CHAPTER 4

PERSONAL LOYALISTS AND THE MEANING OF ALLENDISMO

■ Images and memories of Salvador Allende are woven in complex ways into the political and cultural fabric of contemporary Chile. Throughout the 1990s postauthoritarian period, for example, the Chilean political right has periodically invoked Allende as a disastrous president who brought chaos and the specter of communism to an otherwise peace-loving, Christian, capitalist society. The Chilean Communist Party, today on the margins of mainstream politics, has championed Allende in its pamphlets and magazines, convinced that among current and potential supporters, the figure of Allende is remembered with admiration and affection. Allende's own party, the Chilean Socialist Party, today appears to be the most reticent to call upon the memory of Allende, as associations of tensions and the party's betrayal of Allende are among the most negative collective memories of the Popular Unity period.

Interestingly enough, through the 1990s, the figure of Allende has enjoyed more visibility on the cultural plane than on the political one, particularly among Chilean youth and within the Chilean grassroots. In poor neighborhoods, streets and communal associations are often named after Salvador Allende. Popular-sector soccer clubs are named for Allende. In a June 1998 encounter with representatives from a hundred-thousand-member youth soccer federation, the representatives claimed James Dean, Che Guevara, and Salvador Allende to be their idols. When asked why Allende, members said, "Because he was serious, he stood for something, he died for what he believed in."[1] Among these youth, Salvador Allende earns far more respect than current political leaders.

Salvador Allende and the idea of Allendismo have represented the central referent in the political lives of the three individuals upon whom this chapter will focus. Like those in Chile's poor neighborhoods today, the three were born into Chile's popular classes—Hernán Del Canto the son of

a Santiago working-class family; Aníbal Palma, of an Argentine immigrant working-class mother; and Eduardo Reyes, of an agrarian proletariat family in the Chilean provinces. Early in their political lives, the three identified Salvador Allende as the man who most inspired their political beliefs and actions, and in the texts of Del Canto and Palma, particularly, Allende appears as a virtual father figure. As personal loyalists, Hernán Del Canto, Aníbal Palma, and Eduardo Reyes define their political ideologies and roles by tightly linking themselves to Allende as an individual political leader. These loyalists to Allende define their ideologies in terms of "Allendismo," which they interpret as progressive nationalist sentiment and a commitment to formal democratic institutions. They view themselves as preservers of Allende's vision, which they attempt to champion in their political party.

In contrast to the political party loyalists of the previous chapter, personal loyalists identify with a political leader to an extent that outweighs any loyalty they harbor for a political party. Attachments to individual leaders can both elevate and alienate personal loyalists within their parties. This chapter will explore how, through their identification with Allende, personal loyalists attempt to transcend negative public perceptions of the Socialist Party in order to preserve their individual political integrity and self-worth.

It is a *memory* of the association with Allende that is reflected in the texts of personal loyalists, a memory that they depend on to define their present identities. Indeed, as is emphasized throughout this book, memory is central to the concept of identity. How individuals remember and recount the memories of their pasts says a great deal about how they perceive themselves, how they fit in their communities and polities. In the words of social historian Alessandro Portelli, "Memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings."[2] Historians such as Portelli and Luisa Passerini have emphasized the meshing through memory of what is termed an "all-ready memory," that is, the popular or generalized view of the world, with the subjective, individual sense of identity, the "consciousness of oneself."[3] This chapter will illustrate how strongly individual memories can be shaped by popular conceptions of past events and protagonists, and how, in turn, individuals latch on to those conceptions as they reformulate their own political identities.

Memories are also critical to collective identities. As Robert Bellah and his colleagues have argued, entire communities are bound by shared memories:

> Communities . . . have a history—in an important sense they are constituted by their past—and for this reason we can speak of a real community as a "community of memory," one that does not forget its past. In order not to forget that past, a community is involved in retelling its story, its constitutive narrative, and in so doing, it offers examples of the men and women who have embodied and exemplified the meaning of the community. These stories of collective history and exemplary individuals are an important part of the tradition that is so central to a community of memory.[4]

This chapter will begin by examining the uneasy memory that the Chilean Socialist Party sustains of its former leader Allende. On occasion, current PSCH leaders have attempted to utilize the image and beliefs of Allende to try to overcome the negative images of the party's own past, to preserve a crucial element of political party identity as its collective identity, and to appeal to the party's historic militancy and constituency. In an important sense, Allendismo has come to symbolize an intellectual strand that can be represented as ideological continuity within the party, even as the PSCH attempts today to project a fresh, modern image to the Chilean polity and society.

Individual leaders and activists whose lives were dedicated to revolutionary change rely on self-referents that contribute to a positively framed continuity in their lives, even if this means shifting the memories of their pasts in order to preserve their present political identities. The Socialists recognize the contrasting images that Chileans hold of Allende and the party, and many have adjusted or reprioritized their past associations and beliefs to reflect these distinctions. For personal loyalists, Allendismo has lent an ideological continuity to their political identities, representing a kind of haven within a party historically plagued by serious internal friction and division. In contrast to political party loyalist Isabel Allende, who has used her family name to secure her attachment to the Socialist Party, personal loyalists rely on the memory of their associations with Allende in order to detach themselves from the party.

After a discussion of Allende and the Socialist Party, this chapter will explore how through the recounting of their associations with Allende, three individuals have struggled to preserve their own political identities despite bitter individual setbacks and the painful repiecing together of their political lives. The three individuals are former cabinet ministers under Allende and current PSCH Central Committee members Hernán Del Canto and Aníbal

Palma, and former PSCH youth leader and current PSCH Central Committee member Eduardo Reyes. For Del Canto and Palma, memories of close contact with and admiration for Allende continue as dominant forces in their public images as well as their political identities. For Reyes, who is ten years younger than Del Canto and Palma, memories of Allende's leadership and vision continue to inspire his own attempts to infuse the PSCH with a solidaristic commitment to Chile's working classes.

