

Eurocommunism and the Concertación
Reflections on Chilean European Exile 1973-1989

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Abstract

Of the 200,000 exiles who fled Chile after the coup, between a third and a half went to Eastern and Western Europe. They arrived in the midst of some of the most turbulent years in Europe since the Second World War, manifest in both street violence and radical intellectual currents. The European milieu, especially through the more moderate political programs offered by Eurocommunism, attracted many of the refugees, traumatised as they were by state violence in their own country, and already questioning the ideals they had held so strongly.

We argue that these moderate programs of social reform that the returning exiles brought back with them were highly influential in forming the coalition of centrist partners which supported the centre-left Concertación government, and helped maintain a stable and reasonably popular government in Chile for a further twenty years.

Perhaps as many as 200,000 Chilean exiles left their country in the years after the coup which overthrew the left-wing government of Salvador Allende and installed Augusto Pinochet's military regime for 17 years.¹ Some, by chance, were already overseas and remained. Hundreds scrambled into embassies or crossed the land borders clandestinely; thousands more, sometimes after a period of imprisonment or terrible torture, escaped or were ordered to leave the country under what Pinochet depicted as a 'golden exile'. Between 160,000 and 200,000 Allende supporters are

¹ For a number of mostly autobiographical accounts of Chilean exile in this period, for example, see Rody Oñate, Thomas Wright, Carolina Espinoza, Andrea Soto, Ximena Galleguilos, *Exilio y Retorno*, Nosotros los chilenos 13, LOM, Santiago, nd., Leonardo Depestre Catony, *A Medio Mar, Chilenos en Cuba*, Colectivo Un Barco de Papel para Cuba, Mosquito Comunicaciones, Santiago 1996, Alicia Dujovne Ortiz, *Al que se va*, Libros de Zorzal, Buenos Aires, 2002, Cristina Peri Rossi, *Estado de exilio*, Colección Visor de Poesía, Madrid, nd., Estela Aguirre, Sonia Chamorro, *Memoria Gráfica del Exilio Chileno, 1973 – 1989*, Ocholibros, Santiago nd., Velodia Teitelboim, *Notas de un Concierto Europeo*, LOM, Santiago, 1998, Amanda Puz, *Última vez que me exilio*, Catalonia, Santiago, 2006, Loreto Rebolledo, Catalonia, CIEG, Santiago 2006

estimated to have departed from Chile within five years of the coup. Whichever nation now was to accept them, they were leaving a closed society in which one always, according to the novelist Isabel Allende, felt watched over and judged, bearing the weight of forebears where a stain on the family honour could never be erased.² As exiles, they had been violently uprooted and traumatised. With few possessions, they bore the emotional scars of violent defeat and hurried departure. All were arriving in political and social cultures with which they were, to a greater or less extent, unfamiliar. Western European nations like France, Italy, Sweden, and Austria could not have been more different than this Chile of the early 1970s.³ Years or decades later, no one returned to Chile with quite the same confidence in what would be possible and desirable in a country that had itself changed utterly. By the return of democracy to Chile in 1991, very few exiles, whether Communist, Marxist-Leninist, armed revolutionary, Socialist, Guevarista, Maoist, Christian Democrat or centrist, found their inmost political conceptions still moored to where they had left them.

So you are alone with yourself and you have a great deal of time to think. In the middle of the pain, more than the pain, in the middle of a world that has collapsed.

Luis Maira

Many South American exiles fled leftist governments too, and Chileans are among them. Surprisingly, perhaps, they share much in common. The 1974 film *Los Transplantados* depicts the physical distress of a wealthy professional family fleeing Allende's Chile in 1971.⁴ The parents and two teenage children cram into a two room apartment. By the time Allende is overthrown the father has failed in a new business and become an alcoholic; the mother is socially isolated; one child refuses to return to Chile after Allende's overthrow, and the second mourns his death. The family has fallen apart. These right-wing *transplantados* are exiled in the same Paris where so many of the radical left, in their turn, are to gather from September 1973. Here in France – for exiles both left and right - the language is strange and takes months to learn. The French culture, seemingly so familiar during holidays, seems

² Isabel Allende, *Mi País Inventado*, Harper Collins, NY 2003, p. 214

³ Other exile countries included Mexico and Venezuela, Cuba, the United States, East and West Germany, the Netherlands, France, Italy and Spain.

