advocating armed struggle as a necessary component of its strategy against the dictatorship. The popular rebellion strategy sealed the PCCH's alienation from the political center.

The PCCH's shift was caused both by external conditions and events and by conditions within the party itself.[61] External conditions included first, the Cuban Communist Party's increasing influence within the Comintern and, therefore, within the PCCH; second, analyses of the 1970s struggles in Central America, which attributed a marginal role to the local Communist parties in those struggles; and third, the Christian Democrats' continuing refusal to ally themselves with the Communists. As an increasing number of party leaders and militants were assassinated and imprisoned, party members expressed frustration and the need for a reinvigorating of the party to respond to an entrenched military dictatorship. PCCH documents reveal a prolonged debate within the party over its pre-1973 position regarding the electoral road to socialism, questioning the party's emphasis on *la vía no armada*, or "the unarmed way" to socialist transformation.

Currents within the PCCH had begun to judge that the "objective conditions," including the immiseration of the Chilean majority and military repression, demanded Guevarist-inspired actions to incite a people's revolt. The intellectual leaders of this current were young Communist Party exiles in East Germany, and they became known as the Leipzig Group (explored in detail in chapter 5). Isolated from the concrete realities of life under the Pinochet dictatorship and ignited by Central American struggles, these thinkers proposed that the PCCH create an armed wing to combat the regime.

While the Chilean Communist Party was taking a marked turn to the left, sectors within the socialist left, including sectors of the PSCH, the MAPU, and the MAPU-OC, were moving toward an anti-Leninist stance in their analyses of the failure of the Popular Unity project, the necessary alliances to challenge the dictatorship, and proposals for a postauthoritarian Chile. These sectors led the process of socialist "renovation," which as Kenneth Roberts succinctly describes, involved a rethinking of political and class struggle and a revaluation of democracy:

> Ideologically, renovation entailed an explicit rejection of Leninism as a theoretical doctrine, and a "secularization" of Marxism to strip it of its quasi-religious dogmatism and open it to alternative theoretical perspectives both within and outside of the Marxian philosophical tradition. Intellectuals exiled in Italy discovered Gramsci and employed his concept of the *bloque histórico* to "overcome the schematism of class against class" concept of orthodox Leninism and create a new vision of an alternative hegemony for democratic transformation. . . . The process of renovation thus came to be associated with a rejection of authoritarian and bureaucratic models of socialism. . . .
>
> Strategically, the early proponents of renovation broke with the concept of revolution as an act of political conquest and replaced it with the Gramscian notion of developing an alternative hegemony. As such, they advocated a broad, Center-Left alliance to isolate the dictatorship and promote a *salida política* [political exit] from authoritarian rule. . . . [T]here was a broad consensus on the need to construct a more diverse, multi-class socio-political bloc that would supersede the traditional conception of the Socialist-Communist alliance and comprise a solid majority for democratic transformation. Consequently, socialism would not be imposed following a sudden conquest of power, but would be achieved through a gradual "deepening" or extension of democracy to new spheres of social and institutional relations.[62]

There were several variations on socialist renovation, some emphasizing the need for greater internal party democracy, others focusing on party and class compromise across broader shades of the political and social spectrum. What united the "renovationists" was a rejection of Leninist doctrine as inherently antidemocratic. In a damning critique of the "Leninization" of the Chilean left during the late 1960s, Moulián claims that the left increasingly divorced theory from "real politics," that is, from the multiplicity of

reasons that Chilean citizens historically identified with the left and with left parties. Leninization represented an attempt, Moulián argues, to overcome what was seen as "bourgeois democracy," or "electoral illusionism."[63] Democracy had become perceived as an obstacle to transformation.[64]

Divisions within the Socialist Party leadership shifted from what might be termed a left-right divide to a horizontal one between Leninists and anti-Leninists. The Leninists were composed of a group nicknamed the *patrulla juvenil*, or "youth patrol," which had received political and military training in Eastern Europe and which exercised control over the Socialist Party inside Chile. The renovationists were both those influenced by their exile experiences in Western Europe, most notably Italy, and those who remained at Chile's Facultad Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) think tank, supported by European governmental donors and by U.S. private agencies. In 1979 the Socialist Party formally split; it would not reunite until the close of the Pinochet dictatorship. The split symbolized an opposition unable to mount a successful, unified challenge to the dictatorship. Until 1983, the Chilean political party left could do little but organize solidarity campaigns abroad, debate with one another, and reflect on their failures of the past and their hopes for Chile's future. The dictatorship was deeply entrenched.