ALLENDE AND THE SOCIALIST PARTY

Drawing a distinction between Allende and his party, the Chilean Socialist Party, was quite common among those interviewed, among both socialists and nonsocialists. On the one hand, this distinction reflects a broader political history, in which a handful of national leaders transcended their parties in an appeal to a peculiar kind of populism in Chilean politics.[5] On the other hand, studies such as those of Carlos Huneeus also show that historically Chileans have drawn a clear distinction between presidents and their administrations.[6] In the case of Salvador Allende and the Popular Unity government (1970–1973), opinion polls taken in 1972 and in March 1973 illustrate that Chileans sympathetic to the Popular Unity administration tended to be more positive about Allende himself than about his government (see table 4.1).

Since 1973 the analytical and symbolic separation between Salvador Allende and his party has been drawn all the more sharply. Leading scholarly analyses of the breakdown of the Chilean democratic regime have portrayed the Socialist Party as a thorn in the side of a president attempting to transform Chilean society through the country's democratic institutional channels.[7] Such analyses focus on the high degree of factionalization within the PSCH and on the increasing prominence within the party of an "ultra-left" faction, which eschewed attempts to appease opposition to revolutionary change in Chile.

Further, a number of Socialist Party thinkers have produced works that critically examine the role of the Socialist Party in the 1960s and in the Popular Unity period.[8] While they tend to be less damning of the party per se, they are serious critiques of those factions and parties of the left that supported extra-institutional means of achieving socialism. Such works have contributed to universal condemnation of the majority of the pre-1973 Socialist Party leadership.

Table 4.1
Polls of Support for President Salvador Allende and His Government

	1972		*March 1973*	
	Allende	*Gov't*	*Allende*	*Gov't*
Excellent	16.8	7.3	12.3	4.6
Very Good	12.3	5.6	8.1	5.3
Good	35.0	31.0	29.5	23.8
Okay	24.4	37.8	23.4	30.7
Bad	6.1	10.0	13.5	18.5
Very Bad	3.3	5.7	8.1	14.7
No Comment	2.1	2.6	5.1	2.4
	100.00	100.0	100.0	100.0
	N=881		N=753	

Source: Eduardo Hamuy 1972, 1973. Cited in Carlos Huneeus, *Los chilenos y la política* (Santiago: CERC, 1987),85.

Yet perhaps more important than scholarly and political tracts critiquing the PSCH are the memories and symbols held by Chileans themselves of the Popular Unity period and of the role of the Socialist Party during those conflict-ridden years. Filtered through the lens of seventeen years of dictatorship, these memories include societal polarization, large mobilizations and countermobilizations, street brawls, food and gasoline shortages, and general instability.

The Pinochet regime reinforced such memories, primarily through state-controlled television. This was best demonstrated in the 1988 plebiscite campaign, when government propaganda focused on the dangers of a return to the problems of the Popular Unity years should the government be defeated. According to textual transcriptions from government-produced commercials, Chile's Popular Unity period was characterized by "extremist violence, shortages," and "inflation, infant mortality, illiteracy, lack of housing, lack of hope, of feminine dignity, of peace, of a future, poverty, helplessness, hunger, unemployment, uncertainty."[9] The dictatorship played on the memories of conflict and turmoil to improve its own image as one of order and stability.[10]

As Bellah et al. argue, "exemplary individuals" often come to personify sentiments about the past for an entire community. Perhaps the ultimate

negative symbol of the Popular Unity period's Socialist Party leadership has become that of former PSCH secretary-general Carlos Altamirano. Accused of promoting sedition within the navy, Altamirano was the last Chilean exile to receive permission to return to Chile.[11] Altamirano's September 9, 1973, speech in Santiago's main stadium is etched in the Chilean collective political memory. The tenor of it was aggressive and combative, calling on Chileans to defend, with arms if necessary, what appeared to be an inevitable military coup d'état:

> The conspiracy of the Right—our Party thinks—can only be crushed with the invincible force of the people united with soldiers, classes, non-commissioned officers and officers loyal to the constituted government.
>
> Know: the Socialist Party will not allow itself to be crushed by an oligarchic and seditious minority. . . .
>
> Never will we submit ourselves to the force of an illegitimate power.
>
> We are a party, the vanguard of the working class, with forty years of tradition in the proletarian struggle, resolved to resist whatever coup attempt.
>
> Chile will be transformed into a new heroic Vietnam if the sedition dreams of planting itself in our country. . . .
>
> The coup cannot be combated with dialogue. The coup can be crushed by the force of the workers, with the force of the people, with the organization of the working class, with the community commands, with the industrial belts, with the peasant councils. . . .
>
> Comrade Allende will not betray us, comrades, he will give his life if necessary in the defense of this process.[12]

Altamirano has been styled as the "black beast" of Chilean politics, "the most hated," "the worst enemy of the Allende government."[13] In an interview with leading Chilean journalist Patricia Politzer, Altamirano recognized the symbol he became: "As long as I am held as the guilty party for Allende's failure, everyone else can sleep peacefully."[14]

In contrast to Altamirano's speech as a symbol is the death of Allende himself. How Allende died—whether he was killed or committed suicide—in La Moneda palace was a matter of controversy until 1991, when his family had his body exhumed and concluded that the death was a suicide. Nevertheless, in death Allende became a martyr, a man who died for his convictions.[15]

For Chileans who identify themselves on the left, the separation between Allende and the PSCH represents a common tendency, that is, the positive presentation of an Allende who was ultimately betrayed by the brazen ambition and horrendous errors of his party. While respect for Allende varies widely across contemporary Chilean society, most Chileans share a negative view of the role of the PSCH during that period. To be considered a major player in the Socialist Party from 1970 to 1973 is to be viewed today with suspicion and mistrust.

