

## ABSTRACT

### The Catholic Church and the Nonviolent Resistance in Chile

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When can nonviolent action be effective? That is the question that originally initiated this research project. While studying the different factors scholars believe to be important to a successful nonviolent action, I discovered that hardly any study examined whether religion impacted the success of nonviolent movements. This paper examines the influence of religion on nonviolent resistance by examining the case of Chile under Pinochet. Indeed, the presence of the Catholic Church as an institution independent of Pinochet's military regime was so pervasive that if any example of a nonviolent action where religion played an important role could be found, it was Chile. The influence of religion is measured by examining the impact of the Chilean Catholic Church on twelve factors shown to greatly influence the outcome of nonviolent action.

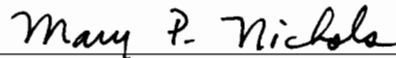
The Catholic Church and the Nonviolent Resistance in Chile

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of Political Science

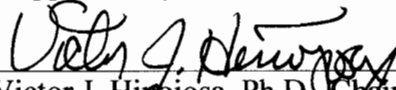


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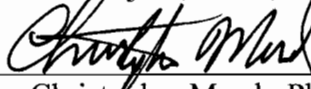
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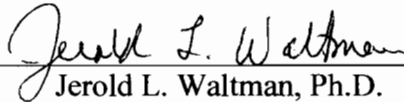
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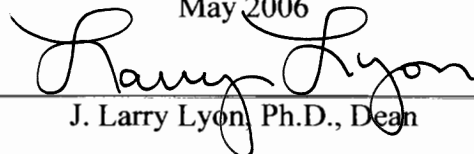


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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Alianza Democrática (Democratic Alliance)
CELAM	Conferencia Episcopal Latinoamericana (Latin American Episcopal Conference)
CNI	Centro Nacional de Información (National Information Center)
CONAR	Comité Nacional de Ayuda a Refugiados (National Committee for Aid to Refugees)
DINA	Dirrección de Inteligencia (Nacional Directorate of National Intelligence)
DL	Decreto Ley (Decree Law)
FRAP	Frente Acción Popular (Popular Action Front)
MAPU	Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria (Movement of Unitary Popular Action)
MDP	Movimiento Democrático Popular (Popular Democratic Movement)
PDC	Partido Democrato Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party)
UP	Unidad Popular (The Popular Unity)

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*For my parents, David and Katherine Edmonds,  
Who taught me to ask questions*

*For my teachers,  
Who gave me the tools to ask good questions*

*And for Zach,  
Who challenges me to question further and deeper than ever before*

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

India's non-violent revolution in the early part of the twentieth century stimulated a new interest over an area that was called 'satyagraha' by Gandhi and that has come to be defined in many terms, such as 'nonviolent resistance,' 'militant nonviolence,' or 'nonviolent direct action.' In the academic world debate over non-violence was initially largely over the moral foundations of non-violence and whether non-violence was morally preferable to war. This in turn led people to question the effectiveness of non-violent resistance. Over the last decade political science research has primarily analyzed when and why non-violent resistance is successful. Usually specific events are closely examined in case studies and many works try to identify the commonalities and trends in effective instances of nonviolent resistance. Unfortunately, among the many factors political scientists study in order to judge their influence on successful nonviolent movements, the impact of religion has been left virtually untouched. I will add to previous work on non-violence by examining the resistance to Pinochet in Chile between 1973 and 1988 and analyzing whether or not religion exerted an influence on that particular nonviolent movement. My hypothesis is that religion exerted a highly positive influence that directly affected the success of the non-violent action in Chile. After a thorough examination of the dominant political works on non-violence, I will lay out my research proposal.

We first turn to an early study on nonviolent action. Clarence Marsh Case was one of the very first writers to compile a comprehensive social analysis of nonviolent



action. His book, *Nonviolent Coercion: A study in Methods of Social Pressure*, which was published in 1923, examines the moral foundations as well as the methods of nonviolent action.<sup>1</sup> Case shows how the moral essence of nonviolence is the conviction that the use of violence, even when it is used in order to accomplish good ends, is essentially evil and therefore will contaminate the results.<sup>2</sup> In other words, there are always negative after-effects that occur when violence is used that undermine the original (sometimes good) reason people committed violence in the first place. Case also examines the Christian underpinnings of nonviolence, and gives several examples of Quakers and Anabaptists who practiced non-violence.

In this early work, there is the acknowledgement that nonviolence is both a moral theory as well as a pragmatic one. In the introduction it says that “more and more armed resistance to government is becoming an invitation to massacre. Naturally those who feel themselves wronged are casting about for some less suicidal means of vindicating their supposed rights.”<sup>3</sup> Non-violence, then, can sometimes offer a form of protection against the threat of government sanctioned violent reprisal. Even if the action does not incite compassion by the power-holder and the regime continues to respond to peaceful protests with violence, it is very likely to stimulate international sympathy. Through non-violence, then, the power-holders are deprived of a reason to respond with violence and if they continue to do so, they can be compelled by world opinion to answer for or to justify their abuse of power.

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<sup>1</sup>Clarence M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion: A study in Methods of Social Pressure*, (New York: The Century Co., 1923).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 404.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 1.

Case lays out two basic methods of nonviolent resistance: persuasion and coercion. He defines persuasion as “that form of social action which proceeds by means of convincing others of the rightness of expediency of a given course of conduct.”<sup>4</sup> It can convince through either arguing or through suffering. The most prominent practices of non-violent coercion, he says, are the strike, the boycott and non-cooperation. In all the instances of non-violent coercion, “the procedure consists in the concerted withholding of social contacts or relations residing within the control of the agents.”<sup>5</sup> Cases’ work is significant because he was one of the first to categorize techniques of nonviolent action.

Case’s work is also important because of his observation of the natural relationship between non-violent resistance and democracy. Democratic practices, he notes, gives the people a chance to be heard through persuasion, protest, and voting and to make an impact on law and procedure.<sup>6</sup> It is the democratic government that gives the people a chance to express themselves non-violently. Non-violent protest in authoritarian regimes, then, often emerges out of the desire for more democratic political processes and is a practice that often contributes to a functioning and just democracy.

The modern father of nonviolence is Mahatma Gandhi. Joan Bondurant, a political scientist, wrote one of the most influential analyses of the ideological premises Gandhi built his political actions around. Her book, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* is the outcome of her years exploring Gandhi’s ideas and their

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 397.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 401.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 408.

influence in politics while living in India in the 1940s.<sup>7</sup> After an examination of five of Gandhi's satyagraha campaigns, Bondurant concludes that what non-violence meant to Gandhi was "the technique of conducting social relations characterized by constructive, peaceful attitudes, and infused with the determination to enlarge areas of agreement and to achieve resolution of conflict by persuasion."<sup>8</sup> Resolution through persuasion, however, did not exempt forms of economic or other types of coercion from being used. Bondurant elaborates on Gandhi's definition of non-violence, or "ahimsa," as meaning "action based on the refusal to do harm."<sup>9</sup> More precisely, she says, ahimsa requires one to resist the wrong-doer or oppressor by dissociating one's self from him even though it may offend the antagonist or injure him physically.<sup>10</sup> The nonviolent protestor, then, should value the life of his opponent out of love, but be courageous enough to refuse to aid him in his corruption or oppression even if this results in harming the oppressor.

Bondurant's analysis of Gandhi's nonviolent technique is clear and insightful. It is interesting, however, that Bondurant is careful to point out that Gandhi stated in 1925 that religious faith was not necessary for satyagraha.<sup>11</sup> However, in *Non-violent Resistance*, Gandhi relates a speech he gave in 1939 where he pointed out that although he used to not enunciate this principle, he now realizes that only those people who

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<sup>7</sup>Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence. The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965).

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 193.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 128.

believe in a higher power will be strong enough to resist oppression non-violently.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, he says that “to bear all kinds of tortures without a murmur of resentment is impossible for a human being without the strength that comes from God.”<sup>13</sup> Although Gandhi defined God broadly, he admits in this same speech that Buddhists and Jains would probably be omitted from practicing Satyagraha. Despite this fact that Gandhi eventually deemed belief in God as a crucial part of nonviolence, Bondurant only included Gandhi’s earlier statements where he dismissed religion in her analysis on Gandhi’s nonviolent action. Thus began the process of separating the political technique of nonviolence from its religious aspect.

Richard B. Gregg is another early writer who analyzed nonviolence largely in view of Gandhi. His book, *The Power of Nonviolence*, published first in 1935, takes a largely psychological approach in examining the Gandhian campaigns.<sup>14</sup> His main contribution to a political understanding of nonviolence is his examination on how nonviolence is effective and pragmatic and why it is a fitting substitute for war. One of the key ideas in his book is his explanation of nonviolent action as ‘moral jiu-jitsu.’ This is the psychological observation that when one returns violence with non-violence, he shows courage and resists submitting to the oppressor. This action, in turn, takes away the legitimacy of the oppressor to respond with force as well as shaming him by the resistor’s commitment to suffer. As Gregg phrases it, non-violence takes away the

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<sup>12</sup>Mahatma Gandhi, *Nonviolent Resistance (Satyagraha)*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 364.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 364.

<sup>14</sup>Richard B. Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, (New York: Fellowship Publications, 1935).

aggressor's 'moral balance.'<sup>15</sup> Gregg emphasizes the importance of the third party, or impartial observer, as being essential to this process.

Gregg also makes a significant contribution to the study of non-violence by constructing a detailed pragmatic argument as to why non-violence is better than war and should be substituted for violence. First, he notes that nonviolent action greatly reduces the number of casualties and deaths, and that it is far less economically costly because it rarely completely destroys agricultural or industrial work. Secondly, he argues that non-violent resistance is better suited to yield the results that the technique of war is supposed to produce. He asserts that since the object of war is justice and peace, nonviolent means can better create a foundation for these things rather than violence, which usually breeds hatred, bitterness, and the desire for revenge.<sup>16</sup> He also shows that nonviolent action can settle many of the same disputes previously decided by war. He maintains that non-violence should be waged in many ways similar to war, and therefore, would not be hard to learn by those previously trained for battle. For example, non-violence must be strategically organized, and the virtues of an effective violent fighter, enterprise, courage, endurance, devotion, order and discipline, are the same virtues necessary for a non-violent resistor as well.<sup>17</sup> By showing that the method of nonviolence is in many ways similar to war, Gregg is arguing for an expanded notion of non-violence, one that realizes that nonviolent action can be just as effective as violence and that nonviolent action is not constrained to a specific set of moral values.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 43.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 117.

Another distinguished practitioner and philosopher of nonviolence was Martin Luther King Jr. Like Gandhi, King thought that nonviolent action was closely related to religion. In the sixth chapter of his writing *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, King relates his personal “intellectual pilgrimage to nonviolence.”<sup>18</sup> He notes that it was when he first read Gandhi that he realized that the love ethic of Jesus could be lifted “above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force on a large scale.”<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, when describing the basic aspects of nonviolent action, King emphasized that the root motivation of nonviolent action was not the efficacy of physical nonviolence, but rather the principle of love. King clarified that by love he meant the “understanding, redeeming good will for all men,”<sup>20</sup> that comes from God, and he claimed that it was this love that stood “at the center of nonviolence.”<sup>21</sup> For King the concept of God was inclusive; he recognized the validity of people who believe in “some creative force that works for universal wholeness” as belief in God. This faith, he said, is what makes the nonviolent resistor able to accept suffering without retaliation.<sup>22</sup> Thus, King makes it very clear that systems of belief not only influenced his initial practice of nonviolence, but it also affected his ability to practice nonviolence consistently and courageously.

Due in part to Martin Luther King Jr., in the 1960s non-violent resistance was increasingly analyzed by those in the psychological, sociological and political fields of

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<sup>18</sup>Martin Luther King Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1958), 90.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 103-104.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 106.

academia, and thus, was progressively accepted as a political tool as well as a moral principle.<sup>23</sup> Two key authors are representative of the general increased interest and changing perception of non-violence among the social sciences. In 1963 George Lakey expanded on the definition of nonviolence to include three techniques of nonviolent action.<sup>24</sup> These methods were distinguished as coercion, conversion, and persuasion. To portray the distinction between conversion and persuasion, Lakey used the examples of the British in India. Although the British were not forced to comply, neither were they convinced that the Indians' demands were just; instead they gave in because doing so was reasonable considering the less appealing alternatives. This was one of the first times nonviolence was defined solely by its visible action rather than its moral foundation.

Johan Galtung's article in the *Journal of Peace Research* "On the Meaning of Nonviolence," helped to set the stage for further investigation into nonviolence by exposing the complexities of defining the concept in such a way that nonviolence can be empirically analyzed.<sup>25</sup> He pointed out the dilemma in considering coercive methods such as sanctions or psychological warfare to be nonviolent, since these actions often have harmful consequences. Bondurant would later respond in a revised edition of her book that "The difference between violent coercion in which deliberate injury is inflicted upon the opponent and non-violent coercion in which injury indirectly results is a

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<sup>23</sup>See A. Paul Hare and Herbert H. Blumberg, eds., *Nonviolent Direct Action; American Cases: Social and Political Analyses*, (Washington, DC: Corpus Books, 1968); William Miller, *Nonviolence: A Christian Interpretation*, (New York: Schocken, 1964); and James Finn, *Protest: Pacifism and Politics*, (New York: Random House, 1968).

<sup>24</sup>George Lakey, *Nonviolent Action: How it Works*, (Pendle Hill, PA: Pendle Hill Pamphlet, 1963), 129.

<sup>25</sup>Johan Galtung, "On the Meaning of Nonviolence," *Journal of Peace Research* 2, no. 3 (1965): 228-257.

difference of such great degree that it is almost a difference of kind.”<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, in the face of this ambiguity of motivation Galtung recommends beginning an analysis of non-violence by examining the values underlying its practice and then moving to a definition of non-violence based on observable patterns of action. The primary definition of nonviolent action, then, should come from practices of nonviolence rather than a moral ideal. Although the definition must in some degree be constrained by the moral imperative, the social scientist should primarily examine the observable actions so as not to become bogged down by the process of making value judgments over what can and cannot be considered nonviolence.

The study of nonviolence as a political technique was highly enhanced by Gene Sharp’s publication of *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* in 1973, which is the most comprehensive political analyses of non-violence to date.<sup>27</sup> *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* is divided into three volumes. The first volume examines the nature of power, and the second looks at 198 specific forms of nonviolent action, which Sharp breaks down into 3 basic categories: protest and persuasion, social, economic and political non-cooperation, and nonviolent intervention. In the third volume Sharp analyzes the dynamics and strategy of nonviolent action. In this review, we will mainly look at Sharp’s theory of power and how he sees the strategy of nonviolence as conducive to success.

In Sharp’s first volume he shows that the political theoretical foundation of nonviolent action is the idea that subjective beliefs influence the way people conceive of

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<sup>26</sup>James F. Childress, “Nonviolent Resistance and Direct Action: A Bibliographical Essay,” *The Journal of Religion* 52, no. 4 (October 1972): 379.