In 1980 Pinochet and his supporters scored a major victory in a government-manipulated plebiscite to approve an authoritarian constitution. The 1980 constitution declared Marxist parties to be illegal. It outlined what would be a gradual transition from military rule to a "protected democracy." This process would begin in 1988 with a national plebiscite to determine whether Pinochet would remain as president until the close of the century or would step aside to allow national elections in 1989 for a new president and Congress. The constitution granted broad powers to the executive and unprecedented autonomy for the military. For a political class that, despite its revolutionary rhetoric, was accustomed to operating within the legal bounds of its constitution, the passing of the 1980 constitution was a tremendous setback. Until 1983, left political parties seemed to be deflated.

Yet events within Chile in 1983 jolted the political party opposition back into action. Pinochet's neoliberal economic "miracle" of the late 1970s succumbed to its own rigidities and to the Latin American debt crisis of 1982. The country's unemployment rate soared to approximately 30 percent, while economic growth plummeted, falling approximately 14 percent, and the entire banking system virtually collapsed.[65] The breakdown of radical neoliberalism sent even its former supporters among the middle class into

the opposition. In May 1983 the Confederation of Copper Workers called for a national day of protest, a call that would initiate a three-year period of popular mobilization against the dictatorship. The May 1983 protest surpassed the opposition's expectations, as businesses closed their offices and an estimated two hundred thousand citizens demonstrated in the streets. National Days of Protest became a monthly occurrence, a collective expression organized by a revitalized political party leadership, weakened yet capable unions, and the activism of party militants and others in an array of grassroots social organizations and movements.[66] Political party loyalists mobilized party bases, while political thinkers and entrepreneurs maneuvered to create alliances and negotiate strategies to topple the regime.

In a concessionary move, the Pinochet regime began to release lists of names of those exiles who would be allowed to return to Chile. Exiles began planning their return, some through "legal" channels with the appearances of their names on the military's lists, others clandestinely, and others still who returned publicly only to be arrested and immediately deported or held for trial. Many of the most well-known political exiles staged dramatic public returns and were greeted by party-organized welcomes at the airport.

Political party leaders scrambled to take advantage of the momentum by forming interparty alliances to coordinate opposition demands. Yet ideological and strategic differences continued to plague the left political class, reflected in the kinds of party alliances formed in the wake of the first protests. As Manuel Antonio Garretón argues, the party alliances represented distinct "ideological identities":

> Although the opposition re-entered public space and it became clear that many political parties had survived and had gained a significant presence, it did not agree on a transition formula, on the issues the group should face, or on the steps needed to form a multiparty coalition. Instead, there was a cluster of ideological blocs that were more concerned with the identity of those included or excluded than with the terms of a proposal for confronting the regime.[67]

The first alliances to emerge in Chile in 1983 were the Democratic Alliance (composed of small groups from the right of center, the Christian Democratic Party, other small center parties, and renovated Socialist Party factions); the Democratic Popular Movement (other Socialist Party factions, the Communist Party and the MIR); and the Socialist Bloc (an attempt by

Chilean socialist intellectuals to unite the socialist left). As Garretón states, from 1983 to 1986, these blocs all agreed on a general platform of " 'exit of Pinochet, provisional government and constituent assembly' and on 'a social mobilization strategy.'"[68] Yet there was little agreement on the specifics underlying the platform, and there were deep divisions between the Christian Democratic Party and the Communist Party, which had now adopted a "popular rebellion" position. This seeming impasse between the PDC and the PCCH tested the Socialist Party's past loyalties and identities, forcing socialist groups to choose between a party that had been a bitter former enemy and a party that had been a close ally. Rifts within the opposition, coupled with a resilient regime that managed to overcome economic and social crisis through tactical and strategic use of both coercion and co-optation, eroded the opposition's expectations of a "quick" defeat.[69]