The Socialist Party leadership has been acutely aware of such sentiments. In 1987 Socialist Party thinker and former PSCH secretary-general Gonzalo Martner linked Allende to the Socialists' search for a left agenda uniting democracy and socialism, challenging his party to reassume Allende's legacy:

> In spite of more than a decade of intimidating propaganda from the junta and servants of the regime, few dare to deny the immense moral value of the example of President Allende, who paid with his life for his opting for democratic institutionality and socialism. But has such a fertile legacy been abandoned? Have the conditions been created for his future projection? We must focus on . . . the relationship between democracy and socialism, . . . one of the key elements of the reconstitution of the credibility of the socialist and communist left. . . .
>
> Once in government, Allende clearly formulated his Chilean road to socialism as that which fights "to assure social liberties through the exercise of political liberties." With that pledge, and without ever obtaining the resolute support of his party to govern, he died combating the military in defense of democratic institutions.[16]

For the past several years, in monographs, organized debates, and party journals, the PSCH has consciously explored the many facets of Allende, of Allende's relationship to the party, and of his relationship to Chilean society as a whole.[17] In these explorations, Socialists have attempted to strengthen the party's collective identity through invoking the memory of Allende and Allendismo. It is an attempt to renovate or modernize the party while maintaining historical continuity and a sense of the party's contribution to historic progressive Chilean politics.

This is not to suggest, however, that the Socialists have invoked Allende in purely laudatory terms. In a 1988 forum organized on the relationship between Allende and socialist renovation, for example, socialist thinkers

analyzed both the contradictions in Allende's positions and his understanding of the meaning of democracy and socialism. Former PSCH president Jorge Arrate criticized Allende's notion of uniting workers through political parties narrowly defined as workers' parties, as well as his failure to devote more attention to constructing the Socialist Party in ways more conducive to his project.[18] Socialist thinker and ambassador to Austria Osvaldo Puccio emphasized Allende's own insistence on defining himself as a Marxist-Leninist who conceived of democracy as the overcoming of capitalism and the breaking of links with imperialism and who claimed that reactionary violence had to be met with revolutionary violence.[19]

Despite these other facets of Allende's thought and discourse, the Socialist Party today emphasizes his commitment to Chile and to a national project of social transformation through the country's democratic institutions. Former MAPU leader Oscar Guillermo Garretón argued that the basis for today's Socialist renovation should be recapturing the virtual "love affair" that Allende enjoyed with Chilean citizens sympathetic to the left. This love affair, according to Garretón, was the result of the citizens' identification with Allende's profound, progressive nationalist commitment to Chile.[20]

On April 19, 1990, Senator and PSCH leader Ricardo Nuñez addressed the Chilean Senate in a speech marking the fifty-seventh anniversary of the Socialist Party. In this speech, Nuñez linked the memory of Allende with the principles espoused by the PSCH today:

> After this long dictatorship we Socialists have been vigorously reborn in Chile. . . . Some of our truths have remained in the air. Others, we are constructing through honest efforts to renovate our basic ideals. In this effort, the figure and the example of the best of us holds special validity: the president martyr Salvador Allende.
>
> He was the best achieved synthesis of the fundamental values of socialism. That is, in Allende the idea of freedom as the full realization of the person materialized; the idea of justice, as the end to all discrimination on the basis of race, sex, or social condition; the idea of equality, as a value dignifying the human condition; the idea of solidarity, which identifies us with the victims of injustice and puts in practice the aspiration for a better humanity; all those principles and values by which socialism considers the historic and moral sense of democracy, as the full realization of human rights.[21]

In the postauthoritarian period, the Socialist Party has somewhat fitfully attempted to reinterpret and incorporate strands of Allendismo into its ongoing formulation of a renovated collective identity.[22] Fearful of the continuing effects of negative societal associations, PSCH invocations of Allende appear to be directed toward the party's historic militancy and constituency, rather than toward Chilean society at large. It is a recognition that none holds tighter to an inspired memory of Allende than those of the party base, whom the PSCH relies upon for day-to-day work and support. Allendismo resonates with individual party organizers such as Aníbal Palma, Hernán Del Canto, and Eduardo Reyes, all of whom have constructed their current political identities and ideologies from their early associations with Allende.

HERNÁN DEL CANTO

"I was so young and inexperienced," Hernán Del Canto repeated as he traced the course of his political life.[23] Del Canto was born in 1940 into a working-class family in Santiago, the son of a metalworker. His first political memories come from the method that his father employed to teach him to read. From the age of nine, Del Canto would labor through *El Siglo*, the Communist Party daily newspaper, reading out loud to his father. Though his father was not a member of the Communist Party, he expected his son to grow up to be one.

At fifteen, Del Canto began as a metalworker at the Phillips plant in Santiago. He attended night school for his high school diploma. At sixteen, influenced by a group of friends at work, Del Canto joined the Young Socialists (JS), and he became an active member of the union rank and file. Del Canto laughed when he remembered his father's reaction to the news he had joined the Young Socialists instead of the Communist Party, with which his father had always sympathized:

> When I entered the JS my father thought I would enter the Jota [the Young Communists]. This would have been his ideal. I entered the JS, and he said that was fine, that it seemed like a positive move because it was like a step for me on my way to entering the Jota. It didn't happen like that.

Del Canto's memories of the late 1950s and 1960s are filtered through the lens of a young Socialist Party militant and labor leader. At seventeen,

Del Canto became the president of a local youth branch of the FRAP, the Socialist-Communist alliance for the 1958 presidential elections. He recalled his first public speeches:

> The first time I had to speak was when I had to say something before a big group of four or five thousand people in a rally we organized for Allende in the Simón Bolívar Plaza. . . . I don't think I spoke for more than three or four minutes and it reflected my own lack of formation in many ways, the lack of a capacity to speak in public, the very nervousness I felt before the microphones then, and the second time was in a cemetery at the burial of a comrade who was a member of the Central Committee of the JS, who died in a train accident on the campaign trail with Allende.

Del Canto remembers that his first efforts at public speaking were directly linked to his work for Allende. He launched into a description of the general political climate of the country, of the excitement and turmoil around the presidential campaigns, of the frustration and bitterness of electoral defeat and of the efforts to reconstruct, rebuild, and recuperate after each campaign. Approximately 60 percent of Del Canto's text is in the collective "*nosotros*," or "we," reflecting a life inseparable from Allende, the Socialist Party, and the union movement. He also recalled the strategies and objectives of organized labor as if he were reciting a union position paper chapter and verse.

At twenty-four, Hernán Del Canto became secretary-general of the Young Socialists. At twenty-seven, he was elected second-in-command of the CUT, the country's leading union confederation. At thirty-one, Del Canto became Salvador Allende's minister of the interior.