<sup>27</sup>Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1973).



themselves and their relationship with the power-holders in their society. According to Sharp, there are six primary sources of power: authority, human resources, skills and knowledge, intangible factors, material resources, and sanctions. All of these sources, however, depend upon obedience. He proposes seven reasons why people may choose to comply: habit, fear of sanctions, moral obligations, self-interest, psychological identification with the ruler, apathy, and absence of self-confidence.<sup>28</sup> He says that obedience, however, is not inevitable. Whether people continue to obey a government in the face of various types of oppression and how they choose to protest depends largely on their perspective of power.

Sharp maintains that there are two basic views of power; the first is that it is fixed and controlled by the people at the top of the government hierarchy, and therefore, that the people's support or withdrawal of it makes no difference. If the government is seen as a self-reinforcing and an independent structure, people are likely to conclude that only overwhelming and violent force can weaken the power structure. Hence, people use violence because they believe that the only choice they have in a conflict is between surrender and violence. Since people think that victory requires violence, they obviously will turn to the threat and use of violence.<sup>29</sup> This theory of the necessity of violence, however, is only true when the people believe it to be so.

The second view of power is that all forms of government depend upon the obedience and compliance of those under the authoritative institution. In other words, power in all governments stems from the people's good will, decisions and support of the

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 3.

structure.<sup>30</sup> Sharp states that in contrast to the first view, nonviolent action is based on the idea that power is “fragile, always dependent for its strength and existence upon a replenishment of its sources by the cooperation of a multitude of institutions and people.”<sup>31</sup> The assumption that a government ultimately gains or loses its legitimacy according to the people is a notion most people are familiar with, for indeed, it is a concept at the very root of democratic thought. If a ruler’s power is dependent upon the general population as well as institutions, it follows that the people and institutions may withdraw their support and in effect remove power from the government. If the people try to use violence in an attempt to weaken the oppressor, however, it is unlikely to succeed, since the regime usually has the superior capacity to wage violent conflict. The resisters are more likely to succeed if they mobilize “their power capacity by working and acting together using psychological, social, political, and economic weapons – weapons that enable them to become stronger.”<sup>32</sup> The people, then, can temper the power of the government by refusing to obey or cooperate with the supposed power-holder. The political theory of nonviolent action is based on the notion that if people can understand that the legitimacy of a government depends upon their own actions, they can become empowered to change their political situation.

Besides defining a political theory for nonviolent resistance, Sharp made several other contributions to this field. First of all, the myriad of nonviolent techniques he describes in volume two is a valuable resource for those who study and/or practice

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Gene Sharp and Afif Safieh, “Interview: Gene Sharp: Nonviolent Struggle,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17, no. 1 (Autumn 1987): 40.

nonviolence. In this section, he does note that the Church as an institution is able to support nonviolence by taking measures of social non-cooperation, such as excommunication. Sharp comments that this form of pressure is especially potent when the Pope (or institutional Church in general) is highly respected in a given society.<sup>33</sup> During the mid-nineteenth century in the United States, for example, excommunication was often used as a weapon of anti-slavery forces against slaveholders who were either excommunicated or prevented from joining churches due to their practice.

Sharp also takes Gregg's concept of moral jiu-jitsu and transforms it into political jiu-jitsu. He describes it as follows: "By combining nonviolent discipline with solidarity and persistence in struggle, the nonviolent actionists cause the violence of the opponent's repression to be exposed in the worst possible light. This, in turn, may lead to shifts in power relationships favorable to the nonviolent group."<sup>34</sup> Political jiu-jitsu can win over uncommitted third parties, whether that is individuals or other nations, it can arouse dissent and frustration within the opponents support group, and lastly, it can increase cooperation and participation from within the oppressed group. It is worth noting that successful political jiu-jitsu to some degree assumes a common political culture, because if third parties have extremely different interpretations over what political justice consists of, they are unlikely to be 'won over' to the resisters point of view.

Lastly, Sharp contributes to our knowledge of how nonviolence can be effective by defining three basic ways the technique of nonviolent action functions in a fashion very similar to Lakey. Indeed, Sharp defines the techniques of coercion and conversion nearly identically to Lakey. What Lakey called persuasion, however, Sharp redefines as

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<sup>33</sup>Sharp, *Politics of Nonviolent Action*, 192.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 657.

accommodation, which is when “the opponent resolves to grant the demands of the nonviolent actionists without having changed his mind fundamentally about the issues involved.”<sup>35</sup> Sharp concludes his book by noting that the subject of nonviolent resistance has been largely neglected within governments, institutions, and academia. Part of the reason for this, he claims, is that historical examples of nonviolence are often studied as isolated case studies, instead of being analyzed as parts of a comprehensive and coherent field.

Douglas Bond’s study in “The Nature and Meanings of Nonviolent Direct Action: An Exploratory Study” in 1988 attempted to remedy Sharp’s criticism of fragmentation in the field of nonviolent studies by analyzing the 72 cases of nonviolent direct action presented by Sharp.<sup>36</sup> Bond uses a minimal definition of nonviolence as “action with no expectation of physical injury or bodily harm.”<sup>37</sup> Despite his use of a definition that could undergo scientific analysis, he recognized that the essence of nonviolence is comprised of both an ideological premise of the value of life and a sense of community. The most important contribution of Bond’s research however, is in his conclusion when he analyzed what type of research can further the practice of nonviolence. He concludes that “If one had a better idea of its efficacy under different conditions, one could make judgments grounded in testable, empirical results.”<sup>38</sup> In other words, the success and promotion of nonviolent action depends in part upon reducing the unknown so scholars and practitioners may understand why and when it best works.

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 733.

<sup>36</sup>Douglas G. Bond, “The nature and meanings of nonviolent direct action: an exploratory study,” *Journal of Peace Research* 25, no. 1 (March 1988): 81-89.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 82.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 87.

Since Gene Sharp's seminal work many compilations of case studies have been written. A few of the prominent compilations are, *Relentless Persistence: Nonviolent Action in Latin America*, by Philip McManus and Gerald Schlabach, and more recently Kurt Schock's *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies*.<sup>39</sup> Notable individual case studies on nonviolent action are *Unarmed Against Hitler: Civilian Resistance in Europe, 1939-1943*, by Jacques Semelin, and "The Role of Non-Violent Action in the Downfall of Apartheid" in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* by Stephen Zunes.<sup>40</sup> These books and case studies usually shared a common goal: to provide evidence of the effectiveness of non-violent action.

One especially notable case study is "Radical Islam and Nonviolence: A Case Study of Religious Empowerment and Constraint among Pashtuns" in the *Journal of Peace Research* by Robert C. Johansen. Using the experiences of the Islamic Pashtuns living in colonial India in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, Johansen shows that "religion may motivate people for bold action against political repression while confining them to nonviolent means in pursuit of humanitarian ends."<sup>41</sup> Johansen notes that his study is especially significant because the negative influence of religion has been highly advertised, while the positive influence religion can have is often overlooked. Johansen notes that since religion definitely helps to create the identities of and mobilize more

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<sup>39</sup>See Philip McManus and Gerald Schlabach, eds., *Relentless Persistence: Nonviolent Action in Latin America*, (Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 1991); Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

<sup>40</sup>See Jacques Semelin, *Unarmed Against Hitler: Civilian Resistance in Europe, 1939-1943*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993); Stephen Zunes "The Role of Non-Violent Action in the Downfall of Apartheid" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 1 (1999): 137-169.

<sup>41</sup>Johansen, Robert C. "Radical Islam and Nonviolence: A Case Study of Religious Empowerment and Constraint among Pashtuns," *Journal of Peace Research* 34, no. 1 (February 1997): 53.

people “than any other contemporary force,” it is important to study how religion can lead to peace.<sup>42</sup> Johansen’s work is important because he provides one of the very few case studies that analyzes how belief systems helped lead to successful nonviolent action.

In a few key works, editors or authors have made a cohesive effort to find patterns and commonalities in the various cases of nonviolent resistance in order to create a basic framework for understanding when and why nonviolence is effective. Unfortunately, belief systems or religion is commonly under-examined in these analyses. We will now examine two such prominent works. *Justice Without Violence* was published in 1994 and edited by Guy Burgess, Paul Wehr, and Heidi Burgess.<sup>43</sup> The stated goal of their book is to further improve the quality of research on nonviolent actions for justice through a systematic analysis of recent conflicts. Their work includes analyses on the theoretical foundations of nonviolence, research questions regarding nonviolence that have yet to be answered, and eight case studies. They build their conceptual basis on Sharp’s consent theory of power and suggest that a by-product of nonviolent action will often be a democratic, decentralized political structure. The case studies cover a broad range of nonviolent conflicts, including the pro-democracy movement in China, ethnic conflict in Africa, revolutions of Eastern Europe, as well as conflict in Nicaragua, the Middle East, and South Africa. Their primary contribution to the study of nonviolence, however, is their synthesis at the conclusion of the work that provides a thorough analysis of the influential structural factors present in the case studies.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 54.

<sup>43</sup>Guy Burgess et. al., eds., *Justice Without Violence*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994).

The editors find that a number of variables can influence the success of nonviolent action. For instance, if the injustice is perceived to be legitimate by many of those under the regime, it is unlikely to succeed. In India, for example, where many of the people who are most oppressed believe that it is the natural order of life; any effort to resist must first begin with creating awareness of the injustice. In other words, if the regime in power is perceived as illegitimate by the majority of people within a country, nonviolent resistance has a great chance of success. In turn, a regime is more likely to be considered legitimate if there is majority domination. In cases of minority domination, such as in Soviet control over Eastern Europe, it was easier to mobilize people against the regime. Consequently, nonviolent resistance was also more likely to succeed if domination came from outside the state rather than inside.

Apart from broad structural factors, they also analyzed how the characteristics of the dominant and oppressed groups influenced the outcomes. They observed that contrary to expectations, democratic regimes did not facilitate nonviolence more effectively than authoritarian regimes but that they did have more tolerance for dissent. Notably, nonviolent resistance in authoritarian regimes did increase the demand for democratization. They also found that whenever the government was deprived of one of Sharp's six sources of power, the dominant group was obviously weakened. A lack of power, then, was usually perceived as a lack of legitimacy. Among the subordinate groups, they found that the size and level of organization was a key factor. Small groups of resisters were more likely to be ignored and perceived as illegitimate. Furthermore, if a resistance was well-organized, stated goals, and planned clear strategies and tactics, they were more likely to be successful. Interestingly enough, they found that a past

history of violence did not prevent the use or success of a nonviolent strategy. Finally, the higher the racial and cultural similarities were between the dominant and oppressed group, the more nonviolent resistance was likely to be successful.

The Burgesses do note, briefly, that belief systems seemed to play an important role in some nonviolent movements. In the case study on Nicaragua they discuss the direct influence the Base Christian Communities exerted on reducing violence as well as the peace-keeping efforts of the Moravians and the Mennonites.<sup>44</sup> In their concluding chapter Heidi and Guy Burgess state that historically, belief systems “did seem to play an important role” by helping to determine whether or not a regime was considered unjust or illegitimate and by influencing whether a resistance would be violent or not.<sup>45</sup>

Unfortunately, they were not able to support these assertions with details, as the case studies they used never, or only briefly mentioned the role of beliefs. Nevertheless, the Burgesses conclude that belief systems, combined with the social, legal, and political structures of society, play a major role in determining a society’s tolerance of violence.<sup>46</sup>

Another important study of factors that influence the success of nonviolent resistance is Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler’s *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*.<sup>47</sup> They maintain that there are two main and related goals of nonviolent strategy: to empower people who are oppressed and subordinate, and to weaken or remove power from the oppressors. Their goal is not just to show that nonviolence can be a potent and oftentimes successful strategy, but to identify the proper strategy for nonviolent struggle

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 90.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 266.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 268.

<sup>47</sup>Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century*, (Westport, CN: Praeger, 1994).



in order to help resisters operate proactively instead of reactively. Their thesis is that the “comprehensive adherence to a set of strategic principles enhances performance, which bears importantly on the outcome.”<sup>48</sup> In order to determine critical factors that influence success, they analyze six case studies.

Ackerman and Kruegler point out that they will primarily examine the internal character of resistances rather than structural constraints, since it is the internal characteristics that in many cases alter the external constraints. They describe 12 principles of strategic nonviolent conflict that are divided into three main categories: development, engagement and conception principles. After examining the interface between the principles and individual case studies, they arrive at the following results. Civic organizations, continuity, and a wide variety of sanctions imposed by the nonviolent resisters all helped to generate a successful outcome, while ambivalence about the use of violence, inability to move to a less offensive mode, imposition of martial law by the governing authority, or failure to specify the goals of the resistance was very hurtful to nonviolent campaigns. They also found that there was never an obvious progression from resistance to victory or defeat in any of the campaigns. The influence of religious beliefs or institutions was barely mentioned in this book. They did note that religious leaders’ appeals to avoid violence helped to keep opposition movements nonviolent,<sup>49</sup> and that “the opportunistic use of religious places (especially Catholic

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 318.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 300.

Churches) and symbols were important,” though they do not discuss how or why they were important.<sup>50</sup>

Although their primary focus was to examine how the characteristics of the resistance movements influenced the outcome of the conflict, Ackerman and Kruegler also made two observations concerning the influence of the oppressor on nonviolent conflict. Regarding the behavior of the opponent’s response to the resistance, the analysis of the case studies found that the strength of the regime was not a corollary factor. However, if a regime pursued a moderate course of sustaining steady pressure on the nonviolent protagonists rather than choosing strong repression or acquiescence, they had a better chance of defeating the resisters. Ackerman and Kruegler’s main contribution, however, to the study of nonviolent action is their systematic analysis of case studies in order to find out what strategic characteristics of nonviolent resistance lead to a better chance of success.

Finally, we will examine a prominent case study of Chile found in Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall’s popular *A Force More Powerful*. Like many compilations of case studies, this book’s goal is primarily to relate the many examples of nonviolent action that have occurred in the twentieth century. The authors also hope to expose people to the ideas lying at the root of nonviolent action as well as to communicate how these nonviolent revolutions happened.<sup>51</sup> In order to do this, they introduce 12 case studies of nonviolent action from around the world. In the following paragraph I will

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 311.

<sup>51</sup>Jack Duvall and Peter Ackerman, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 2.

examine how Ackerman and Duvall explain the success of the nonviolent action in Chile, and whether or not they look at religion as an influential factor.