The opposition's initial hopes of a collapse of the dictatorship eventually gave way to the belief among most that the transition would have to proceed by Pinochet's timetable for the transition, established in the 1980 constitution. In 1986, a year hailed by the left as the "decisive year," two events thwarted both oppositional unity and any hope of Pinochet's immediate downfall. First, the regime discovered an enormous arms cache belonging to the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (FPMR), the new military wing of the Communist Party. This lent credibility to the regime's claim that a violent communist threat was still afoot in the country. Second, the FPMR staged a dramatic assassination attempt of Pinochet, which failed. The two events led to increased repression against a broad sector of the opposition and ended several important attempts to unite political and social organizations. The military staged massive raids into the city's shantytowns, rounding up and holding overnight substantial numbers of the neighborhoods' male population. In addition, security forces arrested leading opposition figures and relegated union and other social activists to remote areas of the country. Such repressive actions exacerbated already widespread insecurity and fear, and the social mobilization through protest strategy proved no longer viable.

In 1987 the opposition abandoned its strategy for toppling the regime but still refused to accept Pinochet's timetable and plan for a 1988 plebiscite.[70] In January 1987 the Democratic Alliance and the Popular Democratic Movement called for "free elections" in place of the plebiscite. By midyear, several "free election" groupings had been established. Behind this call, however, the opposition remained deeply divided into roughly three camps, reflected by separate "free elections" committees. Christian

Democrats led one committee, moderate socialists another, and the groups from the socialist and communist left another. The divisions represented concerns within the ideological camps regarding postdictatorial politics, concerns that were all too reminiscent of predictatorial divides.

Pinochet refused to accept a proposal to replace the plebiscite with free elections, and the regime continued to operate according to the timetable of the 1980 constitution, establishing voter registration processes, electoral mechanisms, and other procedures to prepare for the plebiscite. The regime had begun to manufacture propaganda for the "Yes" vote, a vote supporting Pinochet as president of Chile until 1997. As 1987 passed month by month, the October 1988 plebiscite date loomed closer in the minds of opposition strategists. By mid-1987 non-Marxist parties had officially registered as outlined by the constitution. In December 1987 Socialist leader Ricardo Lagos announced the moderate socialists' decision to register the Party for Democracy, a "non-ideological" instrumentalist party invented to contest the regime in national elections without the Socialist Party's compromising its rejection of the regime's constitution and institutions.

In January 1988, Christian Democratic Party president Patricio Aylwin publicly announced that his party would participate in the plebiscite and would join any party in a campaign for the "No" vote against the regime. By the end of February, most opposition parties had signed on to a platform urging Chileans to vote "No" in the plebiscite—"No to Pinochet." Aylwin became the head of the Concertación Alliance for the No. This marked the beginning of an unprecedented center-left effort to beat the dictatorship at its own game, and it would be this same sixteen-party coalition that constituted the Concertación alliance for the 1989 Aylwin presidency.

Through a massive organizing effort, the "Campaign for the No" defeated Pinochet with 54 percent of the vote. The campaign urged Chileans to overcome their fear, to vote for a new and bright future for the country. The victory was a watershed for all who had worked for more than a decade to defeat the dictatorship, including those who had doubted the opposition strategy of participating in the Pinochet-orchestrated plebiscite until the day of the plebiscite itself.

The Chilean Communist Party remained ambivalent about whether it would encourage its members to vote until only shortly before the plebiscite, when it instructed them to vote "No." There was reason to be skeptical about the sincerity of the regime's intentions. The dictatorship had manipulated the 1980 plebiscite, which ushered in the authoritarian constitution, and it was unclear that the government would cooperate re-

garding such issues as transparency of the electoral rolls and vote counting. Raids continued in many of the poor neighborhoods, and severe repression against particular groups, including the Communist Party and the MIR, was still being conducted. In addition, it was unclear what would happen after the plebiscite in the context of an undemocratic constitution, which, among other things, proscribed Marxist parties, allowed Pinochet to appoint nine "designated" senators, gave the military supreme authority, and made it extremely difficult to amend the constitution itself.