Del Canto's political trajectory, which carried him from union organizer in an automobile plant to a cabinet post, is highly unusual for Chile. In a society that is markedly class-stratified, the Allende years represented a moment of political mobility for the Chilean organized working class.[24] Del Canto's two primary networks—the Socialist Party and the trade union movement—placed him in the seat of left political power.

Del Canto's text focuses extensively on the Popular Unity period, the period in which he played his largest roles in the PSCH, the union movement, and in the government itself. He emphasized his close relationship with Allende as well as his commitment to Allende's positions.

In the [PSCH] Congress of La Serena in 1971, where Carlos Altamirano was elected secretary-general, it was a very new, renovated Central Committee, renovated from the generational point of view. More than half of the PSCH Central Committee were people between twenty-five and thirty years of age . . . and I was the commissar of that congress . . . and afterwards I was elected to the Political Commission . . . and on that commission I was very prominent, as they say now, because I got the highest number of votes from the Central Committee. . . . I was a person that provoked a certain unity internally in the PSCH for one reason. First because I was a person very *unlinked* to the internal groups, and second because I had a very high rank in the union movement. . . . So, we acted in the Political Commission, I was one of the two or three people who had relations with President Allende. . . .

What we [the Popular Unity government] were really experiencing between 1972 and 1973 was an organized insurrection that brought the military into action in 1973, so that what I can say is that in that period we lived *very* intensively in a great linking with President Allende, a close collaboration. I had a very frank, very cordial, very fraternal relationship with him in spite of the fact that naturally we had a big age difference, he was double my age. I had a close friendship with President Allende's daughters, and I would say that together we lived with great intensity what for me has been the most important period of my life, a period that gave me great satisfaction, although I also learned some big lessons about what politics is, what confrontation is, what irrationality is. . . .

Inside the Popular Unity government there were two political projects, one that felt the process should be more moderate, greater agreements with the opposition, greater understanding, a search for the legal channels to get away from the problems we were confronted with, and the other sector that supported greater political, economic, and social radicalization, including those that at one point were disposed to stop supporting the president. In our own party in which we were leaders, there was a division within the leadership, in the Central Committee, almost half and half, in which one sector sustained that the government was veering off its revolutionary course. . . . there were those in favor of creating a parallel government. And there was the other sector, which felt the party had the *obligation* to support the government, that our *responsibility* was to continue, that was the commitment we had

> made to the country, a democratic path, of plurality and liberty . . . And we had many internal confrontations, many differences, I considered myself always a part of those who were supporting President Allende.

In this excerpt Del Canto portrays himself as a kind of political mediator in a party polarized virtually in half. Del Canto was a member of the highest echelon of the party, the Political Commission, a commission that favored a more rapid radicalization than the president did. He allies himself clearly with the Allende position, which he holds ideologically as loyalty to Chile and a commitment to formal democratic institutions. Del Canto blames youth and inexperience for his own shortcomings as a politician, as well as for the errors of the Socialist Party. As he describes the basic division within the PSCH, Del Canto never questions Allende's politics and leadership.

Throughout the five-hour interview, Del Canto emphasized his commitment to Allende, to the Allende family, and to Allende's vision of a democratic road to socialism. In a manner that parallels the PSCH's projection of continuity within its own renovation, including its emphasis on democracy and compromise, Allende serves as the inspiration for Del Canto.

When asked what were the three most important events in his life, Del Canto answered, first, becoming secretary-general of the CUT; second, his appointment as minister of the interior; and third, the final minutes and death of Allende in the presidential palace.

> I would say that the third event has most affected my life, hit me in a very complex way psychologically. On the eleventh I was sent to La Moneda by the Political Commission of the Socialist Party. I entered when he was fully engaged in giving instructions to the people who were there to carry out a defense of La Moneda palace. I had to wait for him to speak [his final radio address] in order to speak with him and to transmit to him the Socialist Party opinion regarding the events taking place that morning. I listened at his side, practically at the same distance that you and I are here, to the last speech he made. I said to Augusto Olivares, a well-known journalist and close friend of Allende's, that it was clearly his farewell speech, that there was nothing more to do after that speech. I waited for him, I spoke with him, I had a short conversation, well, I, and that had a huge impact on me given that I saw him with an enormous integrity, disposed to remain there until the final consequences [Allende's death].

> I went on behalf of the PSCH to tell him that we considered that his attempt, at this point, that this coup attempt was pretty invincible, and that, therefore, his immolation in the palace didn't make much sense. This was the position that the Political Commission adopted, and it sent me, to carry the decision, to transmit this decision. I was the only one that went to La Moneda that day to express this to the president. Books have been written, very deformed versions of this event, including versions from others and not from me. I am now giving you my confirmation of the final conversation I had with Allende.
>
> I entered La Moneda when there was still a palace guard, police who were with him, and when I left they were already against him, and a rifle was put to my chest and they didn't let me leave! But I managed to get out anyway . . . and the bombardment came, and the closing of Parliament, and the *bandos*[25] for us, and the sacking of our homes, including the harassing of my wife, who had our year-and-a-half-old child at home, and the robbing of everything in my home, well, these are naturally things that have a big impact on one's life, then leaving Chile— But I can't complain.

As Del Canto indicates, the way he remembers this moment is quite distinct from a number of popularized accounts of his last conversation with Allende. The "deformed version" Del Canto is probably referring to appears in the book *El día en que murió Allende*, written by the highly respected Chilean journalist Ignacio González Camus. Now in its third edition, González's book is considered an authoritative journalistic account of the major events that took place on September 11, 1973, the day of the coup. In one passage, González recounts Hernán Del Canto's final exchange with Allende:

> Allende observed Hernán Del Canto with hostility. At his side was Joan Garcés.
>
> Del Canto said to him that he had arrived at La Moneda representing the Socialist Party leadership to ask him what he wanted the leaders to do; what should their action or their help be at that moment.
>
> The sum of the discrepancies between the President and his party, those which had occurred during his government and especially in the final months, and his own frustration at having been cast into the scenario he was now living, led to a very acid response. He spoke briefly, in a short tone.