⁴ Percy Mayer Dir., *Los Transplantados*, c. 1974

indecipherable now that one is no longer a tourist. On every side is a political milieu advancing new ideas, strategies and political philosophies that never cease to challenge the ideals that have sustained them.

Almost every exile, then, undergoes the cultural shock described by the Argentinian exile Julio Cortázar. One is stripped of

a family and at the very least a way of life, the smell of the air and the colour of the sky, the familiarity of the home and the street, of libraries and dogs, of cafes with friends and newspapers and music and walks through the city. Exile marks the end of contact with the leaves and the trees, the end of a deep-rooted relationship with the land and the air. It's like an abrupt ending to a love affair, or an inconceivably horrible death in which one continues to be conscious...⁵

It may be true that there is something to be professionally gained for the Latin American adrift in a sympathetic Europe. On 23 September 1973 Fernando Elegría departed 'quickly, quietly, without looking back, wrapped in a scarf'. He first endured numbness, pain and depression; but as the months passed, he found that

the Latin American intellectual grows in his profession, opposing and fighting the system, but also using it to gain respectability in his protest. Wherever he goes there will always be an establishment to rebel against and in which to succeed, or seem to succeed - to be celebrated, admired and rewarded to the extent that he excels in making his protest and uses his alienation effectively and imaginatively....⁶

Such may be the exterior front presented at the political rally, the TV interview and the launch of the latest book. The pain remains, but the mind is awakened to new possibilities.

Such a re-conceptualising of the political world was no more profound than among those who found themselves in the Europe of the 1970s. It is to those exiles, that is, between a third and a half of all the Chileans who left their country during the dictatorship, that our article is primarily directed. Here were fresh programs of left-wing reform that did not demand armed revolution, that questioned orders from

⁵ Julio Cortázar, 'The fellowship of exile', in M. Robinson, ed., *Altogether Elsewhere. Writers on Exile*, Harvest, San Diego, 1994, pp. 171-178

⁶ Fernando Elegría, 'One true sentence', in Robinson, pp. 193-198

Moscow, that built upon their own countries' political traditions, that worked toward gradual electoral success, and that accorded an honorable role to middle-class intellectuals. These new directions were broadly encompassed within the political phenomenon known as Eurocommunism, which Encyclopaedia Britannica defines as the

trend among European communist parties toward independence from [Soviet] doctrine during the 1970s and '80s. ... The Eurocommunist movement avowedly rejected the subordination of all communist parties to the once-prevalent Soviet doctrine of one monolithic world communist movement. ... Instead, every party was expected to base its policies on the traditions and needs within its own country.⁷

Such new directions of political thought had passed largely unnoticed by the many parties of the Chilean left, embroiled as they had been for the previous five years in working towards, and from 1971, supporting and defending Allende's government.

The first emotions of the exile often are despair, even self-recrimination. The Christian Socialist Luis Maira, received into the Mexican embassy a few weeks after the coup, reflected

After [September 1973] one was forced to reflect deeply on, for example, my family life, was it worth it to be so detached? Did it make sense to put affection aside, allow your little girls to grow up alone, to initiate what seemed an inevitable process of 'desamor', not taking the time to support and caress the relationship with your wife? These were the first existentialist questions we all asked ourselves, I think.⁸

One of the best known expatriate writers Ariel Dorfman, a refugee first in dangerous Argentina, later the United States, undertook the same interrogation of the persona which, he now realized, he had never fully inhabited. His wife said to him, 'You want to suffer because you didn't die. You thought you should have died back there with Allende. Well, get over it.' Dorfman reflects that she was right, 'I had assiduously cultivated my life as a minor self-embodiment of Che Guevara who subordinates everything personal to the cause of revolution'.⁹