Nevertheless, voter turnout for the plebiscite was well over 90 percent. While the 43 percent voter support for the "Yes" was troubling, the opposition was euphoric, and the experience of cooperation and consensus proved invaluable in preparation for the December 1989 elections for president and Congress. The opposition did manage to negotiate a series of approximately fifty constitutional reforms, approved by plebiscite in July 1989. These reforms included a shorter transitional presidential term (from eight to four years), an increase in the number of elected senators (from twenty-six to thirty-eight), and revision of the constitutional amendment procedure itself (reducing the percentage required for amendment from three-fifths to two-thirds in two consecutive congresses).[71] Presidential candidate Patricio Aylwin, the very man who had been president of the Christian Democratic Party during the Popular Unity government and who had staunchly supported the coup, was now a figure for unity against the Pinochet-supported candidate Hernán Buchi and right-wing neopopulist candidate Francisco Javier Errázuriz.

In March 1990 Pinochet handed the presidential sash to Aylwin. The Concertación alliance garnered approximately the same percentage of votes in the presidential elections as it had in the plebiscite. Aylwin won with 55 percent of the popular vote. The Concertación also won a majority in the Chilean House (70 of 120), though not in the Senate (22 of 47), but only because of the designated senators.

The left had a poorer showing than expected. Chilean socialists ran for the legislature in both the Concertación alliance and in a separate alliance, PAIS, composed of the Communist Party, a sector of the Socialist Party, a sector of the Christian Left, the MIR, and other left groupings. PAIS supported Aylwin for the presidency but ran its own candidates in several congressional electoral districts.

Through their instrumentalist party, the Party for Democracy, socialists won twenty-one congressional seats. An additional six candidates representing the "left" wing of the Socialist Party won congressional seats. Of

the forty PAIS candidates who ran for the House and Senate, only two were elected. Not a single Communist Party candidate was elected.

The elections were perceived as a victory for the "center," those who supported moderate social reform and political stability. The Concertación government ran on a campaign promising policies that would combine growth with redistribution, maintain an open and competitive economy while beginning to address inequality and real wages that had fallen well below their 1974 level. Regarding human rights, Aylwin had campaigned promising to attempt to repeal the 1978 amnesty law exonerating human rights abusers who acted between 1973 and 1978, the worst years of repression. Yet he had also warned of the difficulty a new government would face in "seeking justice" as well as the truth regarding human rights violations. In the area of constitutional reform, the Concertación had great plans but decided it was prudent not to push for such reforms given the need to have a two-thirds or three-fifths majority to amend the constitution.

The Aylwin government pursued cautious policies in its four years as the country's transitional government. The Aylwin cabinet, composed half of Christian Democrats and half of ministers from the Socialist Party, the Party for Democracy, and the Radical Party, maintained a cohesive profile, publicly united in its politics of consensus with the right-wing opposition. The new regime became recognized as a Democracia de Acuerdos, or Democracy of Agreements. The 1980 constitution remains fundamentally intact, neoliberal economic policies largely mirror those of the last years of the Pinochet regime, and though the government has attempted to address the needs of the very poor, there has been little redistribution of wealth in a country that in Latin America now ranks second to Brazil in the disparity of income between rich and poor.

The Chilean left within the Concertación fully backed the Aylwin administration's approach to the polity and economy, as it did with Aylwin's 1994 presidential successor Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei Jr. Left leaders tended to adopt a pragmatic politics-of-consensus approach among the political elite, discouraging broad-based participation to support more extensive social reform. Political discourse was filled with a "modernizing" Chile that would avoid the "populist" patterns of its neighbors—"growth in the first year, inflation in the second, political trouble in the third."[72] Even in 1993, as the administration was drawing to a close and PPD–Socialist Party leader Ricardo Lagos launched a call for primaries within the Concertación between himself and leading Christian Democratic candidate Ed-

uardo Frei Jr., there was no noticeable difference between the two candidates' economic platforms.

Yet ten years after the transition from military rule, cracks clearly surfaced in the alliance. Christian Democratic leader and president of the Senate Andrés Zaldívar challenged PPD–Socialist Party leader Lagos to represent the Concertación in the December 1999 presidential elections, forcing a primary vote. This public split between leading Christian Democrats and Socialists conjures up past images of bitter fighting between the two parties, and in his battle against Lagos, Zaldívar alluded to the Popular Unity government to resuscitate memories of the Socialist Party's disastrous record of governance.