> He said to Del Canto that it was strange to him that, after so much time of not having taken his opinion into account, that the leaders would bother to ask. He added that, at the same time, the party leaders surely knew very well what to do. And that he, for his part, knew very well what his duty was.
>
> Del Canto stood alone, diminished, in a certain sense scorned by the attitude and words of the President.
>
> "After he spoke with Allende, it gave him a crisis of nerves," remembers detective David Garrido, drinking his coffee and smoking a cigarette.
>
> Garrido had the rough voice of a smoker. His wife circled around him, calling him "*papi*." Garrido strikes one as a man of action, someone who knows what he wants.
>
> "He cried desperately," Garrido continues, referring to Del Canto. "'They're going to kill us, they're going to kill us,' he said. He had to be asked to leave so he wouldn't create a crisis or collective hysteria. Allende's bodyguards had to remove him from there."[26]

In González's third edition, the author includes an addendum relaying the version that Del Canto reported to him in 1988. The account closely resembles his account to me in 1991.

The purpose of presenting these contrasting texts is not to decide which is right and which is wrong. Rather, it is to explore how one individual remembers and recounts his past to preserve his identity in the face of pending tragedy and his own powerlessness to prevent it. Erik Erikson argues that when memories are painful, "they at least recover from the defeats of the past the stragglers of unlived potentials." "All confessions," Erikson writes, "seek to settle a (big or small) curse."[27] For Del Canto, the exchange between himself and Allende is perhaps the most important of his life. In today's context, in which the former Political Commission of the PSCH is considered treasonous, Del Canto holds tightly to his close association with the president.

In an account of an Italian worker's experience with the death of a comrade, Alessandro Portelli analyzes how memory attempts to heal the wounds of humiliation and powerlessness.[28] Portelli's worker recalls action rather than inaction, shrewd observance rather than uncertainty or fear. As Portelli states, "Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did."[29]

After the coup, the PSCH directed Del Canto to leave the country. He sought political asylum in the Colombian embassy, spent six months in Bogotá, and then moved with his family to East Berlin, headquarters of the PSCH's External Secretariat. There he was placed in charge of international relations for the PSCH, a position he held for a decade. Del Canto spent fourteen years in exile, and yet had it not been for persistent questioning, he would have spent no time discussing it. For Del Canto, the fourteen years based in East Berlin were little more than a "parenthesis" in his life.[30]

Del Canto returned to Chile in 1988. Today he is still an elected member of the PSCH Central Committee, and he holds a midlevel position in the Ministry of the Presidency. This post is but a shadow of the governmental positions that he occupied twenty years ago. Unlike Aníbal Palma, below, for whom university education and training gained him slightly greater access to contacts and opportunities both in exile and upon return, Del Canto found that his class and labor background and subsequent structure of opportunities limited his possibilities in the transformed political moment.

The Popular Unity government represented the pinnacle of Hernán Del Canto's political career. Despite a number of painful memories from that period, Del Canto's memories of both personal political prominence and his sense of self-worth are far more elevated then than at any other moment in his life. Such prominence, Del Canto believes, was linked to his loyalty to Allende over and above any loyalty to the party. Del Canto's narrative fits Portelli's description of individuals who have been transfixed by particular life experiences:

> We may . . . come across narrators whose consciousness seems to have been arrested at climactic moments of their personal experience: certain Resistance fighters, or war veterans; and perhaps certain student militants of the 1960s. Often, these individuals are wholly absorbed by the totality of the historical event of which they were part, and their account assumes the cadences and working of *epic*.[31]

As the PSCH attempts to modernize, as political party leaders and organizers tend to downplay the once deeply penetrating role of the party in civil society, Hernán Del Canto remains frozen in his memories of the past and his loyalty to Allende. He relies on his early association with Allende in a vague profession of hope for the party's return to past ideals. His text reveals a contradictory, conflictive stance on the question, for example, of the relationship between the party and organizations in civil so-

ciety. On the one hand, Del Canto proclaims his support for the autonomy of civil society organizations, for their freedom from control of the parties as was common in the past. On the other hand, when asked about his visions of the role of the party in society, Del Canto berates what he terms an "*internista*" or "inward-focused" culture in today's PSCH, in which the party appears to show little interest in playing a visible role in crucial organizations of civil society:

> There's a certain *internista* culture within the party in the sense that they believe that the party functions well when they meet, arrive at certain accords, pay their dues, read the act, and they're through, they're happy with this. We have to put an end to this behavior. We have to ensure that the problems of the people, the problems of the people in the neighborhood organization where I live, the problems in the sports organizations, in the struggle for cleaner air, in blocking the cutting down of trees because it negatively affects the environment, of assuring that sporting events function properly . . . these are the problems of the people, and we have to have an answer for them, gather their proposals and transform them into program and *push through our agenda at the neighborhood level* and not allow our party to become a kind of closed parish, where people are unsure if the party exists or doesn't.

Del Canto is embedded in the Socialist Party yet alienated from much of its current leadership. Historically the other most important network for Del Canto, the trade union movement, is no longer the working-class political and social force it once represented. Wrenching, traumatic experiences have caused Del Canto to grip the political identity of his past, an identity that has been more idealized over the decades.

ANÍBAL PALMA

The cover design of *Un sólo norte*, a collection of speeches, essays, and interviews that Aníbal Palma had released for his unsuccessful 1989 Senate race, consists of a large head shot of Palma in the foreground, linked to a portrait of Allende receding in the background.[32] It is the perfect symbol for Palma, a man who has been a committed Allendista since his first political activism as a young student leader and militant of the Radical Party in the 1950s.

Like Hernán Del Canto, Aníbal Palma was born in 1940 to a poor Santiago family. Palma's father died when he was four. His mother, an Argentine social worker, believed strongly in education, and Palma sought refuge in his studies. He excelled in high school and entered the University of Chile Law School, where he earned the highest distinctions. The university also proved the catalyst and training ground for Palma's entry into politics. He entered the Radical Party, for it was the party of his closest friends, including Jorge Arrate and Ricardo Lagos, both cabinet ministers in the postauthoritarian period, leaders of the Chilean socialists, and the latter a potential future Chilean president. In 1957, as a leader of the Young Radicals, Palma became secretary-general of the FECH, the most important university student confederation in the country. It was then, at the age of twenty, that Palma met and was profoundly taken with presidential candidate Salvador Allende.