⁷ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/195643/Eurocommunism>

⁸ Luis Maira, in Katherine Hite, *When the Romance Ended. Leaders of the Chilean Left 1968-1998*, Columbia University Press, NY, 2000, pp. 132-3

⁹ Ariel Dorfman, *Confessions of an Unrepentant Exile*, MUP 2011, p. 97

Despair for most turned to acceptance of the new surroundings. Slipping from youth to middle age, marriage breakdown, enrolment in formal study, learning new languages, absorbing foreign cultures, breathing exciting political change - awakened the mind of every exile to the new and the possible. One could debate the causes endlessly, but beneath the fresh air of European change, was the knowledge that the Chilean democratic leftist experiment had failed catastrophically. Some conceded that the exiles might even have contributed to their own destruction. Adriana Muñoz was a member of the Chilean Socialist party before Allende's election. Born in 1948, she was of exactly the right age to enmesh herself in the unstoppable 1960s conviction that the world could be, and had to be, changed:

The idea that everything is possible, everything can be changed for the better I think this has marked me more than anything else, to be part of a generation euphoric for change.

Muñoz fled to Austria. Interviewed by Katherine Hite thirty years later, she reflected that massive social change had never been possible, even in 1971:

We were trying to redistribute the wealth, and of course we were, we were the generation imbued with the great paradigms, with the revolutionary models and tendencies, the Bolshevik, the Cuban, the Chinese, the PLO, and we were trying to apply these models to the Chilean case. ... And then we had time to reflect in exile on how out of touch we were with the sense of security Chileans cherish and how threatened they felt by our great schemes. I was so swallowed up by my militancy, by the internal struggles within the party and by our struggles with the right. We were completely oblivious to the risks.¹⁰

Some rank and file of the armed revolutionary party the MIR, styled after the leadership principles of Che Guevara rather than Marx or Mao, found themselves in Europe released from the party's doctrinal straitjackets. The former MIRista Gabriel Sanhueza reflected,

I felt absolutely distant from the MIR in the concept of what it wanted: the MIR utopia and the MIR mission. But what motivated me most to leave it was how antidemocratic an instrument it was in the sense of never discussing

¹⁰ Adriana Muñoz in Hite, pp. 82, 85-6

any mission or party objective, none of them. One just had to serve, defer and accept. I remember that the breaking point came when we presented a critical letter of many positions of the MIR and I asked that this be distributed by the party to all members of the MIR in Europe, if not I would leave ... Well we waited for two months until in the end they expelled me, for the false position of having turned into a little bourgeois, grown too fond of whisky, something like that. When the MR threw you out it was you committed errors not because you had a problem with the party.¹¹

I spent six months in Paris, in the best of all worlds, experiencing this great cultural revolution.

Antonia Leal

While the Chileans re-assessed their political ideals they first sought tangible elements of the lost country: empanadas and red wine, served in peñas (cafes), in performances in political art and music.¹² By the end of 1974 the loose social, family, sporting or cultural alignments were beginning to regroup into the former political parties. The armed revolutionary intellectuals the MIRistas (members of the MIR) gathered in Paris, Brussels and later Havana. Many members of the Communist party went to Moscow, the Socialists and remnants of Allende's United Popular members went to Berlin. Over months the party structures began to re-emerge to become the dominant foci of European Chilean life. Wright and Zúñiga present a reasonably harmonious picture of the political discussions of what had gone wrong, and should now be done. Not everyone recalls it that way. Critics of the exiled members of the MIR in Paris pointed to donated fighting funds used only to pay the rent. A 1974 film not altogether in sympathy portrayed 'The Chilean experience ... ceaselessly re-lived in Paris, without any attempt to forget former antagonisms or correct previous mistakes'.¹³ Whether to dislodge Pinochet violently or democratically became a dividing issue in 1979, when by a vote of two to three, the MIR executive decided to