Generally, Ackerman and Duvall seem to point towards an opposition that was able to unify itself despite political differences as the key that eventually brought Pinochet down. They spend most of the section on Chile analyzing the events that occurred from 1983 (ten years after Pinochet took over) to 1988. One of the things their analysis does well is to emphasize that the few outbursts of violence that occurred from the far left during Pinochet's reign did little except to reinforce people's belief that the authoritarian government was necessary and thus to give legitimacy to Pinochet's abuse of human rights and civil liberties. For example, on September 4, 1986 the MDP led a small attack as Pinochet caravanned from his house in El Melocotón to Santiago. Pinochet survived the missiles and bullets, and then used the attack as a reason to again impose a state of siege and a strict curfew on the country. In the month following the attacks, four men were brutally killed, eight opposition leaders were detained, several priests were expelled from Chile, and dissident periodicals were shut down.<sup>52</sup>

Ackerman and Duvall mention the role the Vicariate of Solidarity, a Catholic institution, played in recording disappearances and providing legal aid and shelter to government victims in a scant two paragraphs. They also occasionally mention the important position persons associated with the Catholic Church had within the opposition. Mónica Jiménez, for instance, had been with the Peace Commission of the Catholic Church for ten years when she was asked to lead the Campaign for Free and Fair Elections. This Campaign eventually came to be known as simply Participa, and was

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 295.

responsible for adding four million Chileans to the voting rolls in the years leading up to the plebiscite.<sup>53</sup> Mostly, however, the analysis on Chile emphasizes the tumultuous efforts of the opposition to unite and then to ensure a fair and honest election. The section, however, fails to examine how the opposition was able to initially come together and mobilize in a climate of harsh repression. Indeed, the authors assert that it was only when the opposition, made up of sixteen distinct parties, launched their campaign that political activists were able to revive “dormant networks.”<sup>54</sup> They don’t explain, however, how sixteen political parties were able to lay aside differences and work together for the removal of Pinochet without the normal political networks. Ackerman and Duvall end with the rather vague conclusion that it was the “broad center of Chilean political life” that was willing to give up fear and fight for democracy that led to the success of the nonviolent opposition.

This review of the literature helps us to understand how political science has commonly perceived and studied the phenomenon of nonviolent resistance. Through case studies and more recently through analysis, there has been an effort to identify factors that contribute to the success of nonviolent action. However, the political literature that seeks to understand nonviolent action as a tactic has almost completely side-stepped any consideration of religion as an influential variable in this process. This is surprising when one realizes that two of the most admired practitioners of nonviolence, Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., frequently emphasized the importance of religion when practicing nonviolence. This lack of consideration for the influence of religion may be due in part to the secularization theory that held sway over the social sciences for

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 297.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

much of the twentieth century. Many philosophers of politics believed that religion would decrease in influence as states modernized. In the last decade of the twentieth century, however, this theory has been increasingly questioned and the effects of religion have come to be seen as substantial. In Samuel Huntington's groundbreaking article, "If Not Civilizations, What?" he states that "In the modern world, religion is a central, perhaps *the* central force that motivates and mobilizes people."<sup>55</sup> While Huntington was asserting that religion was a primary way that people identify within cultures, and thus that religion could be a major source of conflict, his article served to remind scholars of international relations that cultural factors such as religion were important agents in global politics. This article was followed by the first in-depth political analysis of the way that religion can serve as an agent for peace in Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson's *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*.<sup>56</sup> Since that time religion has been increasingly studied as an agent that can both inspire conflict or contribute to peace and justice. With this recognition has come the effort from many scholars to determine why it is that sometimes religion can lead to peace and sometimes to conflict and war. In *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* Scott Appleby makes the case for using religion to alleviate conflict and injustice; he convincingly shows that "The unique social location, institutional configuration, cultural power, and remarkable persistence of religions commend the cultivation of elements within them that foster harmonious and just

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<sup>55</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, "If not Civilizations, What?" *Foreign Affairs* 27, no. 5, (November/December 1993): 186-195.

<sup>56</sup>Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

relations among people and nurture the seeds of reconciliation when conflict threatens or after it occurs.”<sup>57</sup>

If “religious beliefs and values are usually among those most deeply held, and most formative, in the actions of individuals,”<sup>58</sup> one can assume that religious beliefs may have some influential role to play in nonviolent actions. The study of religion in international relations, however, has not seemed to spread to the research done on nonviolent resistance. As we have seen in our review of the political literature on nonviolence, studies may mention a religious actor or the role of belief systems occasionally, but there has been very few studies that systematically examine the influence religion might have on the success or the failure of nonviolent action.

Another possible explanation for the lack of research done on religion in nonviolent action is the desire to clearly separate political nonviolent action from the moral and philosophical debates on nonviolence. By doing this, proponents of nonviolence can assure people that nonviolent action is not an option exclusively for religious pacifists. Indeed, in Gene Sharp’s new compilation of case studies, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, practically the only time religion is mentioned is when Sharp argues that one does not have to be a moral pacifist in order to engage in nonviolent action. He points out that “all of these struggles were conducted largely by people who had no moral or religious prohibitions against the use of violence, although believers in ethical or religious nonviolence occasionally were active in the conflicts.”<sup>59</sup> As an example, he

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<sup>57</sup>Scott R. Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 8.

<sup>58</sup>K. R. Dark, *Religion and International Relations*, (New York: Palgrave, 2000), vii.

<sup>59</sup>Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Practice and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Potential*, (Manchester, NH: Extending Horizon Books, Porter Sargent Publishers Inc., 2005), 344.

states that in a few cases like the United States Civil Rights movement “appeals to nonviolent discipline on religious grounds were supported by people who would never have called themselves ‘pacifists.’”<sup>60</sup> Sharp seems to be worried that if religion is acknowledged as a factor that influences the political outcome of nonviolent action, then people will be less likely to use it because it won’t be as universally applicable. Similarly, Ackerman and Duvall note that when people consider nonviolent action as a moral preference rather than a pragmatic option, its strategic value in conflict is obscured.<sup>61</sup> Hence, scholars of nonviolence seem to be concerned that if religious influence is emphasized in a positive light when analyzing nonviolence, then people who are not particularly religious will discount nonviolent action as method only used by religious zealots and will not see it as a strategic and effective way to end conflict.

I do not intend to argue that one must have certain beliefs in order to succeed in nonviolence. I do, however, maintain that the political scientists’ attempts to separate moral nonviolence and strategic nonviolence have led examiners of nonviolent action to ignore the extent to which religious institutions, beliefs, and actors have influenced nonviolent action. Many questions remain, such as ‘can beliefs influence the success or failure of nonviolent movements?’ and ‘if religion does have some effect, is it positive or negative?’ and ‘if religion can have a positive influence, how can those involved in nonviolent action utilize belief systems to their advantage?’ The goal of this project then, is to help fill this gap in political studies of nonviolence by examining the influential role religion played in the nonviolent resistance that occurred in Chile from 1973 to 1988. I also hope to contribute to the growing amount of research analyzing the potent influence

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 345.

<sup>61</sup>Ackerman and Duvall, 7.

of belief systems by demonstrating the power of religion in bringing about justice and democracy through nonviolent means in Chile.

My hypothesis is that religious organizations and individuals working on behalf of a religious institution can sometimes play a vital role in the success of nonviolent movements, and thus deserve more attention in scholarship on nonviolent action. I have chosen Chile as my case study because, in many ways, the resistance to Pinochet that occurred in Chile is a classic example of the sort of nonviolent action that occurred many times in the 1970s and 1980s in places like Poland, South Africa, and the Philippines. They are all cases where nonviolent action was used to overthrow a repressive authoritarian style of government and where democratic governments were successfully established. It is also a case where a religious institution, the Vicariate of Solidarity, was obviously involved to a great degree. The nonviolent struggle in Chile was a long and intense conflict in which the ruling group was able and willing to use violence and repression to keep a hold on power, and in which the opposition group was equally committed to nonviolent action. Additionally, both sides of the conflict were supported by a large segment of society. These details tell us that the Pinochet regime was not easy to dislodge, and that the conflict was deep and long and required a strong force to resolve it. Finally, this resistance is particularly striking because the initial goal of the Church was simply to stop the violations of human rights that were being committed by the government, but the goal eventually became to dislodge the military regime and return Chile to democracy. Thus, we will be able to observe how the opposition adapted their goals according to the political situation. Finally, I specifically chose a case that occurred between 15-20 years ago because the success of the movement is established whereas in



more recent examples, such as Ukraine, it remains to be seen whether a strong and stable democracy will remain.

For a definition of religion I refer to Appleby's explanation of religion as a system of beliefs that:

“Embraces a creed, a cult, a code of conduct, and a confessional community... A creed defines the standards of beliefs and values concerning the ultimate origin, meaning and purpose of life... Cult encompasses the prayers, devotions, spiritual disciplines, and patterns of communal worship that give richly suggestive ritual and expression to the creed. A code of conduct defines the explicit moral norms governing the behavior of those who belong to the confessional community.”<sup>62</sup>

I will use the terms religion and belief systems interchangeably. Religion will be operationalized by examining the positions taken by particular religious institutions, such as the Catholic Church, and religious individuals, primarily the clergy, acting on behalf of those institutions. I will determine the position of the religious institutions by looking at official proclamations or documents it puts forth. I will also, however proffer statements made by Church clergy given the authority to speak for the church, such as Cardinal Silva of Chile. Regarding the influence of individuals on the nonviolent resistance, I will primarily examine the statements and actions of clergy, or those people working directly on behalf or through the Church. Lastly, I additionally will examine the influence of institutions begun and sustained by the Catholic Church.

I should also note that in this paper I plan to primarily examine the role of the Catholic Church in Chile. One should realize, however, that Protestant churches were also active in opposing the Pinochet regime, but that their efforts had a smaller range of influence because of the relatively small number of Protestants in Chile. Despite

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<sup>62</sup>Appleby, 8-9.

Protestants' admirable achievements, it was the Catholic Church that was the main agent that formally mobilized the resistance, and thus, the analysis will focus on it.

The following chapter will examine the political events that led to the Chilean coup of 1973 as well as the political aftermath that followed Pinochet's takeover. This chapter will attempt to briefly summarize how Chile, one of the Latin American countries with the longest history of democracy, could fall prey to a brutal dictatorship that lasted for nearly two decades. We will examine why the coup was tolerated as well as the actions Pinochet took to consolidate power into his hands and to suppress nearly any possible opposition.

In the subsequent chapter, I will provide a summary of the background of the Chilean Catholic Church. Specifically, there will be an analysis of how the ideology and the political position of the Church had changed in the previous decades in a manner that helped to pave the way for the Church's opposition. In other words, we will look at what made the Church able to meet the challenge that Pinochet's government presented. This section will be particularly important because if we find that my fundamental hypotheses is true, (that religion can play an influential part in the success of nonviolent movements), then we will want to know how and when practitioners of nonviolence may be able to enlist the aid of religious organizations and individuals.

The third section will provide a narrative of the events that eventually enabled the Chilean people to overcome the Pinochet regime. In this section we will specifically look at the Catholic Church's initial response to the coup and to the repression, and then look at the subsequent actions the Church took that mobilized Chileans to resist repression and

eventually to oppose and overcome the Pinochet regime. This section will also examine the influence the Church had on the larger resistance effort.

The fourth and final chapter will evaluate the degree of influence the Chilean Church had on the nonviolent resistance. In order to do this I will use the twelve principles of strategic nonviolent conflict put forth by Ackerman and Kruegler to examine whether religious institutions and actors influenced these factors that in large part determine the success or the failure of nonviolent action.<sup>63</sup> Instead of choosing success as my dependent variable then, I will use the factors that are deduced by Ackerman and Kruegler to largely contribute to the success of nonviolent resistance as my dependent variables. Ackerman and Kruegler note that these principles are exploratory, not definitive, and thus these concepts are open to refinement and further study. Nevertheless, these principles are based on the history of nonviolent case studies as well as basic strategic concepts such as the ability to formulate objectives and resources available for defensive and offensive measures; hence these principles highlight the salient features of successful nonviolent conflict.<sup>64</sup> Thus, I will examine whether religion, (the intervening variable) influenced the 12 variables that Ackerman and Kruegler determined contribute to the success of nonviolent action.

The variables are divided into three categories: principles of development, principles of engagement, and principles of conception. The principles of development are formulating functional objectives, developing organizational strength, securing access to critical material resources, cultivating external assistance, and expanding the repertoire

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<sup>63</sup>Ackerman and Kruegler, 21-53.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 22.

of sanctions. Principles of engagement are attacking the opponents' strategy for consolidating control, muting the impact of the opponents' violent weapons, alienating opponents from expected bases of support, and maintaining nonviolent discipline. Lastly, the principles of conception are assessing events and options in light of levels of strategic decision making, adjusting offensive and defensive operations according to the relative vulnerabilities of the protagonists, and sustaining continuity between sanctions, mechanism and objectives.

While some of these principles may seem obvious, many require further clarification. Within principles of development, goals should be concrete, be achievable within a reasonable time frame, be focused on the vital interests of the protagonists and ideally, should appeal to the widest amount of people within the society affected by the conflict.<sup>65</sup> For example, freedom or democracy may be a good objective, but it is not a good strategic objective because it is not specific enough. A free and fair election would be a better goal because it is specific and it is easy to assess if the goal has been met. Developing organizational strength refers to three main characteristics: first, there must exist the ability "to create new groups or turn preexisting groups and institutions into efficient fighting organizations."<sup>66</sup> Secondly, there must be a small group of credible leaders that are empowered to make decisions for the wider group of nonviolent protagonists. By having this smaller committee the resistance is enabled to respond quickly and efficiently to new challenges and circumstances. Lastly, there must be an "operational corp" whose primary jobs are to communicate decisions and basic information to the larger group of protagonists, to instruct and support the population

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 26.

how to react nonviolently, and to gather intelligence. Regarding cultivating external assistance, the goal of this principle is to have outside support or approval withdrawn from the adversary, and to garner support for the resistance efforts.

Among principles of engagement, attacking the opponents' strategy for consolidating control is one of the most confusing principles. This refers to the attempt to undermine any manner in which the regime is maintaining or legitimating its control. At the concrete level, if the government is depending upon local police to enforce its wishes, efforts should be made to convert those police. Likewise, if a regime is depending upon the hope that people will keep silent about human rights abuses and such out of cooperation or out of fear, people must find a way to proclaim the antagonist's abuses to the world. Concerning the maintenance of nonviolence, it is essential that protestors are taught not only how to engage in nonviolence, but why it is necessary for the success of the group.

Finally, within the principles of conception the ability to assess events and options in light of different levels of strategic decision making is a factor that is the same for both nonviolent and violent conflict. The authors show that the ability to keep five decision-making levels, policy, operational planning, strategy, tactics, and logistics, always in view "allows nonviolent strategists to analyze fully the conflict and avoid overlooking important tasks that will strengthen their position in the fight."<sup>67</sup> Most importantly, principle ten focuses on the ability to assess how the opposition is progressing vis-à-vis the opponent.<sup>68</sup> Regarding the adjustment of offensive and defensive operations, the protagonists must be able and willing to modify their goals and plans in light of the

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 47.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 330.

actions taken by the opposing regime. Furthermore, the nonviolent resisters must also be able to adjust their plans in relation to the level of vulnerability. For example, if the government is using any tactic possible to hunt out and destroy the opposition, the opposition would be better served to lay low and provide for those people who are suffering through the oppression. If a regime shows weakness, however, then the opposition must be prepared to go on the offensive and use nonviolent techniques to weaken the government. Finally, the last principle, sustaining continuity between sanctions, mechanisms, and objectives highlights the need of the opposition movement to make sure that their technique can bring about their final objective. Ackerman and Kruegler highlight three main mechanisms defined by Gene Sharp: conversion, accommodation, and coercion. Different mechanism of nonviolence may be used at different points in a struggle, and those movements whose leaders can recognize which mechanism has the most chance of success will be more likely to achieve their overall objectives.