Founded in 1886, the Radical Party had historically played the pivotal role of Chile's centrist party, carrying candidates to the presidency based on alternating alliances with right and left parties.[33] Yet by the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Radical Party's position as the center party had begun to be eclipsed by the increasingly popular Christian Democratic Party and its charismatic leader, Eduardo Frei Sr. For Palma, the Radical Party "had always been defined as a socialist party, of the people, of the left, a party with a socialist program." It was the one Chilean political party that was a member of the Socialist International. Nevertheless, in the ideologized atmosphere and hotly contested presidential elections of 1964, the Radical Party refused to support Socialist Party presidential candidate Salvador Allende and ran its own candidate, Julio Durán. Aníbal Palma resigned from the party. Palma worked on the Allende campaign, accompanying Allende to campaign rallies and speeches across the country.

After Allende's 1964 loss, Palma officially sat out of public politics and established a small law firm. Palma reentered the Radical Party when the Radicals joined the Popular Unity coalition, formed in 1969. In 1971 he was reelected to the party's national executive committee.

In September 1972 Allende appointed Palma undersecretary to Minister of Foreign Relations Clodomiro Almeyda. Shortly thereafter, Palma became Allende's minister of education. It was Palma's ministry that proposed one of the most controversial reforms of the Allende administration—an overhaul of the educational system. The proposal was modeled on many European systems and had been supported in large part by previous administrations. Yet, as Palma himself recognized in retrospect, the pres-

entation of the proposal was "unfortunate" and ill-timed. The opening lines of the written and published proposal for a United National School (ENU) stated that the project's objective was to "assure the formation of the new socialist man."[34] This opening sounded yet another alarm to the Popular Unity government's opposition and proved to be a centerpiece for mobilization against the administration.

As described briefly in chapter 1, Palma recounted the personal anguish he suffered as education minister, as opposition students protested against him, as student supporters of the government stood up in his defense, as demonstrations became increasingly violent in universities and high schools in Chile's major cities.

> It wasn't just the demonstrations. *High school students* were taking over high school buildings. While such tactics had been used by university students, this was something new at the high school level. Other students would then go in and try to remove those students who had taken over the buildings, so there were very difficult confrontations, and impending danger. The opposition students took over the buildings, then students on the left who supported the government would take justice into their own hands to remove and launch a virtual assault on the building, and this resulted in very violent situations. I had to witness some of those episodes. . . .
>
> Imagine, my [two] children were students and I minister of education, and moreover, I lived in a sector of Santiago where the left didn't exactly dominate, so I lived a kind of curious coexistence with my neighbors. I can tell you as an anecdote that at that time there were a series of robberies in the neighborhood and a delegation of neighbors came to my house to say, "Why don't you have police protection, because that would serve the whole neighborhood, it would bring more peace to the neighborhood," et cetera, and I replied that I hadn't wanted protection because I had seen how in each demonstration [against the government] my neighbors went into the streets, banging their pots and pans, and that if there were a policeman there he would have to intervene and that I didn't want conflicts in the neighborhood. So we agreed that I would request a policeman for the neighborhood and they wouldn't have any more demonstrations in our streets.

Palma's text shows the tensions and ironies in this uneasy resolution of the public and private spheres of his life. Ideology—the larger vision of what is

necessary for the common good—disappeared into the day-to-day tactical responses to vehement opposition. For Palma, the Popular Unity period was a traumatic political experience. Its effect was to bind Palma more closely to the president.

After his stint as education minister, Palma ran as a senatorial candidate for Santiago in the March 1973 elections, the last parliamentary elections to take place until 1989. Palma lost by a close vote, and Allende appointed him minister of government:

> I served in this position from March to August of 1973, basically the entire preparatory period for the coup, and I had one of the most complex and difficult positions that existed in this country, it is the ministry most at the side of the president, the one that has to manage information, be the face of the government, the voice, so that this wasn't an easy period, either . . . You know that all of this, in my opinion, is a period that is very difficult to judge if you didn't live through it, so strong was the motivation of those sectors [of the opposition], because depending on how one looks at the situation, in those times we faced a period of shortages as a product of many factors, of government policy, of international pressure, the boycott, et cetera, but finally the fact was there were shortages, lines to get goods you couldn't find, a black market, et cetera, et cetera. I was a senatorial candidate in a period in which I remember having arrived in poor neighborhoods to see immense lines of people waiting to be able to buy one item, and I as a government candidate, my position was very difficult, and some people wouldn't approach me, they would whistle derogatorily, but others would say, it's all right, comrade, it's the fault of the *momios*.[35]

This sense of personal anguish and personal responsibility resonates throughout Palma's text, matched by his political behavior at several points throughout his life. On the day of the coup, Palma, no longer a government minister, chose to go to La Moneda palace to be with his president. Together with several prominent cabinet officials, Palma was arrested. He spent the next three years in Chilean concentration camps before his sentence was commuted to exile. Palma would behave similarly in his decision to return to Chile. In 1985, facing certain arrest on charges issued by the dictatorship, he returned to the country. Upon his arrival at the airport, he was placed under arrest. After thirty days in prison, Palma was acquitted and released.

Invited to teach law and philosophy in the university, and at the behest of the Radical Party, Palma spent his exile years in West Germany. He represented the party's European regional organization, and as its representative, had contact with the most important leaders of the Socialist International, including Willy Brandt, Felipe González, and François Mitterand. Through his legal training and contacts that he had developed over the years with German professionals, Palma has been able to return to Chile to establish a professional practice that focuses on business with Germany.

Together with Del Canto, Palma served in the mid-1990s as co-secretary-general of the Socialist Party, and he draws on the figure and memory of Allende as his chief source of ideological reformulation. Unlike Del Canto, however, Palma, through his university education, was exposed early on to a different set of opportunities, and today he is Chile's ambassador to Colombia. Nevertheless, Allende represents the thread of continuity in Palma's political trajectory, in his continuing search for identity within the formal framework of the Socialist Party.