¹¹ Sanhueza, nd, cited in Oñate, Wright, Espinoza, Soto, Galleguillos, p. 22

¹² V. Thomas Wright and Rody Oñate Zúñiga, 'Chilean Political Exile, *Latin American Perspectives*, 155, 4, July 2007, 31-49, for an example of political protest theatre, see 'Theatre de la Resistance – Chile', in Aguirre and Chamorro, pp.104-6; see also Rebolledo, pp. 106-7

¹³ From the film *Diálogos de los exiliados*, in www.rouge.com.au/2dialogue.html.

return MIRistas compulsorily to Chile to continue a clandestine armed struggle. For many, the decision turned out to be little better than a death sentence.¹⁴ Some MIRistas who remained were equally disillusioned. 'Jorge', exiled in the Netherlands, left the MIR in 1985 because the party itself had begun to fall apart through 'different visions and discussions'.¹⁵ In the Dutch city of Eindhoven two committees, one radical, the other more moderate, debated with each other while secretly discussing separate action plans with their compatriots remaining in Chile. Pablo Eppelin, a Socialist, spoke for many in maintaining that the problem was that Chileans were too divided in how the left should continue to fight the dictatorship. Boris del Valle Ruíz, interviewed in 2010, echoed the warning of Elegría that the brooding, bearded exile could be a little too seductive a role to adopt:

Some people think that they stay relevant and interesting if they call themselves political refugees, but that is dangerous. ... Some Chileans in the Netherlands think too much as revolutionaries almost more than they did before the coup... What purpose does it have to fight for something that is 16,000 km away from us?¹⁶

Lest this seem too negative a portrayal of the European exiles, let us recall that political supporters of Allende had been anything but united in Chile before the coup. The Popular Unity party, as Isabel Allende wryly observed, was a party 'popular, but not united'; ... 'the parties of the coalition fought like dogs for every morsel of power and Allende not only had to confront the opposition from the right, but also the critics of his [own] ranks demanding speed and radicalism'.¹⁷

The often disillusioned exiles were now to meet one of the most stimulating European decades of the century. Sylvia Plath died sensationally in 1963 from which point some date the birth of the feminist movement. In 1967 Rudi Dutschke, imbibing together liberation theology and Rosa Luxemburg's Marxist critique, was inflaming European students into mass action; 'Red Danny' Cohn-Bendit in 1968 was envisioning a society organized by the workers, peasants, students and consumers themselves who

¹⁴ Patricio Rivas, in Hite, pp. 93-4. A minority member of the MIR executive, Rivas felt a direct responsibility for the deaths and after 1984 decided to withdraw all the operatives that he was responsible for.

¹⁵ F. von Schaik, 'Chilean exiles in the Netherlands. Activism, Memories and Traumas', MA thesis, University of Utrecht, p. 29

¹⁶ Wright and Zúñiga pp. 31-2

¹⁷ Isabel Allende, *Mi País Inventado*, Harper Collins, New York, 2003, p. 174

would formulate a society based on self-management.¹⁸ In the same year the Soviet tanks crossed the Czechoslovakian borders crushing Czech resistance and the trust of believers worldwide. Franco died in 1975, freeing Spain from the list of right-wing countries that the exiles must avoid. Those arriving in the later 1970s found themselves at the peak of the Gramscian revival that stressed the role of intellectuals leading the hegemony of cultural change on behalf of a mass society that could not yet articulate it for itself. The Chilean Communists learned how to free each nation from the self-imposed manacles that bound them to the dictates of the Soviet Union, while the MIR confronted the challenging notion that political change might ultimately rest not in armed insurrection but in changing people's minds. It was in 1977 that the Spanish communist leader Santiago Carrillo published *Eurocommunism and the State*, that set leftist intellectuals ablaze. Here was a new manifesto of national and cultural bases for leftist political action: a mass workers' movement might develop, each in its own country, to develop its own national program of collectivist change, radical but peaceful, democratic and acceptable to the many. In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The following year Solidarity, the first noncommunist trade union in a Warsaw Pact country, emerged triumphant. In the middle 1980s, one of the first initiatives of Gorbachev's *perestroika* was to install multiple candidates (though for the one party) in the Soviet Union itself. As critical as the evident collapse of Soviet authority, were the novel concepts of variety, compromise, a less doctrinaire ideology, a search for workable solutions. This was the turbulent earth to which the Chilean left intellectuals were falling.