To summarize, my research design will consist of analyzing the influence of the independent variables, that is religious institutions and actors, on the dependent variables, which are the twelve principles of nonviolent conflict explained by Ackerman and Kruegler. By examining the influence of religion on these important factors, we will be able to find out whether or not religion was a significant factor in the success of the Chilean nonviolent movement.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Chile's Move toward Socialism and the Loss of Democracy

Prior to 1973, the Chilean political landscape was highly democratic and extremely competitive. Voter turnout was high and election results were accepted as binding.<sup>69</sup> Labor unions worked closely with political parties, especially those on the left, due primarily to the importance of copper to the economy, and there existed a large middle class. Moreover, respect for the constitution and the law was deeply ingrained in all Chileans, and political competition and compromise was a highly developed skill.<sup>70</sup> By all appearances, Chile's political system was an unlikely candidate to fall to an oppressive authoritarian military regime. Yet a gradual move towards the left throughout the 1960s in Chilean politics culminated with political, economic and social turmoil in the Allende government; the military responded to this turmoil with a coup that ushered in an unexpected fifteen year period of harsh repression and authoritarianism.

#### *The Alessandri and Frei Presidencies*

By the 1950s there were three main groupings of political parties in Chile, the centrists, the leftists and the conservatives, each attracting about a third of the popular support. No group was clearly dominant, and thus when presidential elections were held every six years new coalitions had to be forged. The failure of the Ibáñez government (1952-1958) led to the decline of the Radical Party, thus creating a vacuum in the center

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<sup>69</sup>Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 121.

<sup>70</sup>Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1991), 21.

of the political spectrum.<sup>71</sup> The Christian Democratic Party, however, rapidly filled this open spot. Hence, in the 1960s there were three major political parties. There was the right-leaning group which contained the Conservative and Liberal parties, the Marxist left which was made up mainly of Communists and Socialists, and the Christian Democrats, a center, reform-oriented party that was attracting voters from the right and the left and that would eventually completely usurp the place of the Radicals as the primary centrist party.<sup>72</sup> Throughout the 1960s one can observe a gradual increase in power for the left in Chilean politics. Part of this was due to the problematic policies of Jorge Alessandri, who won a 31.6 percent plurality of votes in the 1958 presidential election. Alessandri had just barely managed to beat Salvador Allende, who was the candidate of the Socialist-Communist alliance, the Popular Action Front (FRAP). Alessandri had run as the candidate of the right, on a combined front put forth by the Conservative and Liberal parties. While president, Alessandri attempted to stabilize the Chilean economy by encouraging free enterprise and foreign investment. He also tried to decrease inflation with a conservative IMF-style policy of budget cutting and devaluation to a fixed exchange rate.<sup>73</sup> These measures did succeed in decreasing inflation; however, they did little to solve the multitude of social problems, such as the severe shortage in housing and jobs, and a lack of education that plagued Chile and especially Santiago.

In the 1964 presidential election Salvador Allende again ran with FRAP. Liberals and Conservatives (both parties which belonged to the right) decided that to prevent

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<sup>71</sup>Michael Fleet and Brian H. Smith, *The Catholic Church and Democracy in Chile and Peru*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 48.

<sup>72</sup>Skidmore and Smith, 123.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 122.



Allende, a strident critic of capitalism, from becoming president they would have to join forces with the Christian Democrats. The Christian Democrats (PDC) had by this time overtaken the Radical Party and had become the main centrist party.<sup>74</sup> The coalition of the centrist Christian Democrats and the Liberals and Conservatives on the right successfully voted in Eduardo Frei, who promised to bring about reforms that would create a more efficient capitalist economy, while still respecting the constitution. His goals for Chile were essentially moderate; he wanted to offer a solution that struck a balance between the unbridled capitalism of the right and the Marxism of the left.<sup>75</sup>

Frei was successful in many of his reforming efforts; the Chilean government acquired partial ownership of U.S. copper companies and also enacted agrarian reforms that resulted in 28,000 new farm ownerships.<sup>76</sup> However, Frei had promised that the land reform would change the lives of 100,000 peasants, but the land program had gone slower than expected. Thus, the reforms were seen by the left as inadequate in comparison to Chile's vast social ills. Meanwhile, due to the vehement opposition of the landowners to the expropriation process, the land reform precluded any possibility of an alliance between the right and the center for the 1970 election. Thus, by taking a moderate stance, Frei and the Christian Democratic Party disappointed both the right and the left and set the stage for a heated election between the right and the left.

There was also division within the PDC. A group called the *rebeldes*, or rebels within the party wanted Frei to push more agrarian reforms through in the second half of

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<sup>74</sup>Lois Hecht Oppenheim, *Politics in Chile: Democracy, Authoritarianism, and the search for Development*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 25.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Skidmore and Smith, 125.

his presidency. This group, frustrated with the lack of progress, split from the PDC in 1969 and formed a socialist Christian, but non-Marxist group called MAPU. Before the presidential election in 1970 MAPU joined the leftist coalition, the Unidad Popular or UP, hence giving the left vote a slight increase.

In the 1970 election the right decided to run its own candidate, former president Jorge Alessandri. The Christian Democrats, meanwhile, supported a left-leaning candidate, Radomiro Tomic. The Communists, Socialists, and MAPU had joined together under the Unidad Popular party and had once again chosen Salvador Allende as their presidential candidate. Allende's campaign was based on a call for radical changes in Chile including the total nationalization of the copper companies. Allende won the election, but just barely; he won a plurality of 36.3 percent while Alessandri was a close runner up with 34.9 percent of the vote.

#### *The Allende Government*

Allende, the first elected Marxist president, decided that despite his narrow win, he would still try to implement radical change in Chilean society, but through a "second path" to socialism. This second path for Allende meant the effort to transform the political and economic order through peaceful and democratic frameworks.<sup>77</sup> The government began the process of change by freezing prices and raising wages; he also nationalized the copper companies, a decision that the congress voted for unanimously.<sup>78</sup> The large amount of support for this action is attributed to the rising nationalist sentiment as well as to the common perception that Frei's policies had failed in bringing about

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<sup>77</sup>Constable and Valenzuela, 24.

<sup>78</sup>Skidmore and Smith, 126.

sufficient progress.<sup>79</sup> Allende, however, began to expand his reforms to areas that did not have such a large degree of public support. The UP government broadened state control from the copper companies to the coal and steel industries and also nationalized 60 percent of private banks. Subsequently, loans from the World Bank and other international sources were withheld, and private foreign investment stopped. Another problem was that land “expropriations came faster than the government’s ability to ensure the services (credit, access to supplies, equipment) needed by the new small owners.”<sup>80</sup> Additionally, leftist radicals seized land without government approval or financial backing.

In August of 1972 shopkeepers led a one day boycott to protest government socialization. Although a large amount of the population was discontent with the new economic policies, the UP government continued to be supported by the large number of Chileans, such as workers and rural laborers, who were benefiting from the changes. By 1973, however, inflation was skyrocketing and the economy was a disaster. Despite these difficulties in March of 1973 the UP was able to increase its percentage in the Congressional elections, thus reducing the opposition’s majority from 32 to 30 (out of 50) in the Senate and from 93 to 87 (out of 150) in the lower house.<sup>81</sup> This was unfortunate for the parties other than the UP, because they had been hoping to gain a two-thirds majority and thus be able to impeach Allende. It was at this point that the Center-Right forces began to look for extra-constitutional means to be rid of the UP government.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>82</sup>Oppenheim, 79.

Both the right wing politicians as well as the majority of the Christian Democrats had decided that military intervention was necessary to restore order.

Several changes grew out of this election. First, the right began to avidly try to discredit the election results, although there was hardly any possibility of fraud. Secondly, the political parties other than the UP used their slight majority to stop any UP legislation that went to the Congress. Even more unfortunate for Allende was the division within his own party, the UP. Made up of six different groups, the factions within the UP had a variety of goals and methods and began to disagree with Allende. The elections as well as the resulting stalemate also reinforced the middle class' growing suspicion that there could not be a democratic solution to the crisis. In July of 1973 mass protests against Allende's government were began by middle-class associations such as lawyers, doctors, and architects and copper workers loyal to the Christian Democrats began to strike; Allende supporters responded with counter-protests. Additionally, terrorist incidents occurred frequently. The right-wing group Fatherland and Liberty attempted to sabotage the UP government by bombing railroads, electrical transmission powers, and even assassinated an aide of Allende's.<sup>83</sup> Many were frightened that civil war would begin before a new president could be elected in 1976.

In August 23, General of the Armed Forces Carlos Prats resigned due to the fact that high-ranking army officials were protesting that Prats was too closely associated with the UP government to be neutral. Prats believed that he had lost credibility and that

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 81.

remaining as head of the army would only divide it. After assuring Allende that his replacement would be a constitutionalist, General Augusto Pinochet replaced Prats.<sup>84</sup>

By September a military coup seemed inevitable, but many believed it would be a *golpe blando*, a soft coup with little violence. Allende refused to arm the workers, believing that this would be not only unconstitutional but would also “lead to needless violence.”<sup>85</sup> Allende’s opposition eagerly awaited the coup, believing that once the left was subdued political power would be returned to them.

### *The Coup and Subsequent Consolidation of Power*

On September 11, 1973, a military coup occurred, directed by General Pinochet. Although there were many ways of escape made available to Allende, he refused to leave the Moneda Palace and was killed when the presidential palace was bombed by the Chilean Air Force. While the capture of the president was the military’s first goal, they also set out to neutralize the radical State Technical University, the industrial sectors, and the shanty-towns of Santiago. From there, the military would focus on securing the rest of the country. Although the military was ready for a war, there was little resistance among government supporters. Yet the takeover was the most violent military coup in twentieth century South American history.<sup>86</sup> While there was little to justify the prolific bloodshed, the excessive force was probably used to persuade government supporters to not resist the coup; in fact “one of the edicts broadcast by radio in the early hours of the

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 82.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>86</sup>Skidmore and Smith, 131.

coup warned that the armed forces would quell any attempted resistance with the same force with which they attacked the Moneda.”<sup>87</sup>

The week after the coup Pinochet moved quickly to obliterate those who might challenge him and to consolidate power into the military’s hands. Many people were swept up in factory and shanty-town raids and were killed immediately or taken to the National Stadium, where they were executed; Popular Unity supporters were specifically sought out and arrested, and then killed. Many of the UP politicians did not flee; indeed, “an astounding number of Chileans dutifully turned themselves in at a military checkpoint or police station after they heard their names broadcast over the radio.”<sup>88</sup> Most were exiled or killed without a trial. A curfew was enacted and followed by a decree stating that troops had the authority to shoot any Chilean who violated the curfew.

Additionally, Pinochet began to invest the military junta with executive power by Law Decrees (DL) and removed all government workers, “from the President of the Republic to heads of local neighborhood communities.”<sup>89</sup> Moreover, he dissolved the Congress and the Constitutional Tribunal, and burned the electoral register. Indeed, Pinochet did not just want to reform the political system; he wanted to annihilate all leftist and, to a lesser degree, centrist political parties. The UP was declared illegal, and all other political parties were told they were in recess.<sup>90</sup> Despite of these repressive actions, at the time the army took power however, they issued a decree stating that they would remain in power “only for the length of time that circumstances may require in

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<sup>87</sup>Mark Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet*, (Philadelphia: University of Penn Press, 2000), 26.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>89</sup>Pamela Lowden, *Moral Opposition to Authoritarian Rule in Chile, 1973-90*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 27.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

order to ‘restore the institutional framework that had been broken.’”<sup>91</sup> Law Decree 5 declared the country to be in a ‘State or Time of War’ and thus military war tribunals would be used to issue convictions. The repression in the first few months is described thusly:

“More extensive than imprisonment and execution by order of the Tribunals was the practice of mass detention without trial in military establishment and concentration camps throughout the country... Torture, including until death, was widely practiced, but not, of course, publicized... there was also a series of secret, extralegal or simply criminal executions and disappearances of prisoners both in Santiago and throughout the country. Although the left’s political militants, labour leaders and intellectuals were specific targets of the repression, it was on such a large scale that it was also arbitrary, particularly in poor urban and rural neighbourhoods.”<sup>92</sup>

The Pinochet military regime justified this repression as necessary to win the “war” against the UP by claiming that “a faction of the UP had been planning an imminent internal coup to eliminate all persons and obstacles standing in the way of the installation of totalitarian rule.”<sup>93</sup> They further legitimated their violent oppression by claiming that people who held leftist principles were not ‘real Chileans,’ hence rhetorically de-nationalizing those of different opinions.

According to the Report of the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, 1,213 people were killed between September and December of 1973 as a result of political violence.<sup>94</sup> Tens of thousands of people were arrested without charges being brought against them. Those detained were denied due process of law, harassed,

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 27.

tortured, and often exiled.<sup>95</sup> There was little protest to the military junta in the first few months after the coup due to a multitude of reasons. It is generally accepted that a majority of the public supported the military intervention of the Allende government. People were also generally ignorant of the severe repression that ensued as the junta tried very hard to “invest their actions with the character of law.”<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, several institutions that could have spoken out against the Pinochet regime’s violation of human rights chose not to. Indeed, the judiciary branch, for example, became an ally of the military regime. Supreme Court President Enrique Urrutia expressed his ‘delight’ over the actions of the junta to “respect and enforce judicial decisions.”<sup>97</sup> Jorge Correa, a legal scholar, notes that the Supreme Court “made no effort to protect human rights during the worst years of the dictatorship.”<sup>98</sup> At this point then, there was little public dissent regarding the coup or the subsequent actions of the military regime.

Power was gradually consolidated in the hands of Pinochet. In March of 1974 the government said that the salvation of the nation would take longer than foreseen. The Declaration of Principles of the Government of Chile stated that “the armed forces and the police do not set timetables for their management of the government, because the task of rebuilding the country, morally, institutionally, and economically requires prolonged and profound action.”<sup>99</sup> In June of 1974 Legislative Decree 527 declared the military junta’s constitutional and legislative power but conferred the executive role on General

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<sup>95</sup>Ensalaco, 46.

<sup>96</sup>Lowden, 30.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Ensalaco, 53.

<sup>99</sup>Lowden, 29.