The PPD and the Socialist Party (now two distinct parties that forbid "dual membership" for all except Ricardo Lagos) had a stronger showing in both the 1993 and the 1997 elections than expected, as did the Communist Party. In the December 1997 congressional elections, the combined votes of the PPD, the Socialist Party, and the Communist Party surpassed the vote percentage received by the Christian Democratic Party. The PDC fell from 27 percent in the 1993 elections to 23 percent in 1997. The Communist Party garnered 7.5 percent, a significant gain over the 4.98 percent it received in the 1993 elections. The PSCH remained steady at 11 percent, and the PPD made a modest increase to 12.5 percent.

Yet what proved most disconcerting about the 1997 elections was the dramatic decrease in voter participation. Between failure of the government and political society to recruit young, newly eligible voters to register and the abstention among those who were registered, approximately 38 percent of Chile's voting age population—a record high—chose not to participate.[73] Many analysts and politicians interpreted this unprecedented decrease in voting as a sign of generalized dissatisfaction with the political class. Echoing a classic vein of Western democratic political theory, others argued that some degree of abstention reflected mere political apathy and that political apathy is not a terrible thing for democratic stability.

Nevertheless, for both the Concertación government and the political left, voter nonregistration and abstention triggered a series of internal discussions regarding the need to reinvigorate the electorate. In mid-1998 prominent members of the center and the left released two distinct public documents, each signed by different leaders, attempting to lay out the Chilean government's accomplishments in the 1990s as well as its goals for the beginning of the twenty-first century. The documents reflected distinct emphases and positions regarding the Chilean modernization pro-

cess. The first document, "Renovating the Concertación: The Force of Our Ideas," was signed by more than sixty prominent Socialist, PPD, and Christian Democratic leaders of the executive and the legislature. The document lauded the Concertación's achievements in returning society to the rule of law and alleviating the economic desperation of the poorest of the poor. It highlighted Chile's top ranking among less industrialized nations regarding standards of human development and political freedom. While the document recognized that social and economic inequality continued to plague the country, it affirmed the current neoliberal model.

In contrast to the self-congratulatory tone of the first document, the second document, "The People Are Right," was more critical of the Concertación in the areas of social and economic policy. Fundamentally, however, the second document focused on what it termed the exclusionary, elitist nature of Chilean politics, calling for greater citizen incorporation and empowerment. President Frei had instructed his cabinet to refrain from signing any second document, and "The People Are Right" was signed only by Socialist, PPD, and a handful of Christian Democratic thinkers and members of the Congress. Nevertheless, the two documents reflected distinct thrusts within the Concertación regarding the role of the state and the market as well as the relationship between the state and civil society.

In addition to these debates over modernization, social equity, and political participation, the issue continuing to loom large on the spectrum is human rights. While President Frei failed to champion reconciliation as his predecessor Aylwin had attempted to do, by mid-1998 politicians on the center and the left were beginning to perceive a new opportunity for truth-telling and reconciliation. Regarding the issue of the disappeared, for example, politicians on the right had begun to speak about the moral need for families to know "where the bodies were buried." Newly appointed Chilean archbishop Francisco Javier Errázuriz has taken a far more active stance than his predecessor on the need for former persecutors to come forward, and several bishops are initiating renewed data collection and investigation of the fate of the detained and disappeared.[74] Several leading politicians, including Ricardo Lagos, have suggested a second government-sponsored Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

One of the most important symbolic acts of 1998 regarding human rights and the past was the official decision, publicly supported by Pinochet himself, to end the celebration of September 11, the anniversary of the military coup d'état, as a national holiday. Instead, the Congress agreed to support a National Unity Day, to be held during the first week of September

each year. The "Pinochet-blessed" decision seemed to lead to a flurry of popular media imagery and reports focused on the brutality of the coup and the first years of the dictatorship. For the first time, popular press, popular talk shows, and other media concentrated significantly on stories and debates about the nature of the repression itself, a discursive shift from a focus upon the chaos and disaster of the Popular Unity government. The arrest of Pinochet has furthered such debate. Questions now being raised include: What was life really like in those first years of the dictatorship? Was the degree of repression so necessary?

This shift in popular imagery and discourse has led to a decrease in the defensive character of significant sectors of the Chilean left political class. While strategy-making and personal political positioning dominated left politics over the past several years, Chile appears to be at a crossroads in its democratization process, and that may provide a window of opportunity for a new period of direction and vision from the left.