EDUARDO REYES

Eduardo Reyes had never before been interviewed.[36] A soft-spoken, gentle man, he is a member of the PSCH Central Committee. Reyes was born in 1951 in the village of Mulchén, an agricultural community in the central valley province of Bio Bio. His father was a poor agricultural worker.

> My father worked from sunup to sundown and didn't know an eight-hour day until [the 1964–1970 presidency of Eduardo] Frei. On my father's payday the family would buy a hundred-pound bag of flour at least, and this meant we had bread for sure. We never knew hunger, but we never ate well, either. . . .
>
> My dad couldn't read or write, but he was pretty smart, and I remember well that when I first started learning to read, he would pick up all the flyers there were and we would go to the meetings and protests. My father wasn't a political person, but he was very conscious of his rights, and I heard him say many times, "Sure, if you try to claim your rights, they call you a communist," and I believe he was an Allendista.

Reyes's narrative reflects his self-perception as an Allendista by instinct, from early childhood. It is an identity he also projects onto his father, of

whom he speaks in only the most reverent tones. At thirteen, Eduardo and his father went to a neighboring town to hear Salvador Allende speak. He remembers that event as having made a profound impression on him.

> When I was a little boy I saw Allende. Allende came through all the towns, and in the small town plazas there is a kind of grandstand, one was installed in a small neighboring town and there Allende came to speak, and I remember that I went. I don't remember what he said, but I do remember that I sat on the grandstand, and I listened to Allende. I suppose he said things that interested me because I behaved well and I sat there and listened to his entire speech, which is a difficult thing for little kids to do. . . . So this had a decisive influence on what was my later life.

During the 1964 elections, Eduardo began disseminating propaganda for Allende in Mulchén, inscribing the letter "V" for "Viva Allende" on walls throughout the village.

Despite his early sympathies for Allende, Reyes also remembers that he was not equally taken with the Socialist Party, whose officials in his town "were not very good." The local PSCH officials, Reyes explained, were in large part to blame for his community's failure to support Allende—not, as conventional wisdom might hold, the fact that until the 1960s voting in the agrarian provinces was heavily controlled by the landed oligarchy.[37] This distinction between Allende and his party representatives parallels such distinctions during the Popular Unity period.

Reyes and another boy from Mulchén were the only ones from their rural elementary school to go on to high school. Education was important to Reyes, and he arrived in Santiago in 1967 in order to continue his studies. From a small rural school, Reyes landed in the Valentín Letelier High School, boasting a student body of two to three thousand working-class and lower-middle-class teenagers. Reyes recounts the tremendous sense of solidarity he gained at the high school, joining in large secondary school protests in the late 1960s, first against obligatory military service, then in solidarity with educational workers. He recalled that these demonstrations were largely unorganized, that they were often spontaneous, triggered by rallies and protests in other sectors of Chilean society. Reyes consistently re-created images of a mass movement in Chile in the late 1960s, of a highly participatory society.

He became friends with a group of young people in high school who attempted to decide collectively upon the political party they would join. Ac-

cording to Reyes, the choice was among the Young Communists (the Jota), the Young Socialists, and the newly formed Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR). Because of an unpleasant organizing experience with the Jota, Reyes claimed, he and his friends decided against the Communists. The group then divided their allegiances between the Young Socialists and the MIR. "I decided, even though I was aware that the PSCH was a mess, that for me it was important to have the right to an opinion, to say what you wanted, and, what did I know? I found this to be the case in the Socialist Party."

> I joined the PSCH in '69, already as a community leader linking our high school and the community of Recoleta. . . . and when we joined we began to work basically on the Allende campaign. At that time regarding the Socialist youth as such, it was difficult to convince the youth to work on the campaign because their leaders were not of this tendency, so the youth were only convinced some six months before, when the campaign was already launched, and they would argue over whether to go to the Sierra, or whatever. I didn't have this crisis, we had decided among ourselves immediately to work for Allende, I had *no* doubt in that regard.
>
> Meanwhile something very strange happened to me. The Miristas took me to a meeting to ask me to join the MIR, and they began to talk to me about the Tupamaros,[38] that Allende was a reformist, and I remember clearly that I said to them the Tupamaros don't interest me, I don't know them, I don't know *who* the Tupamaros are and I am an *Allendista*, so we have nothing to talk about.

Throughout the interview it was clear that the specter of the MIR both plagued and intrigued Reyes. He had a great deal of contact with Miristas, who "were arguing about going to the Sierra" and wanted him to join armed struggle. He referred several times to Miristas within the Socialist Party who were attempting to edge the PSCH toward more radicalized positions. Reyes had a strong connection with the Miristas, yet he felt uncomfortable with such strategies as the formation of *focos*,[39] and in talking about that he juxtaposed such a strategy with his emphasis on "participation of the masses." Reyes appeared to be torn between admiration of the Mirista militants of his generation who were wholly committed to action and revolutionary change and fear of the Miristas' physical and intellectual isolation from the Chilean majority.

Reyes is far more interested in action than in ideological debate. He talked at length of his respect for the Vietnamese revolutionary movement, for its ability, as he perceived it, to form alliances. In particular, Reyes spoke of the "modesty," or humility, of the Vietnamese, of their concern for the everyday person, of their incorporation of the Vietnamese peasantry. At several points in the interview, Reyes signaled his resistance to abstract intellectual debate within the party, preferring to discuss concrete revolutionary processes, such as the Russian Revolution, which he admired and had the opportunity to study in depth in a two-month trip to the USSR in late 1972. Throughout the interview, Reyes wrestled with the seeming contradiction between his desire for mass participation and the right to voice dissent, and his equally strong desire for internal party discipline, order, and clarity.

For Reyes, demonstrating his consistent faith in Allende has become an answer to this internal dilemma. He associates Allende with mass participation in electoral campaigns, the ability to form alliances, and with strong leadership. It is an association that bridges Reyes's past and present political identity.

It was extremely important to Reyes that he get across the notion that the profound divisions within the PSCH during the Popular Unity period did not translate into PSCH corruption or graft.