Pinochet, the “President of the Junta who is Supreme Chief of the nation.”<sup>100</sup> In December 1974 Pinochet was formally made the President of the Republic of Chile. Further, Pinochet had direct control over the new intelligence service, the Directorate of National Intelligence (DINA), whose mission it was to not just contain leftists, but to eliminate them.<sup>101</sup>

Pinochet’s consolidation of power was undoubtedly a factor that enabled the regime to last much longer than the other Latin American military authoritarian regimes in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, “The consolidation of one-man rule in the person of Pinochet gave the regime considerable structural strength by virtue of his dual role as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and president of the republic.”<sup>102</sup> The immense power wielded by Pinochet in the first decade after the military coup made him almost impossible to resist; as we will see, however, it was the Chilean Catholic Church that was able to find the chink in Pinochet’s exceptionally strong armor.

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>101</sup>Ensalaco, 55.

<sup>102</sup>Lowden, 7.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Before Pinochet: The Journey of the Chilean Catholic Church

In order to understand the role the Catholic Church played in the nonviolent resistance to the Pinochet regime, we must first look at the changing nature of the Church in Chile. In many other Latin American military regimes during this same time period the Catholic Church did not officially condemn the numerous human rights violations that occurred. The following dilemma then, is why the Church in Chile was able and ready to take action on behalf of the oppressed. This chapter will present the evolving position of the Church in Chilean society prior to the military coup in order to discover what prepared and motivated the Church to stand against the military government.

Historically, the Latin American Catholic Church tended to respond to “modernity and secularization by retreating into fortress-Church and reaffirming dogma and authority.”<sup>103</sup> Like most Catholic Churches in Latin America, the Church in Chile was closely associated with the upper and middle class. Traditionally, the Catholic Church as an institution was “dependent on state concessions and subsidies,” and “aligned with landed elites whose wealth and power it defended.”<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, the majority of poor Chileans had little contact with the institutional church.<sup>105</sup> In the 1860s the Catholic Church formed an official partnership with the Conservative Party of

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<sup>103</sup>David Lehmann, *Democracy and Development in Latin America*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 120.

<sup>104</sup>Fleet and Smith, 36.

<sup>105</sup>Brian H. Smith, "Chile: Deepening the Allegiance of Working-Class Sectors in the Church in the 1970s," in *Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America*, ed. Daniel H. Levine (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 160.

Chile due to a resurgence of anti-clericalism. Hence, church funds were used to support Conservative candidates during elections, several priests held Conservative positions in the legislature, and a number of bishops were official party members.<sup>106</sup> However, due to changing religious leadership and the growing political power of liberal forces, the Church position would soon change.

The Church officially separated from the state in 1925 when the new constitution declared church and state to be separate and autonomous, but the Church continued to have ties with the Conservative party throughout the early part of the twentieth century. The vast majority of individual bishops, priests and lay Catholics still supported the Conservative party, and a full break with the Conservatives would not occur until the late 1950s.<sup>107</sup> Yet liberal ideology in the form of social Christianity began to have root in Chile even at this early stage. Chilean Catholic Action was formed in 1931 in order to “coordinate existing programs of spiritual formation and social assistance;” it specifically helped the Catholic Church to attract workers, young people, and other middle class persons who had drifted away from the Church.<sup>108</sup> By 1936 more than 47,000 people had joined.<sup>109</sup> Participants were taught to embrace social Christian values; subsequently, these members were the people that would eventually make up the bulk of the moderate Christian Democratic Party. In 1938 groups promoting Catholic Action organized the programs into a political movement that was independent of the Church’s structures.

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<sup>106</sup>Fleet and Smith, 37.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 41.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 41.

This political party was called the Falange Nacional, and it was the forerunner of the Christian Democratic Party.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s “social Christians pushed the Church toward greater social involvement and led younger Catholics away from the Conservative Party.”<sup>110</sup> While most bishops remained advocates of the Conservative Party, a few bishops and a number of priests and lay people began to sympathize with the left and supported the Falange Nacional. Falange’s goal was to provide “a partisan political voice of social Christianity, aspiring to a ‘third road’ alternative to liberal capitalism and Marxist socialism, to the reconciliation of individual and social interests, and to the defense of both freedom and social justice.”<sup>111</sup> By the late 1940s, nearly all leaders and members of Catholic Action were members or sympathizers of the Falange.

In July of 1957 the Falange joined with several other small social Christian movements to create the Chilean Christian Democratic Party, which would bring Eduardo Frei to presidency in 1964. By 1964, the combined efforts of Catholic Action and the Christian Democratic Party would move many conservative Catholics to the political center.<sup>112</sup> A survey by the Centro de Opinión Pública in Santiago in 1958 showed that “religious practice was still strongly correlated with rightist political tendencies and with support for the candidate of the Conservative and Liberal Parties.”<sup>113</sup> However, in another poll taken in 1964, the Centro found that “among Catholics of every category of religious practice there was a significant shift away from the Right, a substantial gain for

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<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 41.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>113</sup>Brian H. Smith, *The Church and Politics in Chile*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 89.

the Center and a slight increase for the Left.”<sup>114</sup> The shift made by Catholic Chileans during this time period was due to both normative and practical considerations.

The first conference of Latin American bishops (CELAM) was held in 1955 in Rio de Janeiro with the purpose of bringing back people into the Catholic faith and renewing the mission of the Church. The main threat to Catholicism was deemed to be “atheistic communism,” and much emphasis was put on the importance of developing alternatives to communism. Hence, the conference marked the creation of Christian trade unions, cooperatives, literacy campaigns, and peasants’ and women’s organizations. Furthermore, the Latin American Center for Research and Social Action (DESAL), sponsored by the Catholic Church, was created in Chile in order to “promote professional research on social problems.”<sup>115</sup>

Another event that pushed the Chilean Catholic Church towards more social involvement was the Cuban Revolution of 1959. Frightened by the socialist Cuban revolution and its “devastating effects on Cuba’s ultraconservative Church,” the Chilean Catholic leaders gained additional motivation for proceeding with both reform and social initiatives.<sup>116</sup> Hence, the Chilean Church responded to the threat of communism by supporting the alternative provided by the Christian Democrats. The Church also increased emphasis on responding to the plight of the poor. In 1962 a document entitled ‘Social and Political Responsibility in the Present Hour’ was released by the National Conference of Chile; the paper urged the “promotion of reform of societal structures,

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>115</sup>Virginia Marie Bouvier, *Alliance or Compliance: Implications of the Chilean Experience for the Catholic Church in Latin America*, (New York: Syracuse University, 1983), 16.

<sup>116</sup>Fleet and Smith, 49.

including agrarian reform and a more equitable income distribution.”<sup>117</sup> New parishes and new programs were established in the slums and many priests and nuns were sent to live in the shantytowns.

The work done in these impoverished areas also had the effect of radicalizing the Catholic leaders involved in work with the poor.<sup>118</sup> In addition, as many clergymen died or retired they were replaced with more socially progressive leaders. Indeed, many of the new clergy had been active members of Catholic Action. Furthermore, Raul Silva Henríquez, formerly the director of Caritas Chile, the major relief agency provided by the Chilean Church, was appointed the archbishop of Santiago in 1961. Silva’s emphasis on social reform helped to strengthen the social Christian movement in Chile by his endorsement of agrarian and other reforms. Hence, throughout the 1950s and 1960s the Chilean episcopate grew increasingly more progressive.

### *Vatican II*

Vatican II is representative of the normative shift that had been occurring within Catholic thought for several decades. The central question Vatican II was designed to answer was how the Catholic Church should respond to the challenges of the modern world. The resulting documents “emphasized renewing the internal spiritual life of the church by bringing it closer to the people and expanding its role of service to the secular world.”<sup>119</sup> The conference, which was attended by over 700 Latin American bishops, led

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<sup>117</sup>Bouvier, 27.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

<sup>119</sup>Smith, *Chile: Deepening the Allegiances*, 156.

to a new openness within the Catholic Church to issues of social justice.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, “the documents of Vatican II stressed the need for the church to analyze structural and global causes of injustice.”<sup>121</sup> One of the main ambitions of the Council was to increase engagement by the church in contemporary social problems such as poverty, racism, war, and violations of human rights. Hence the Second Vatican Council “committed the Church to an active roll in the promotion of justice, human rights, and freedom, urging all Catholics to share the ‘joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are in any way afflicted.’”<sup>122</sup> The Second Vatican Council also “helped to accelerate pastoral changes in Chile. Its endorsement of work for justice, decentralized Church structures, and a larger role for the laity in its ministries, reinforced initiatives of the Chilean bishops in these areas.”<sup>123</sup>

Vatican II also called for the Church to be independent from the state, stating that the Church “does not lodge her hope in privileges conferred by civil authority.”<sup>124</sup> This was particularly relevant within the Chilean context, since the Church had closely aligned itself with the conservatives and then with the PDC throughout the 1960s. As the PDC gradually fell out of favor with the vast majority of the Chilean public, however, the Church came to realize it needed to be “sufficiently independent of political parties to avoid the identification of church apostolates with the face of any political movement.”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>Bouvier, 17.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile*, 4.

<sup>123</sup>Fleet and Smith, 51.

<sup>124</sup>Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile*, 287.

<sup>125</sup>Smith, *Chile: Deepening the Allegiances*, 160.

The importance of social issues to the Latin American Church was increased at CELAM II in Medellín Colombia in 1968. The Medellín Documents on peace and justice stated that “Justice, and therefore also peace are won through the dynamic action of the awakening and organization of the popular sectors of society which are capable of pressing action by public officials who are often impotent in the carrying out of their social projects without popular support.”<sup>126</sup> Both Vatican II and CELAM II helped to reinforce the ideological shift towards the left that had occurred in the Chilean Catholic thinking throughout the middle of the twentieth century. They also further encouraged support for social programs that emphasized the need to reform structural causes of poverty and injustice.

#### *The Catholic Church and the Christian Democrats*

Not only was the PDC made up of many members of Catholic Action but the PDC emphasized the same values that were articulated and encouraged in the Second Vatican Council. Thus, it is not surprising that the Church hierarchy began to closely identify itself with the Christian Democratic Party in the 1960s. Although statements issued from the Church prior to the 1964 election never explicitly named the PDC, they nevertheless had a partisan tone.<sup>127</sup> In pastoral letters, for example, the bishops analyzed the need for agrarian and industrial policy reforms in an almost identical manner to the calls for reform articulated by the PDC. The Church also undertook many of the same initiatives the PDC supported. For example, using financial support from abroad, the Church created housing cooperatives, peasant training programs, slum-dweller

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<sup>126</sup>Bouvier, 18.

<sup>127</sup>Fleet and Smith, 51.



organizations, and trade union federations in order to attack the causes of poverty.<sup>128</sup> In word and action then, the Catholic hierarchy provided legitimacy for Frei's structural reforms.<sup>129</sup>

Unfortunately, the Church's close affiliation with the PDC harmed the Church's unity and image during Frei's presidency from 1964-1970. Leftist Catholics were generally discontented with Frei's reforms, claiming them to be too slow and falling far short of expectations. On the other hand, right-leaning Catholics who had supported Frei only to stop Allende from gaining power began to criticize the Church's 'partisan support from the PDC agenda.'<sup>130</sup> Meanwhile, the Catholic Church was experiencing a serious personnel shortage, since the PDC had "replaced the Church as a more effective channel for societal reform."<sup>131</sup> Even more concerning for the Catholic hierarchy was the fact that the Church had become closely identified with the PDC in the view of the Chilean people, thus alienating Catholics on the right and on the left. These problems persuaded the bishops to conclude that the PDC was "a merely mortal political force, and that a more neutral stance would be better for the Church in the now more likely event that a right- or left- wing candidate would win the next presidential election."<sup>132</sup>

Due to the increasing polarization of society as well as to the division within the Church, in 1967 the Catholic Church began to distance itself from the PDC and to adopt the role of a nonpartisan moral agent. In order to show that the Church was not directly

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<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>129</sup>Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile*, 134.

<sup>130</sup>Fleet and Smith, 52.

<sup>131</sup>Smith, *Chile: Deepening the Allegiances*, 157.

<sup>132</sup>Fleet and Smith, 53.

associated with the PDC, the hierarchy pointed out the problematic areas of Frei's reform strategies and called for further initiatives to strengthen social justice. The Church decided that their primary goals should be to "develop among them a spirituality more in tune with the times that would include an ongoing commitment to work for social justice; recruit new cadres of leaders into positions of responsibility for the local church... and remain sufficiently independent of political parties to avoid the identification of church apostolates with the face of any political movement."<sup>133</sup> The Church still continued to place emphasis on social justice, but tried to do so while remaining politically neutral. In the months preceding the 1970 election the bishops stressed their neutrality and underscored the importance of "democratic procedures and the importance of avoiding civil war and military rule."<sup>134</sup>

#### *The Church in the Allende Years*

Throughout the three years Allende remained president the Catholic Church maintained their neutral stance. They generally urged all parties to respect the constitutional procedures and to compromise in order to resolve conflict. True to their stated position, the bishops refused to endorse attempts by the right-wing extremists to prevent Allende from being confirmed by the Congress and rejected a request by Conservative Party leaders to denounce Allende.<sup>135</sup> The also recognized the UP government as legitimate. In a document issued by the Chilean Episcopal Conference in 1971, the Church said that Christians could work together with Marxist socialism, since

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<sup>133</sup>Smith, *Chile: Deepening the Allegiances*, 160.

<sup>134</sup>Fleet and Smith, 54.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, 55.

Catholics were not bound to support any specific economic or political agendas. They spoke strongly, however, about the necessity of systems that supported justice. Lastly, the hierarchy reiterated that it was of the utmost importance for clergy to not publicly identify with any party, “nor use their moral authority to promote partisan positions.”<sup>136</sup>

When the Allende government began to run into economic and political problems half way through 1972, the bishops maintained their neutral stance by refusing to take sides in the conflict, and instead encouraged negotiated compromises. The hierarchy condemned attempts to create instability or violence, and remained committed to a democratic resolution to the mounting crisis. Essentially, “the bishops used their moral authority to promote moderation and consensus.”<sup>137</sup> Despite their efforts, however, the conflict escalated and polarization increased to the point that social chaos broke loose.

Although the Catholic Church continued to publicly support a democratic solution to the problems that plagued Chile, “the majority of leaders at all levels of the Church privately believed in September 1973 that a military coup was necessary to put an end to chaos and prevent civil war.”<sup>138</sup> Like the political leaders of the PDC and of the Conservatives, the Church expected that Chile’s strong constitutional norms would help ensure that the military intervention would be short and relatively bloodless. Virtually no one expected a military takeover and the harsh suppression of human rights that would follow. Indeed, the initial promise of the four-man military junta to remain in power only as long as it took to restore “order and constitutional rule” reinforced the Church’s

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<sup>136</sup>Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile*, 176.

<sup>137</sup>Fleet and Smith, 57.

<sup>138</sup>Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile*, 287.

erroneous expectations. It would take little time, however, before the Church would become aware of her mistake.