Who could remain unmoved in such turmoil? The communist Antonio Leal had been in a 1968 Paris seminar that coincided with the May revolution. 'The student explosion happened at the same time as Czechoslovakia. I could hear the reflections of the Italian, French communist parties there'. When he returned to Chile later that year he found it 'painful for me to have to support the PCCH' [Chilean Communist Party]. He began to study Gramsci in 1977. After the coup he 'returned to Italy transformed. I realised that there was an alternative Marxism to the Stalinist ones, the concept of hegemony so important to socialists today.' In terms of his own past, Leal 'realised that one cannot buy equality at the price of freedom':

¹⁸ <http://www.tfp.org/ftp-home/fighting-for-our-culture/sorbonne-1968-a-devastating-cultural-revolution-meets-unexpected-resistance-40-years-later.html>

The vision of socialism, with freedom, with respect for human rights, is an absolute necessity. I have come to believe that the socialist bloc ideologies were unviable. ... Dead for me is the orthodox notion of Marxist-Leninism as something that is really viable. It was expressed in the concentration of power in the hands of one party. The idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat transformed into the dictatorship of the party ... I continue to be inspired as a Marxist, but not as a partisan one.¹⁹

The communist Jorge Insunza spent his exile in East Berlin from 1976 to 1980 and then in Moscow from 1981 to 1986. While his experiences reaffirmed his convictions as a communist,

Nevertheless, I also recognised levels of division in German society which for us Chilean Communists were plainly undemocratic and clashed with our value structures.²⁰

Carlos Altamirano, Secretary General of the Socialist Party of Chile (1991-1979), reflected of his life in East Berlin,

It wasn't liberty. I was enormously affected by the absence of liberty. It was a coercive society, in which the decisions were made from above and orders passed down, limiting liberty enormously.²¹

Exile in Europe, even in Eastern Europe, broadly caused intellectuals to move towards moderation and political accommodation. The former MIRista Carlos Ominami declared 'European exile profoundly altered my conceptions and my political convictions. I could observe the evolution of Eurosocialism, of Eurocommunism'. Jorge Arrate declared himself decisively affected by first-hand exposure to international developments and intellectual currents.²² He became a leader in the formation of the moderate Concertación, the centre-left, multi-party government that led Chile for twenty years.

¹⁹ Antonio Leal, in Hite, pp. 137-145

²⁰ Jorge Insunza, in Hite, p. 67

²¹ Wright and Zúñiga, p. 41

²² Carlos Ominami, Jorge Arrate, in Wright and Zúñiga, p. 42

Exile in other cultures and nations brought quite different perceptions and strategies.²³ In the US, Ariel Dorfman found a country decidedly less preoccupied with reformulating leftist political philosophy. He wrote that

The failure of our peaceful Chilean revolution did not turn me into an advocate of armed struggle. ...I had deposited in a revolutionary party, true, of a new lefty variety – my liberty and my conscience and that Marxist philosophy, still a superb instrument with which to comprehend and to critique capitalism, still a fiery vision of the future to which I continued to subscribe, seemed to have increasingly foggy responses to the new dilemmas of our times.