> It was the time I ate the worst, the time of Allende. . . . you can accuse us of many things, of errors with respect to the economy, et cetera, but you cannot accuse us of having robbed the people. . . . The popular sectors never had more possibilities than during that time. I also believe that the person who had the clearest picture of what had to be done was Allende.

As a leader of the Young Socialists, Reyes was sent in 1971 to organize in the mining region of Antofogasta. The PSCH head of the region was Carlos Lorca, a leading thinker for the party who is a *desaparecido*. Reyes took classes with Lorca and with Martha Harneker, classes that focused on the teachings of Lenin. He also made a brief trip to Europe and the Soviet Union for additional training. In Antofogasta, Reyes was named secretary of the Young Socialists for the northern region.

After the coup, Reyes formed part of the PSCH Political Commission's Direccion Interior underground until he was detained in 1975 by Chilean security forces, the DINA. Reyes was held incommunicado in the Cuatro

Alamos concentration camp for four months, a period that he did not wish to discuss, other than to say that he developed close bonds with a number of fellow Socialists while in prison. In early 1977, Reyes, like Palma, had his prison sentence commuted to exile. He was sent to East Germany, where he lived until his return to Chile in 1982.

Today Eduardo Reyes plays an organizing role closely identified with the PSCH base. In the cases of Del Canto and Reyes, neither the Socialist Party leadership nor the two men consider themselves "thinkers." Reyes claimed he had little taste for abstract postulating. "I never felt any great love for either Eurocommunism or for Gramsci ideologically. My vision was much closer to the processes of the Russian Revolution than to those processes that took place much later, like the Cuban Revolution."

The greatest political preoccupation for Reyes, Del Canto, and Palma is the lack of internal party unity, which in their view destroyed Allende's transformational project and will prevent the party from leading the country again. To these three men, Allende and Allendismo represent ways of linking leadership and militancy, a militancy that has tended to be skeptical of new directions in the party. Common to these personal loyalists is the immediacy of memories of the Allende period, detailed memories of victories and defeats that occurred more than a quarter of a century ago.[40] Vivid memories of the Allende administration find their way into the discourse and explanations of these personal loyalists' current politics far more frequently than is the case for other political leaders.

Yet there is a contrast between Hernán Del Canto, on the one hand, and Eduardo Reyes and Aníbal Palma, on the other. For Reyes, who is some eleven years younger than Del Canto, Allendismo appears to be a way to resolve past inner conflict while allowing for personal political progression or development as a party organizer.

> I feel I have evolved a great deal with time. I've read, I've rethought Allende. I have always been an Allendista and I think that Allende was the precursor who was capable of marrying democracy and socialism, who wanted socialism "à la chilena" with "red wine and empanadas." This symbolizes the problem of autonomy and the idiosyncrasies or peculiarities of what Chile was. Allende never wanted to break what had been a long democratic process, although it is clear that what we mean by democracy today is not the same as it was before the dictatorship, nor was our evaluation of human rights. And one thing is clear, at that time we spoke of the electoral process in somewhat pejorative

> terms, as an instrument. I would say that today there is no other system, as imperfect as it is. Voting shouldn't be all there is to democracy, but it is clear that it is the only instrument that controls power and establishes a democratic coexistence with one another.

Reyes forms an active part of a group of thinkers and activists within the PSCH trying to mesh historic party principles with contemporary concerns and strategies.

> I continue to serve as a member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party and to be very active in advancing the party. It is a difficult struggle, as this country, Chile, is moved today by the market. It is a society that lives for the market, and for an individualism that is alienating us from one another, and within the party as well, and I struggle to continue to contribute to a solidaristic sense, to a sense of the common good.

During the first five years of the Concertación administration, Reyes served in the Ministry of Government as one of several important liaisons between the administration and grassroots community groups. In 1996 he shifted within the ministry to join a team dedicated to an experimental drug-use-prevention outreach program, and Reyes oversees pilot projects around the country. Reyes's younger years and new professional embeddedness in a government agency attempting to forge new relations between the state and civil society have strengthened his political commitment to a participatory society:

> It is an error to assume that simply with advances in social terms, in social policy, that people are not interested in participating in politics. It is a real problem that the poor majority feel excluded from politics, because of things like the binomial system, designated senators, political problems that offend society itself. It has contributed to a real disrespect for the system, for people don't understand how such policies can be a part of the democratic process. This is very, very fundamental, and it weakens the Concertación, the government.

The cognitive ideal-types described in this study are meant to help us predict the dynamics of how individual political identities respond to major

political traumas and play particular roles during specific political moments. Faced with broadly similar kinds of traumatic political experiences, the types provide a way to hypothesize about the dynamics of political identity transformations for a range of political leaders. For personal loyalists, like the political party loyalists before them, wrenching political experiences cause them to hold tight to a central referent—in this case the referent is Salvador Allende.

Unlike the political party loyalists, however, these personal loyalists appear to be more influenced by collective memories or popular perceptions of the Socialist Party as negative and of Salvador Allende as a democratic martyr. This is especially important to Hernán Del Canto and Aníbal Palma, whose political careers reached their pinnacle during the Allende presidency. The personal loyalists of this study thus seek haven in their attachment to Allende in efforts to rise above their perceptions of the ideological polarization and antidemocratic sentiments within the Chilean left of that period. It is not clear, however, that the Chilean public accepts the distinction the two make: as ministers in the Allende cabinet, Del Canto and Palma are associated with a failed political project. Palma has managed to carve out an ambassadorship, but Del Canto has been unable to secure a high-level public office in the postauthoritarian period.[41]

Like other cognitive types of this study, the Allende personal loyalists attempt to portray a continuity between the ideologies and political roles that they assumed in the past and the present. Their allying themselves closely with Allende tends to relegate them to a past era. Nevertheless, it is highly likely that the personal loyalist cognitive type benefits Chilean political actors who are loyal to other prominent individual leaders. While the subjects of this study are Allende loyalists, it is conceivable that there is a range of personal loyalists in today's Chilean political class whose close identities with other leaders, such as Eduardo Frei Jr. or Augusto Pinochet, privilege their political roles.