There are several changing shifts within the Catholic Church's relationship to Chilean society that have been noted in this chapter. Historically, the Catholic Church was very closely tied to Chilean politics, first through the Conservative Party and then through the Christian Democrats. The progression of the Church towards the left was the result of multiple factors, such as the decreasing political relevance of Conservatives, new normative considerations reinforced by Vatican II, and a Catholic leadership that was increasingly concerned with social justice. Although a normative consensus on social justice issues linked Chilean society and the Church together in the 1960s, the Church began to take a neutral stance regarding politics as tension mounted in the second half of the Frei government and throughout the short-lived Allende government. Despite their neutral stance towards politics, however, the Church had not become neutral regarding certain values. The values of nonviolence, justice, and human rights had flourished within the Church and its institutions, and it was these values that would motivate the Church's resistance to the Pinochet regime.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Resistance to Repression: The Vicariate of Solidarity

As discussed in Chapter two, the military regime immediately began to consolidate power by closing the Congress, outlawing Marxist parties, placing all political parties in ‘recess,’ and by prosecuting people associated with the Unidad Popular. The position the Catholic Church would take towards the new government would be highly important to the military regime; such a powerful society institution could either concretize the legitimacy of the regime, or call it into question. This chapter will relate the progression of the Chilean Catholic Church’s position from accommodation to opposition and enumerate the ways the institutional Church contributed to a legitimate and unified opposition.

#### *Cautious Compliance*

Despite of the reassurances of the coup leaders to simply restore order, their actions eventually created doubt about their real intentions. In the first six months of the regime, however, the collective statements of the bishops were careful and amenable to the new military government. The first formal reaction to the coup was a declaration on September 13 made by cardinal Silva and the Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference. The statement mourned for “the blood which has reddened our streets... the blood of civilians and of soldiers” and asked for “moderation towards the vanquished and that there be no needless reprisals;” however, the statement also reaffirmed the hierarchy’s belief that the junta was acting out of patriotic and selfless intentions, and

“asked the nation to ‘cooperate with those who have taken on the difficult task of restoring the country’s institutional order and economic life.’”<sup>139</sup> In this first statement the Church did not condemn nor did they legitimize the coup; rather, the Church showed that they accepted what had occurred and desired to restore order and peace. Soon after the coup, however, the Church began to realize that the degree of repression was much higher than what was being reported. Since nearly all social institutions had been outlawed, placed in recess, or were under heavy surveillance, the Church became the focal institution that people suffering repression turned to for help. Hence, “the offices of the archbishopric began to fill with people desperate for protection for help for themselves and family members arrested or ‘disappeared’” and this situation was the same in parishes throughout Chile.<sup>140</sup>

At the lower levels the Church immediately took action to aid the vast number of people petitioning the Church for help. In late September, Catholic, mainline Protestant and Jewish leaders formed the National Committee for Aid of Refugees (CONAR) in affiliation with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The organization was set up on Catholic premises and served to aid the safe exit of non-Chileans. By February of 1974 CONAR had helped around 4,500 people get out of Chile. This ecumenical cooperation led to the formation of an organization that would help Chileans who were suffering from the repression. A meeting was called on the sixth of October in the archbishopric’s offices for leaders from the Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, Methodist Pentecostal and Greek Orthodox Church, and the Jewish

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<sup>139</sup>Lowden, 31.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid.

community, and in this meeting the Ecumenical Committee of Cooperation for Peace in Chile (COPACHI), or the Committee for Peace, was created.

Throughout the efforts made by the Church to help those in need, the Church still issued statements promoting cooperation with the regime. On September 28 the Church offered to help collaborate with the regime in the work of reconstruction, and on October 9 Cardinal Silva met with the new military leaders and reached an agreement. They decided that the government would not curb the institutional freedom of the Church to conduct both pastoral and humanitarian activities, and in exchange, the Church would accept the legitimacy of the government and help in the reconstruction work.<sup>141</sup> Hence, the Catholic Church gained legitimacy for the Committee for Peace.

#### *The Committee for Cooperation for Peace in Chile*

The stated purpose of the Committee for Peace was to “aid ‘those Chileans who, as a result of recent political events, are in serious financial and personal need’” by providing “legal, financial, technical and spiritual assistance.”<sup>142</sup> An important aspect of the organization was that it was highly ecumenical; Pamela Lowden compares it to a religious equivalent of the Red Cross.<sup>143</sup> The Committee’s finances totaled \$1.8 million, of this 52.5 percent came from evangelical sources (most of it from the World Council of Churches), 43.7 percent from Catholic funds and the remaining amount came from either organizations abroad, many of which were Catholic in nature, and from Caritas Chile, the

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<sup>141</sup>Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile*, 290.

<sup>142</sup>Lowden, 32.

<sup>143</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

Catholic Church's largest social aid agency in Chile.<sup>144</sup> Although government permission was not directly sought to create the committee, the ecumenical nature of it would have made it very difficult for a government to object to its creation, especially since it had already condoned ecumenical work with its permission for CONAR and encouraged the Catholic Church to aid in reconstruction. Another important aspect was that, "the Churches not only had moral integrity and authority, but also material resources."<sup>145</sup> Indeed, the infrastructure of the Catholic Church in Chile was well developed and could communicate effectively with a wide variety of people. Church leaders were also in a role conducive to calling on people to provide their skills to the Committee. Although all of the above mentioned churches were part of the directing body, the organization legally was under the jurisdiction of the archdioceses of Santiago, and the joint presidents were Bishops Frenz and Ariztía. Although Cardinal Silva was not directly involved in the every day affairs of the Committee, he supported the organization against mounting pressure from the government to close it down. A crucially important pillar of the Committee was the support of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Indeed, although the Committee was ecumenical, it was the Catholic dimension that was politically essential.<sup>146</sup>

The Committee began cautiously, and when its creation was announced the advertisement specified the legal nature of the organization. The announcement said:

Workers lacking resources who, as a result of the present national situation, wish for information as to how to receive the assistance to which they are legally entitled

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<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., 41.



in resolving employment or penal problems afflicting them, may come to the Committee offices, Santa Monica St. 2338 between 9.00am-1.00pm and 2.30pm-4.00pm, Monday to Friday.<sup>147</sup>

The committee initially had five staffers but by August of 1974 they had expanded to 103 staff members in order to meet the expanding demand for help. By the beginning of 1976 the Peace Committee had created 24 more offices in provincial areas. Indeed, the Committee was not addressing random fringe cases. Rather, by March of 1974 they estimated that the committee “was receiving details of 80 per cent of the cases of detention in Santiago” that lasted for more than 48 hours duration.<sup>148</sup> Lawyers at the Committee had responded to 1,300 petitions for legal aid by that time as well. Thus, the committee was able to gather a large amount of information that no other institution did at that time. This information was turned in to a 60 page report the Committee made detailing the facts of many credible cases, including 134 cases of torture.<sup>149</sup> This report led to an Episcopal declaration, entitled ‘Reconciliation in Chile’ made in April of 1974 by the bishops that purposed to express concern over the human rights violations. ‘Reconciliation in Chile’ was important “in that it marked the first criticisms of specific abuses of power leveled against the Pinochet regime by the church.”<sup>150</sup> The statement said:

“... We are concerned that in some cases there are no effective juridical safeguards to insure personal safety against arbitrary or prolonged detentions which result in neither those affected nor their families knowing the specific charges against them. We are also troubled by interrogations which include physical or moral constraints, by limitations on the possibilities of legal defense, by unequal sentences given for

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<sup>147</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>150</sup>Bouvier, 58.

the same charges in different parts of the country, and by the restriction of the normal right of appeal in the court system.”<sup>151</sup>

Although the bishops tempered this statement by saying that they had no doubts about the good intentions of the government authorities, and that they recognized the legitimacy of “short-term suspension” of some rights, they concluded by saying that there existed certain rights which “pertain to the very dignity of the human person, and those are absolute and inviolable.”<sup>152</sup>

In the first year of Committee work then, one can see the Catholic Church initially trying to balance its work for human rights in the Committee while restricting direct criticism of the government. This ambivalence regarding the abuses of the military regime was due to several causes. First of all, Cardinal Silva and others felt that harsh criticism would only estrange the Church from the government, weakening their ability to help the repressed. Secondly, many bishops felt the government still deserved their thanks for freeing Chile from Marxism and the possibility of authoritarianism. Lastly, many bishops thought that it was highly possible the violations were the result of lower level officials, were not systematic, and did not directly involve the government leaders.<sup>153</sup> Thus, ‘Reconciliation in Chile’ struck a balance between clergy who condoned the government for their actions, and those who wanted to immediately speak out against the abuses. Despite of this ambivalence, the Peace Committee’s work was crucial. The information gathered was trusted by the bishops and indeed, it was slowly starting to shift the balance of Church opinion against the military regime.

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<sup>151</sup>Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile*, 295.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid.

<sup>153</sup>Lowden, 36.

In 1974 the Committee began a project to organize the vast amounts of information being received by victims and families. The information led the Church to expand its human rights activities to include a number of social and economic services, such as medical care centers in poor city districts, a lunch service provided for malnourished children that eventually came to feed over 20,000 with daily meals, and finally an employment cooperative.<sup>154</sup> Apart from its work with the public, the leaders of the Peace Committee also continued to make contact with government officials in an effort to expedite and clarify issues as they arose, particularly regarding matters of political asylum. The committee additionally tried to find ways to help people who had disappeared without any evidence of why or where they were taken. Bishops and other clergy began to present Chilean courts with writs of habeas corpus, which were comprised of a list of individuals (the first one provided 131 individuals) who were missing as well as documentation providing evidence of arrest.<sup>155</sup> Although the writs were often rejected as being invalid, leaders continued to take concrete action through official government channels and to document the more problematic aspects of the government's judicial system. Thus, the Peace Committee went far beyond simply providing a defense for people in the war tribunals.

By March of 1975 the Peace Committee had addressed 15,982 cases in the provincial offices and 2,051 in Santiago.<sup>156</sup> The information the Committee provided over these cases had an important influence in international circles. For example, at the

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<sup>154</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>156</sup>Ibid., 39.

end of 1974 the Chilean government received the first of what was to be a repeated vote of censure against the Chilean government in the UN; this vote was largely due to the committees reports.<sup>157</sup> The Committee for Peace was also important because it provided “the only systematic source of protest against the arbitrary governmental actions in Chilean society” at that time.<sup>158</sup> Although the Church preferred to not have a major confrontation with the government at this time period (preferring to be left free to engage in their social work) the Committee’s main enduring achievement in Chile was that it convinced much of the Church leadership, especially Cardinal Silva, “that the repression was not the result of isolated abuses of power, but rather it was systematic in the full sense of the word: that is, inherent to the regime’s system of rule.”<sup>159</sup> When the Committee was closed, the bishops issued a statement, praising the committee for its “testimony of charity and the commitment of itself to fraternal service for all who suffer.”<sup>160</sup>

### *The Military Regime Counterattacks*

Although Pinochet grew increasingly angry with the Committee for Peace, he did not want to attempt a “frontal assault on religious institutions, especially the Roman Catholic Church.”<sup>161</sup> Indeed, clerics in the Catholic Church hierarchy were the religious leaders of 80 percent of the Chilean population, and hence a very powerful institution in Chile, which was something both the Church and the government were critically aware

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<sup>157</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>158</sup>Edward L. Cleary, *The Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 4.

<sup>159</sup>Lowden, 50.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>161</sup>Ensalaco, 60.

of. The primary event that finally brought out the tension between the government regime and the Peace Committee was the publication of a Committee report written for the bishops by a Mexican newspaper in May of 1974. This came to be known as the Scherer Report and it “made it evident for the first time that Chilean bishops were lending their authority to the collection and analysis of information on human rights violations, despite the caution of the Committee.”<sup>162</sup> The government immediately responded by accusing the Church of “libelous attacks on the government.”<sup>163</sup> At this point the government secretly planned to outlaw the organization and to possibly arrest its leaders but refrained due to the fact that the authority of the Catholic Church was involved. Indeed, for the country as a whole the bishops “represented a source of authority of considerably longer standing than the new military rulers,” however widely the coup was initially accepted.<sup>164</sup> Thus, the government chose not to close the committee, but rather took an indirect attack by launching a media campaign against it with the purpose of discrediting the religious leaders who endorsed the Committee’s information as well as the truthfulness of the information detailed in the reports.

The media campaign was successful to some degree. The government was able to undermine the ecumenical basis of the Committee for Peace by publishing allegations that joint President Frenz was a Marxist. This accusation was the basis on which many Evangelical groups decided to withdraw their support. Furthermore, staff members were arrested and harassed, and in October of 1975 Frenz was denied permission to re-enter Chile after a visit to Geneva. Meanwhile Cardinal Silva’s homilies grew increasingly

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<sup>162</sup>Lowden, 43.

<sup>163</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid.

critical of the military dictatorship. While the government attempted many different tricks to discredit him, Silva was able to fully defend himself.

The government was finally able to find a concrete reason to close the Peace Committee when several priests helped three wanted leftist political leaders escape the DINA. In wake of the conflict, Cardinal Silva met with Pinochet, who requested that the Cardinal dissolve the Peace Committee, or else Pinochet would order it to be done by force.<sup>165</sup> The Cardinal asked that a formal request be sent to him, and on November 11 it arrived. The Cardinal complied with the request, but in his reply he defended the record and purpose of the committee, and emphasized that despite of the dispersion of the Committee, the Church reserved the ability to continue the charitable and religious work carried out by the Committee.<sup>166</sup> The Committee was closed in November of 1975, but within the lines of consent Cardinal Silva laid the seeds of another organization, the Vicariate of Solidarity.

### *The Vicariate of Solidarity*

At the New Year Council of the Vicars of the Archbishopric of Santiago, Cardinal Silva proposed the creation of a new Vicariate that would continue the work of the Peace Committee. On January 1, 1976, the council voted unanimously in favor of the proposal and established the Vicariate of Solidarity by decree of the Archbishopric.<sup>167</sup> This organization was distinct from the Committee for Peace in a very important way. The Vicariate represented the Catholic Church of Santiago and its vicar would thus be a

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<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid, 49.

<sup>167</sup>Ibid, 53.

member of the hierarchy. The institution then was directly protected by the Church, and “now to attack the Vicaría would mean direct confrontation with the institutional prerogatives of the Catholic Church”<sup>168</sup> Indeed, Cardinal Silva Henríquez’s proposal was supported not only by the Chilean Church, but by the Vatican as well, despite the fact that the creation of a vicariate charged with promoting human rights was unprecedented in Catholic life. Cardinal Silva thought that in the face of a severely contracted Chilean civil society, however, Church supported institutions were vital for the people’s welfare. In a pastoral letter entitled the ‘Pastoral of Solidarity’ that became a reference point for the Vicariate, Cardinal Silva explained that the evolution of a social dimension in the Church’s work was crucial in order to protect human dignity, of which an important part was collective or economic rights. Another significant part of the letter was the parable of the Good Samaritan; Cardinal Silva clearly pointed out that an essential part of the Christian faith was to have compassion for all peoples, even those that may be considered by some to be an enemy.<sup>169</sup> Hence, Cardinal Silva was reminding the Pinochet government that to interfere in the Vicariate would be to interfere in the essential practices of Christianity.