Where, Dorfman asked himself, were the Marxist responses to Indigenous issues, industrialization, environmental degradation, feminism, the sexual revolution, homosexuality the ‘puzzles that could not be reduced to one position’. He concluded grimly

one cannot be for freedom in Nicaragua and against it in Hungary, that one could not deplore the US support of Pinochet and applaud Jaruzelski’s mentors in Moscow.²⁴

MIRistas who had moved from quiet Belgium to warlike Cuba continued to plot the violent overthrow of Pinochet. In 1980, a year after the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua, some announced their support for ‘all forms of struggle’, including armed insurrection, to foster the creation of the Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez, known as the Rodriguistas.²⁵ In Europe, though, female members of the MIR imbibed a sense of their own liberation:

At the same time, exile is an instance in which [two MIRista exiles] Arinda and Soledad lived, as a deep existential crisis in respect of their roles as women and militants in questioning the faith. ... Europe is a propitious context to interrogate the development of one’s base identities from inside the MIR. The women’s movement was in full flight in the old continent, ... which

²³ Carrizal Informe Especial (TV documentary), June 2006, viewed in the Library of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, Santiago de Chile; for activities of, and opposition to, the Rodriguistas in Chile, see M. Wyndham and P. Read, ‘And some have no memorial’, *Encounters*, 5, 2013, pp. 169-182.

²⁴ Dorfman, pp. 231, 238-9

²⁵ Rodriguistas were responsible for the failed attempted assassination of Pinochet in 1987.

influenced them in their wide and deep search they would develop in the years to come, as to what constituted being a woman. ... ²⁶

Many European exiles found strength in the gathering force of Human Rights. Far from thanking Pinochet for their 'golden exile' in allowing them to leave rather than stay to be further tortured or killed, the Chileans provided powerful ammunition to advance the cause of Human Rights in a credo that could overarch political parties left and right, and dictators of every hue. Patrick Kelly describes the huge growth of the movement in the 1970s and 1980s as a kind of universal solidarity movement to galvanise the world against state repression and terrorism. In this way Chileans could denounce the contravention of the International Charter of Human Rights as well as the purely national violation of the Chilean Constitution. Clearly one did not need to be a Gramscian to appreciate its universal appeal. Though powerful human rights lobbies emerged in the US, Canada, Venezuela and Mexico, western and northern Europe with its long traditions, sympathetic parliaments and existing organisations, was fertile soil. Activists, especially in areas where their audiences were most receptive, began to construct their experiences not just as the unwarranted persecution of the left, but as fundamental breaches of basic human freedoms. The exiles played no small part in persuading the International Human Rights Commission to spotlight Chilean abuses as one of its first specifically-directed investigations in the middle 1970s.

Kelly traces the Chilean origin of the Human Rights movement to Jose Zalaquett's seminal work *The Human Rights Movement*, published in 1981, the thinking for which had begun in the United States after his expulsion from Chile in 1976. Campaigns against human rights abuses soon became allied with the previously non-political Amnesty International: from the combined efforts of both, torture began to supplant exile as the first focus of violations. Strange alliances formed: the leader of the MIR, Miguel Enriquez in August 1974, wrote to Archbishop Raúl Silva Enriquez, that divided as they were, 'certainly at least we are united in the defence of Human

²⁶ Tamara Vidaurrázaga Aránguiz, 'Mujeres en Rojo y Negro'. *Reconstrucción de memoria de tres mujeres MIRistas 1973 – 1990*, MA Thesis, University of Chile, 2005, p. 49

Rights, Aug 74.²⁷ The presentation of Pinochet's atrocities as violations of both International Law and Human Rights, rather than the persecution of the left, has continued to be the dominant voice of Chilean post-Pinochet protest. Ex-president of the Association of the Relatives of the Disappeared, Viviana Diaz, whose father was detained-disappeared in the early period of the dictatorship, stated during a memorial at the torture and extermination centre Villa Grimaldi:

[t]ime has passed, but the violations of human rights are still an inexcusable aberration; the truth of the deeds has always been here. ... Many did not want to know, others not even to find out. ... [We want] a society that does not mortgage justice for fear of powerful factions, a society that dares to look us in the eyes and whose authority we accept²⁸

From 1987 many exiles began to return in the expectation of their being able to resume a moderate political program. As the economy weakened and the Human Rights campaigns strengthened, they began cautiously to implement these moderate paths they had first understood, then sketched out, in western Europe.²⁹ One wing of the Socialists, having moved left to adopt a Marxist-Leninist stance in 1967, began to work with the moderate Christian Democrats. In Europe many Socialists were now identified as having become less militant, more open to a diversity of new ideas.³⁰

'Benito' arriving back from the Netherlands in 1989, found that the Socialist Party had the same manners and plans as in the 1970s, namely to fight and start a war with the capitalists. But that did not work in 1973 and it would not work now.³¹

More dominant after 1990 was the centre-left Concertación, whose anti-authoritarian and anti-bureaucratic alliance was a pragmatic socialism flexible enough to attract and

²⁷ Patrick Kelly, quoted, 'The 1973 Chilean coup and the origins of the transnational human rights activism', in *Journal of Global History*, 8 (1)/ 2013, 165 - 186

²⁸ Viviana Díaz, 'Chilean Society of today in the Light of Violations of Human Rights Violations in the Past', in *A Museum in Villa Grimaldi: Space for Memory and Education in Human Rights*, International Seminar, August 2005, (Municipalidad de Peñalolén, Santiago: Corporación Parque por La Paz Villa Grimaldi', nd., c. 2006),

²⁹ 4942 exiles were granted permission to return in 1984, 1471 in 1987.

³⁰ Arrate, Jorge. 'El exilio chileno. En dossier de la reunión de Chantilly, 1982 y publicado por la Revista Chile América', p.136, quoted by Cristina Moyano, 'Diálogos entre el exilio y el interior. Reflexiones en torno a la circulación de ideas en el proceso de renovación socialista, 1973-1990'; Revista www.izquierdas.cl, 9, abril 2011:31-46, p. 44; <http://www.izquierdas.cl/revista/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Cristina-Moyano3.pdf>

³¹ Insulza, in Hite, p.182-184; Benito in Schaik, p. 29

absorb much of the membership of the Christian left and former allies or partners in the Popular Unity party.³² Jose Miguel Insulza, having spent from 1974 to 1981 in Italy, returned to become an organiser of the 1989 Concertación campaign. He reflected,

I was not among the most rebellious of that period, yet certainly I and my political group have moderated. That's the reality of the times, and it clearly has been appropriate for us to adapt to the political moment.³³

In truth the people as well as the economy had changed. A film crew in 2008 visited several 'poblaciones', (working class settlements with Soviet leanings before the coup) to ask older residents to reflect on their times. They lamented that the new generation knew nothing, drugs and alcohol were everywhere, the old spirit of mutual help had evaporated, values and principles lost.³⁴ While community life was perhaps already ebbing even before the coup,³⁵ certainly the returning exiles were distressed by what they saw. The former president's daughter Isabel Allende, returning in 1986, recalled,

The first thing I felt was this very competitive spirit. Less solidarity. A capacity, not to look deeply at much, not to remember much, to take the most comfortable, easiest, path.³⁶

The cool, if not icy, reception shown to many returning exiles helped to stabilise the connections formed in Europe. Wright and Zúñiga's European interview subjects found that years of the dictatorship's propaganda had implanted the idea of a carefree 'golden exile' even among their friends who had remained in Chile. Prejudice against them socially and in employment made work hard to find. As difficult to bear was the studied uninterest in what had happened to them, at home or abroad. No one seemed to want to talk even about the centres of torture, murder and disappearance. Ariel Dorfman was brusquely told, 'You don't speak Spanish in Chilean'.³⁷

³² Wright and Zúñiga, pp. 41-3

³³ Insulza, in Hite, p.184

³⁴ AFASIA: 'Nueve comunas allanadas entre 1973 y 1990', 2008; copy held in the Library of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, Santiago. The communities included La Legua, Lo Espejo and Cerro Navia

³⁵ Sergio Villalobos R., 'El dilema de la historia', *Manifiesto de Historiadores*, Sergio Grez y Gabriel Salazar (compiladores), Libros del Ciudadano Serie Historia, LOM Ediciones 1999, pp. 59-66.