Father Christian Precht, the Peace Committee’s secretary, remained as the vicario, or the leader of the Vicariate. Initially, there tended to be much more clerical leadership present in the Vicariate than in the Committee for Peace, but lay persons were eventually adopted as leaders of departments. The number of staff quickly swelled to 150 persons and was composed of people from both centrist and leftist political persuasions. For example, Alejandro Gonzalez, a centrist, became head of the legal department in 1977;

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<sup>168</sup>Ibid.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid., 55.

Jose Manuel Parada, a Communist, was in charge of the department for national coordination. The Vicariate thus was able to bring different political groups together while protecting them with Catholic legitimacy. Fortunately, the World Council's contribution to the Committee was now moved to fund the Vicariate. Within a year of its creation the Vicariate proceeded to establish 12 sister offices throughout Chile and created five departments: legal-welfare; zones; national coordination; labor and rural; and a secretary of communications which was in charge of administrative and publicity functions. Furthermore, in May of 1976 the Vicariate created a bulletin entitled *Solidarity*, which was distributed for free semi-monthly and included statistics on malnutrition, unemployment, and people who had been arrested or disappeared.<sup>170</sup> The Vicariate also made announcements by Radio Chilena, which was Catholic-owned and the only media outlet not controlled by the government.

In 1976 there was another fierce wave of repression, mainly directed at controlling a restive and discontent population. Indeed, unemployment was at an unprecedented high at 19.8 percent in 1976.<sup>171</sup> The coercive measures, however, were focused not only on the communist party members but also to a lesser extent, on the Christian Democrats. By the end of 1976 the Vicaría had registered 552 political arrests for the year. It was in this year that one can begin to see a change in the Catholic Church's statements regarding the military regime. In the past the government had been very careful to condemn the actions of the government, and not the regime itself.

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<sup>170</sup>Bouvier, 64.

<sup>171</sup>Lowden, 58.



However, in a public statement made by the Permanent Committee of the Episcopate Conferences in August of 1976 the hierarchy stated:

“The actions which we denounce and condemn are not isolated incidents. They are part of an overall process or system that is very clearly delineated in its characteristics and which threatens to impose itself relentlessly throughout Latin America. By a constant appeal to national security, a model of society is being consolidated which takes away basic liberties, runs roughshod over the most fundamental rights and subjugates citizens to a dreaded and omnipotent police state.”<sup>172</sup>

In this statement the Church recognized that the injustices perpetrated by the government were not just random mistakes, but rather were inherent to the authoritarian regime. As this realization increased the Church began to not only oppose specific violations of the government, but the regime itself. The statement went on to say: “The Church cannot remain passive or neutral in the face of such a situation. The legacy which she has received from Christ demands that she speak out in favor of human dignity and for the effective protection of the liberty and rights of the person.”<sup>173</sup> Hence, the Church set itself against the Pinochet regime based on its moral convictions.

Meanwhile, the Vicariate continued to achieve small but significant victories for the protection of human rights in Chile in the international arena. In April of 1976 the US Senate approved the Kennedy Amendment suspending arms sales to Chile. The information on human rights abuses provided by the Peace Committee and the Vicariate, and the respect granted them as Church organizations “served to lend considerable weight to the argument that the Pinochet regime should be treated as a pariah.”<sup>174</sup> This decision

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<sup>172</sup>Bouvier, 65.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid., 65-66.

<sup>174</sup>Lowden, 61.

was corroborated by the car bombing assassination of former Chilean government minister Orlando Letelier and his American assistant that occurred in September in Washington DC. These two events, in turn, led to a drastic cut in aid funding from \$20.6 million in 1976 to \$0.6 million in 1977.<sup>175</sup> The Chilean government reacted by releasing 302 political prisoners. Even more dramatically, in August of the same year the government declared DINA to be dismantled and to be replaced with a new organization, the National Information Center (CNI).

Throughout 1978 leaders in the lower levels of the Catholic hierarchy conducted several hunger strikes in protest of the human rights abuses. The largest that occurred was a seventeen-day hunger strike organized by twenty-seven churches for the friends and families of people who had disappeared.<sup>176</sup> The strike was publicly supported by the Catholic Church. The result was that Interior Minister Fernández promised to investigate the fate of the ‘disappeared.’ Although not much came of the investigation, it was still an important victory because the public had succeeded in pressuring the government to, for the first time, recognize that the problem of disappearances was real and legitimate.<sup>177</sup> During the year Cardinal Silva also declared a ‘Year of Human Rights’ in order to give the Church further opportunity to express its concern that the military regime was depriving Chileans of basic human rights. The year culminated with a series of national meetings and a symposium entitled ‘The Church and the Rights and Duties of Man in the World Today.’<sup>178</sup> In total, the symposium was a huge success, attended by around 1000

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<sup>175</sup>Ibid, 62.

<sup>176</sup>Bouvier, 66.

<sup>177</sup>Lowden, 67.

<sup>178</sup>Ibid., 65.

people including several representatives from international human rights groups, Cardinal Paulo Arns of Brazil, workers, professionals, youth groups, intellectuals, artists, and prominent Christian Democrats.<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, at the symposium the Vicariate of Solidarity was awarded the UN's esteemed human rights prize, which validated the remarkable progress the Vicariate had made in just a few years.

The Church continued to oppose the Pinochet regime yet also attempted to help serve as a mediator between the regime and the opposition. In 1983, massive political protests began in May, spurred by a sharp economic recession, a sudden increase in unemployment, and the collapse of numerous banks.<sup>180</sup> The Bishops justified the protests as "legitimate expressions of popular frustration and dissent," but were also careful to denounce any violence that occurred.<sup>181</sup>

When Cardinal Fresno, who replaced Cardinal Silva in June, became the new cardinal he sought to open dialogue between government officials and opposition leaders. Although meetings between Minister of the Interior Sergio Jarpa and leaders of the newly formed Democratic alliance occurred three times, all meetings were completely fruitless, usually due to the Pinochet regime's stubbornness. Without the Church's urging and presence, however, it is unlikely these groups would have even bothered meeting.<sup>182</sup> The regime responded to the overture for peace by refusing to allow publication of an official statement made by Archbishop Fresno as well as making other repressive actions against the Church. The lack of success in these meetings, however, actually worked to discredit

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<sup>179</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>180</sup>Fleet and Smith, 118.

<sup>181</sup>Ibid., 118.

<sup>182</sup>Ibid., 120.

Pinochet because it made him appear highly irrational and outrageously unwilling to negotiate even with the encouragement of Church officials. These overtures for peace made by the Church failed in providing a resolution, but succeeded by further eroding Pinochet's legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

Pinochet often defended his reluctance to negotiate, or even talk with the opposition by asking, "With whom should I be talking? No one represents anyone."<sup>183</sup> In 1985 Cardinal Fresno launched an attempt to solve this problem by developing a National Accord, by which he hoped to bring opposition leaders together. Cardinal Fresno issued the invitations, and structured individual meetings with different political and societal leaders that all opposed Pinochet, which were held at his house. At each meeting, the opposition leader discussed his views with Fresno, while a Catholic businessman, Jose Zabala, took notes and later summarized the leader's position as well as what commonalities in position he shared with other leaders, as well as identifying what compromises he might be willing to make. After this process all the leaders met together at a Jesuit retreat house, where they learned that they agreed on more than they had thought, and created the first draft of what would become the National Accord on the Transition to Full Democracy, to be signed later in August by 11 distinct political parties. The document called for an end to restriction on party activity as well as on internal and external exile, the holding of direct presidential elections, and changes to the constitution regarding the powers of the Congress and the Council of State.<sup>184</sup> Unfortunately, Pinochet ignored Cardinal Fresno's attempts to present the Accord to the government.

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<sup>183</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>184</sup>Ibid, 123.

Nevertheless, the National Accord was crucial in developing a united opposition out of a variety of parties to challenge Pinochet.

In 1987 the Papal visit had another large positive effect on the political opposition to Pinochet. First of all, the Pope's visit gave the opposition the opportunity to publicly protest through marches without the fear of reprisal for the first time since the military coup. These televised marches helped make the Chilean people aware of their large numbers and of common concerns.<sup>185</sup> Secondly, the Pope met with many opposition leaders as well as people who had been victims of Pinochet's brutal repression. Furthermore, the Pope criticized the current condition and practices of the government, and vocally supported the opposition's efforts to restore democracy. These occurrences had two main effects. The Pope's encouragement was greatly uplifting to the people that had been risking their lives to oppose the Pinochet regime, and it inspired those who had been hesitant to oppose the regime to become bold. Ultimately, the Pope's symbolic visits "helped to counter the regime's depiction of its opponents as unworthy of attention or respect."<sup>186</sup>

After the Papal visit, priests and bishops began to play a large role in enabling a plebiscite vote to be held. They largely encouraged voter registration, and consistently stated that a re-call vote was essentially the only way that Pinochet could be effectively challenged. Catholic activists also played a large role in convincing opposition groups to unite and endorse the registration for the plebiscite. The strong alliance against Pinochet (known as Concertación por el No) has been heralded as one of the main reasons the

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<sup>185</sup>Ibid.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid, 132.

plebiscite vote actually worked.<sup>187</sup> Additionally, in 1988, the Church helped broker a social pact between trade unionists and entrepreneurs which greatly alleviated the fear that a chaotic situation would result if Pinochet was to be ousted from power. As it became known that the plebiscite would actually take place, Catholic leaders additionally served an important function by ascertaining that conditions surrounding the re-call vote would be fair. Church leaders helped to ensure that there was fairness in media attention given and that there was no government intimidation. Finally, in the plebiscite of 1988, 54 percent of voters rejected Pinochet's "bid for an additional eight-year term."<sup>188</sup> The work done by the Church in Chile and through the Vicariate in particular "buttressed the struggle against terror and seriously hindered the authoritarian regime's effort to legitimize its rule."<sup>189</sup> Thanks to the Church's work upholding human rights, legitimizing opposition groups, and encouraging opposition groups to work together to uphold the recall vote, Chile was able to replace the brutal Pinochet regime with a democracy that protected the political and economic rights of the people. The military dictatorship ended officially on March 11, 1990, when General Pinochet handed over his presidential sash in Congress.<sup>190</sup>

In general, the Vicariate had several effects on the political environment in Chile. First, the documentation of abuses "revealed the true state of affairs underlying the public

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<sup>187</sup>Ibid, 133.

<sup>188</sup>Ibid, 135.

<sup>189</sup>Hugo Fruhling, *Fear at the Edge*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 139.

<sup>190</sup>Patricia Verdugo, *Chile, Pinochet and the Caravan of Death*, (Boulder, CO: North-South Center Press, 2001), 185.

image of the authoritarian regime.”<sup>191</sup> This was an especially important service since it was nearly impossible to access any information in Chile other than official, regime-censored media. The Vicariate also helped support grass-roots level organizations by providing them with a sort of official backing or with new organization techniques.<sup>192</sup> Although the Vicariate of Solidarity was founded as a response to the abuse of power by the military regime, it evolved into an organization that was “committed to strengthening the popular organizations and to searching for new ways to resist and denounce arbitrary abuses.”<sup>193</sup> The Vicariate was so important not only because of the services it provided, but because it was essentially the only organization allowed to do so. In the bloody aftermath of the 1973 coup and throughout the Pinochet regime, “the families of the persecuted had nowhere to turn, with the conspicuous exception of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, a mission under the protection of the nation’s Catholic Church.”<sup>194</sup> During Pinochet’s regime, the Vicariate of Solidarity was one of the most vital human rights groups in all of Latin America, as evidenced by winning the UN human rights award. Moreover, political parties began to re-emerge in Chilean society in the beginning of the 1980s in large part due to the Vicariate’s support and defense for opposition groups.<sup>195</sup> The bishops were taken very seriously by all Chileans because they were perceived to be respected moral authorities. Their protest of the government, then, helped to legitimize the protest of the opposition groups in the eyes of more moderate citizens.

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<sup>191</sup>Fruhling, 127.

<sup>192</sup>Ibid.

<sup>193</sup>Ibid, 128.

<sup>194</sup>Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 144.

<sup>195</sup>Fruhling, 136.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Analysis of the Catholic Church's Influence

In *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict* Ackerman and Kruegler examine twelve internal characteristics of an opposition that they judge to be highly important to the overall success of nonviolent resistance. While these factors are not determinative, they find in their study that the twelve principles are the most salient features of strategic nonviolent conflict, “and that conformity with their broad recommendations will tend a nonviolent struggle toward success.”<sup>196</sup> In order to discover whether the role the Catholic Church played was important in the success of nonviolent resistance in Chile, I will analyze whether the Church played any role in enabling these principles. It is my goal, then, to analyze which of these factors were present in the case of Chile, and how many of those factors were influenced by the Catholic Church. It is my hypothesis that the Catholic Church indeed enabled or contributed to the majority of the twelve principles of success in the case of Chile. If this is the case, we will be able to see that the Catholic Church was indeed highly influential in the nonviolent downfall of Pinochet.

#### *Formulate Functional Objectives*

The first factor is the articulation of clear and tenable goals. The Church's statements served two roles in articulating the objectives of the opposition. First, the Church identified a central problem in Pinochet's regime that different political parties could agree to oppose, and secondly, it delineated the common goals the opposition to Pinochet would eventually pursue. By 1976 the hierarchy stated that their primary

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<sup>196</sup>Ackerman and Kruegler, 22.



objection to the Pinochet regime was the abuse of human rights; even more importantly, the Church called attention to the fact that these abuses were part of the overall system of the regime in a public statement written in September of 1976. They noted that “The actions which we denounce and condemn are not isolated incidents. They are part of an overall process or system... By a constant appeal to national security, a model of society is being consolidated which takes away basic liberties.”<sup>197</sup>

While the Church definitely helped to identify the central problem of the military regime as that of a lack of respect for human dignity, Ackerman and Kruegler note that an opposition also needs to articulate the specific steps necessary to reach the end goal, in this case the end of repression and the preservation of liberty. The Church articulated that it was democracy that was necessary in order to restore justice and dignity for Chileans; in March of 1977 the Permanent committee, the “official voice of the hierarchy”<sup>198</sup> stated:

“There will not exist full guarantees for the respect of human rights so long as the country does not have a Constitution, old or new, ratified by popular vote. Such guarantees will also be lacking so long as laws are not written by legitimate representatives of the citizenry, or while all the strictures of the state, from the highest to the lowest, are not subject to the Constitution and to a set of laws.”<sup>199</sup>

Here we can see the Church enumerating not only general respect for rights, but the specific means by which this goal could be reached. Moreover, through the publication *Solidarity* the Vicariate was able to communicate its work as well as its goals to a large number of Chileans and international supporters. Thus the Catholic Church was responsible for articulating the goal as well as the method of the opposition: to protect the

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<sup>197</sup>Bouvier, 65.

<sup>198</sup>Lowden, 130.

<sup>199</sup>Bouvier, 66.

lives and dignity of Chileans by re-instating a representative democracy where all people, even the government, are subject to laws.