³⁶ Isabel Allende, in Hite 74-5

³⁷ Wright and Zúñiga, p. 46; Dorfman p. 197

Such vivid experiences meshed with the alienation felt on returning to the almost unrecognisable country: Roberto Matta told the film-maker Patricio Guzmán

Look where it led us, our dream. Like a jigsaw puzzle, a land transformed into small little islands, where each one inhabits with their own landscapes and memories, not an immense land, but very intimate. You can't recover what you left behind. I lived in the place I invented for myself. It's very hard not being anywhere; like a ship without a port, a tossing directionless ship.³⁸

An older man interviewed by Guzmán, asserted

Ideology doesn't serve us any more. All the models are broken. We must assume the task of becoming living images so that the young looking for something to grip on know that this is no shipwreck but an aftershock.³⁹

Most poignant was the resolve of many of the women imprisoned at the National Stadium or Villa Grimaldi. Such was the searing nature of their memories that their solidarity as women torture victims bound them in bonds stronger than exile or the politics of the left. The former MIRista Gladys Diaz told the film-maker Gloria Camiroaga:

They [the military] helped us to form a new family that is very important in our lives. Our project is to live together. We are going to buy some land and spend the rest of our lives together. ... I gained a profound admiration of the human being. I felt such a capacity of love so unconditionally that I had never felt that form of love. And that remains. ...

³⁸ Patricio Guzmán, dir., *La Memoria Obstinada, La Lucha de un Pueblo sin Armas, 1996*

³⁹ Patricio Guzmán, *La Memoria Obstinada, 1996*.

You return to a concept of humanism much deeper. Those painful experiences you can turn into personal development. ...I worked at continuing to develop myself and to find inside the feminine soul my own soul. I had always worked with men and then I wanted to recover the best of the feminine soul. I believe and still believe in humanity despite such inconceivable crimes.⁴⁰

For all the despair and alienation, the years of exile also returned to Chile the Socialist and Communist think tanks of Europe. Eighteen years of exposure to European alternatives re-awakened Adriana Muñoz's realization that Chile might never be prepared for any revolutionary model: Chileans preferred the sense of security of moderate governments. And this, indeed, was the message of the Concertación that began its long rule after Pinochet's defeat. So many of the individuals whose words we have briefly followed here found political or senior government office after 1998. Muñoz became the first Vice-President of the Chilean House of Deputies. Patricio Rivas worked for the cultural division of the Ministry for Education. Antonio Leal became a member of the Chilean House of Deputies. Miguel Insulza served as a highly successful Foreign Minister. President Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) himself attributed the program of the Renovación Socialista, influential even after a decade of Concertación government, to the 'influence of European socialism'.⁴¹

Much more maligned by the young Left than the old Right, the Concertación provided stable government for the following twenty years. It is not unreasonable to suppose that this period, probably the longest period of democratically and continuously elected conglomerate party of any Latin-American country, owed its stability to the moderation its members had learned in exile, especially to those who had spent a decade in Europe. It was there that they understood compromise, non-violence and discussion to be strength, not weakness; democracy did not any longer have to be but a way-station towards a people's republic but an end in itself. Perhaps most profoundly they had learned that the people's violence, even the people's chaos, was

⁴⁰ Gladys Díaz, in Gloria Camiroaga, *La Venda*, 1999

⁴¹ Biographical details drawn from Hite, and Wright and Zúñiga, p. 41

always liable to be answered by a military violence far worse than anything that, a week before Pinochet's coup, they could have imagined.

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