### *Develop Organizational Strength*

According to Ackerman and Kruegler organizational strength refers to three different components. First, there must be the ability “to create new groups or turn preexisting groups and institutions into efficient fighting organizations.”<sup>200</sup> The Catholic Church’s ability to create the Vicariate of Solidarity, the primary opposition institution, as well as a second institution in 1977, the Vicaría de la Pastoral Obrera as a response to the particular needs of workers, shows that the Church was definitely able to create new groups that became important to the opposition.

Secondly, there must be a small group of credible leaders that are empowered to make decisions for the wider group of nonviolent protagonists. In the first nine years of the military regime, Cardinal Silva and the Episcopal Council filled this role. However, as political activity increased, there was greater need for political parties to unite and lead the political opposition. Indeed, one of the greatest contributions the Church made was to lead the way in helping different opposition groups become unified. The bitter relationship between the remnants of the PDC and the UP parties after the coup cannot be overstated. Though one might think that they would become natural allies, especially after the repression of PDC members increased in 1976, sharp divisions existed between the parties the first six years after the coup. This was primarily because of PDC’s support of the coup as inevitable and necessary and because it took the better part of two years before the PDC began to even partially oppose the regime. This division was a major

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<sup>200</sup>Ibid., 26.

obstacle, since any peaceful, democratic overthrow of Pinochet would necessitate an alliance between the left and the Christian Democrats. It was the Vicariate of Solidarity, however, that was able to foster the connections needed for a unified opposition.

The Church's political pluralism was crucial for its ability to organize an opposition that contained a multitude of different views. Indeed, the Peace Committee, and the Vicariate afterwards, encouraged people with different political persuasions to join its work as long as they were committed primarily to protecting human rights. This experience helped people of different political opinions to learn to work together for a common goal, an experience that greatly facilitated the formation of a number of different opposition groups under the unified *Acción Democrática*. The Church, in focusing the protest on moral grounds, helped to find a common matter of dispute that could join the political center and left.

A clear example of the Church bringing distinct opposition leaders together was the writing and signing of the National Accord. Regarding the formation of the National Accord, Cardinal Fresno and his advisors' mediating influence was at the least substantial, at the most decisive. To begin with, the leaders came because of Cardinal Fresno's request, and probably would not have met otherwise. Even more importantly, "the Church's auspices, Fresno's presence, and the sequence of bilateral sessions followed by group meetings, all made it easier for the participants to speak their minds, acknowledge common ground, and make concessions."<sup>201</sup> Furthermore, the fact that the Church presided over these meetings was important in the eyes of most Chileans, because it gave the National Accord an honorable stature. The Church then, helped to provide the

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<sup>201</sup>Fleet and Smith, 124.

organization necessary for leaders to come together to negotiate and establish their demands.

Lastly, there must be an “operational corp” whose primary jobs are to communicate decisions and basic information to the larger group of protagonists, to instruct and support the population how to react nonviolently, and to gather intelligence. The Peace Committee and then the Vicariate largely provided the operational corp for the opposition. As part of the Catholic hierarchy, the Vicariate was able to use the Catholic Church’s extensive networks. The Church also enabled growing opposition to spread their message through *Solidaridad* and Radio Chilena. Most importantly, however, were the human resources of the Vicariate, because it maintained a large staff that was very loyal to humanitarian principles. The staff was also, for the most part, “extremely skilled, even brilliant, professionals” made up of lawyers and social workers, who were able to bring the required expertise.<sup>202</sup> Thus, the Vicariate provided a quality operational corp as well as the methods necessary to spread news and messages.

#### *Secure Access to Material Resources*

This factor focuses on the access to material resources needed for survival such as food, clothing, medical supply, and shelter, but does not include other resources, such as political, social, or psychological, that are needed to support nonviolent struggle. Ackerman and Kruegler note that “deprivation can easily take as great a toll as their opponents’ attempts at repression,” but that an opposition’s “self-sufficiency with respect to food, clothing, energy, and medical supplies can contribute immeasurably to their

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<sup>202</sup>Ibid., 133.

ability to persevere.”<sup>203</sup> The Catholic Church was indubitably of vital importance in providing for the basic needs of those opposing the Pinochet regime. Medical care was provided by the establishment of five health clinics, placed in poor districts of Santiago.<sup>204</sup> The Committee for Peace also established a lunch service for children, which eventually provided over 20,000 people with daily meals.<sup>205</sup> The Vicariate established regional offices in twenty of the twenty-five provinces, through which they were able to provide over 700,000 people with legal, health, and nutritional services in the first four years of its existence. Indeed, in 1979 alone “over 5 million hot meals were served to hungry children.”<sup>206</sup> Although the Catholic Church helped all people, and not just those who resisted the Pinochet regime, the Catholic Church’s assistance in basic needs helped many in the lower and middle classes survive the brunt of economic hardship and repression while these people were too weak to mount an opposition. Many Catholic organizations, such as Caritas, were crucial in providing funding for basic material resources. Indeed, it was through drawing on its Catholic resources that the Vicariate was able to provide necessities, like medical attention and food to anyone who requested help. Below we will further examine the Church’s abilities to secure access to resources through its many external connections.

### *Cultivate External Assistance*

Indeed, the primary reason the Catholic Church was able to provide for Chilean’s physical needs was through its vast array of external contacts. The Peace Committee’s

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<sup>203</sup>Ackerman and Kruegler, 30.

<sup>204</sup>Lowden, 39.

<sup>205</sup>Ibid.

<sup>206</sup>Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile*, 319.

finances totaled \$1.8 million, of this 52.5 percent came from Protestant sources (most of it from the World Council of Churches), 43.7 percent from Catholic funds and the remaining amount came from either organizations abroad, many of which were Catholic in nature, and from Caritas Chile, the Catholic Church's largest social aid agency in Chile.<sup>207</sup> In general, between 1974 and 1979 Catholic organizations in Northern American and Western Europe donated more than \$67 million in money and materials to Chile.<sup>208</sup> Indeed, when the Vicariate was initially started non-confessional sources provided less than ten percent of the funding, consequentially making the religious sources crucial for the initial Church opposition.<sup>209</sup>

The Church's connections with a broad range of religious and human rights organizations proved to be an asset in more than financial ways. Indeed, it was at the prompting of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) that the ecumenically based National Committee for Aid of Refugees (CONAR) was began and which was able to help around 4,500 people get out of Chile in the first few months after the coup. An important organization that helped to provide funding for this effort was the World Council of Churches. The World Council of Churches was represented by a Presbyterian pastor named Charles Harper, who was anxious to expand the work of CONAR to help the Chileans that faced political persecution by remaining in the country. Harper told the Lutheran Church Bishop Helmut Frenz of his idea, who in turn communicated this idea to Mgr Ariztia, auxiliary bishop of the capital and to Cardinal Silva. The outcome of Harper's prompting was a meeting on the sixth of October in the

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<sup>207</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>208</sup>Ibid., 325.

<sup>209</sup>Ibid., 133.

archbishopric's offices for leaders from the Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Greek Orthodox Church, and the Jewish community, where the Ecumenical Committee of Cooperation for Peace in Chile was created. The Committee for Peace as well as the following Vicariate was financially supported in large part by the World Council of Churches. Hence, it was the Church's connections to religious sources that provided funding for the institutions that were partly inspired by the UN and the World Council of Churches.

*Expand the Repertoire of Sanctions*

The Catholic Church's form of resistance to the Pinochet regime was initially made up of the Committee for Peace that helped provide for the basic needs of supplicants. As need arose, however, the Committee expanded in order to provide legal assistance to families of victims of the Pinochet repression, to employees released of their jobs for political reasons, and to students and teachers expelled from universities.<sup>210</sup> This was followed by an official public statement made by the Chilean hierarchy criticizing the Pinochet government in 1974, and would be followed by many more. While these two forms of protest, aid for those oppressed and official critical statements from the hierarchy, were the initial base of the opposition that formed, the Church also began to encourage other forms of censure and protest.

The Vicariate began to publish a bi-weekly bulletin entitled *Solidaridad* throughout the country free of charge. It related accounts of the Vicariate's projects as well as problems affecting the country's workers, peasants, and students. It also related the status of investigations regarding disappeared persons, "the opinions of labor leaders

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<sup>210</sup>Fruhling, 123.

on the rights of unions, and recent papal and international Episcopal statements on social justice and human rights.”<sup>211</sup> Thus, the Vicariate was able to report on both hopeful changes it was making for the general improvement of Chileans and on the problematic issues of the military regime. The publication also managed to keep the regime’s worrying abuses of human rights in the forefront of social consciousness.

The Catholic hierarchy not only condemned the Pinochet regime within Chile, it also mobilized international condemnation and censure against the Pinochet regime. In 1975 the Committee for Peace reports were crucial to securing the first of many United Nations votes of censure against the Pinochet regime. This action was followed by the approval of the Kennedy Amendment of 1976 which suspended arms sales to Chile. Documents detailing many abuses of human rights provided by the Committee for Peace were also influential in the passage of this legislation.

After the regime realized that the lack of international support was truly damaging its interests, it began to take action to appease its critics. For example, the regime provided a general amnesty for “all authors and accomplices of crimes committed under the State of Siege in force between 11 September 1973 and 10 March 1978;” even more importantly, since the dismantling of DINA, the Vicariate had recorded no further disappearances.<sup>212</sup> The Church responded to the government’s actions by praising the positive steps the regime was taking and by initiating a “Year of Human Rights” that would include many national meetings and culminate in an international symposium entitled ‘The Church and the Rights and Duties of Man in the World Today.’ The Church decided that the motto of the year would be ‘Every Man has the Right to be a

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<sup>211</sup>Smith, 319.

<sup>212</sup>Lowden, 65.



Person,' which would emphasize "the Church's concern that the regime had denied many Chileans just that right: it was designed to be a startlingly simple and hence eminently didactic message."<sup>213</sup> Hence, when the regime showed itself responsive to public pressure, the Catholic Church accordingly began to use this chink in the regime's armor to call even more attention to the importance of human rights.

The 'Year of Human Rights' in turn encouraged several protests of the Pinochet regime where Churches and individuals who were victims of the repression collaborated. It began in May of 1978 when 62 relatives of people who had been 'disappeared' began a hunger strike in the Santiago UN International Children's Education Fund offices and in three parish chapels. The movement quickly gained momentum as other people began to join in the strike, and it resulted in a meeting between Cardinal Silva and the Episcopal Conference and civilian interior minister Fernández where the government promised to investigate the fate of the 'disappeared.' In turn, the Catholic hierarchy notified the strikers and asked the jubilant relatives to put an end to their fast. Although it was unlikely that any of the people who had been disappeared would return, this was the first time an effort put forth by the public had succeeded in convincing the Chilean regime to recognize the problem of those who had disappeared. In order to help with the investigations, "the Vicaría began working overtime to add to and complement its documentation of cases, which it sent to the Interior Minister in copious quantities in the course of June to August."<sup>214</sup> In these many examples we can see the Church leading the way towards opposing the military regime in an ever increasing number of ways. Although the Church initially began with a relief organization and critical statements, it

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<sup>213</sup>Ibid.

<sup>214</sup>Ibid., 66.

was eventually able to mobilize international criticism, thus helping to ensure the safety of protests made by the general public and opening the way for further public protests such as the hunger strikes.

*Attack the Opponents' Strategy for Consolidating Control*

The Catholic hierarchy, and especially Cardinal Silva, was the central voice that vocally attacked the military regime. In one of its more condemnatory public statements, in August of 1976 the Permanent Committee of the Episcopate Conferences stated:

“The actions which we denounce and condemn are not isolated incidents. They are part of an overall process or system that is very clearly delineated in its characteristics and which threatens to impose itself relentlessly throughout Latin America. By a constant appeal to national security, a model of society is being consolidated which takes away basic liberties, runs roughshod over the most fundamental rights and subjugates citizens to a dreaded and omnipotent police state.”<sup>215</sup>

In this statement the Chilean Church is responding directly to Pinochet's claims that in order to preserve security and peace, transgressions of human rights norms should be tolerated. Indeed, the Catholic Church is responding to the more general doctrine of national security that many military regimes in Latin America were based on, and stating that the negatives of the doctrine outweigh the positives of security.

The fact that the hierarchy was able to make statements condemning human rights abuses without severe repercussions by the regime, and the fact that these criticisms were perceived to be legitimate by a large number of Chileans as well as international observers, is directly linked to the status of the Church as a religious organization. My contention here is that because the civic organization involved in this case was religious, it gave a great amount of legitimacy to the opposition movement. Indeed, the military

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<sup>215</sup>Bouvier, 65.

government “dared not systematically attack religious institutions, which enjoyed high social prestige in Chile.”<sup>216</sup> Another important aspect was the support of Pope Paul as well as of his successor, Pope John Paul II, for the Vicariate. Indeed, Pope Paul’s support strengthened the resolve and the authority of Cardinal Silva for the creation of what would doubtlessly be a highly controversial organization. The support of the Popes also “underlined the point that if the regime demanded or forced the closure of the Vicaría, it would find itself in confrontation with the full authority of the Church in both its national and universal dimensions.”<sup>217</sup> Considering one of the reasons the military junta used to justify their coup was in order “to defend Christianity against Marxist atheism,” it would have been very difficult to turn on the Church after gaining power without showing itself to be a hypocrite of the worst kind.<sup>218</sup>

Finally, the institution of the Church was perceived to be a politically neutral entity. As discussed, the Church in Chile had striven to remain above the partisan political fray since the late 1960s and the fall of the Christian Democrats Party, and thus avoid alienating any of the different factions within lay society.<sup>219</sup> Indeed, even in the first several years of the military regime the Church as an institution tried to take a neutral political stance, as it had done with the Allende government before it. However, the Church eventually came to the conclusion that if it was to support human rights, it would have to oppose the Pinochet regime. Fleet and Smith summarize the importance of the Church’s criticism of the Pinochet regime thusly:

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<sup>216</sup>Cleary, 4.

<sup>217</sup>Lowden 131.

<sup>218</sup>Ibid.

<sup>219</sup>Ibid., 4.

As moral authorities and leaders of Chile's most respected national institution, the bishops were not as easily dismissed as other critics. Moreover, they could challenge the government's legitimacy in ways that others could not. Their public statements and positions offered an alternative to the 'order' of dictatorship and the 'chaos' of a still divided opposition movement whose radical elements gave many Chileans pause. In effect, the bishops made it possible for Chileans to reject the government before there was a viable alternative to it."<sup>220</sup>

The fact then, that the Church was seen as a legitimate institution that protected the Chilean people made it hard for the government to discredit their criticism, and also helped to reassure centrists that there was a viable option outside of the Allende of the Pinochet governments.

#### *Mute the Impact of the Opponents' Violent Weapons*

Although the Church could not stop all of the physical repression, it helped to mute the harmful effects on the general population, and especially on the poor and the middle-class that would eventually become the backbone of the opposition. As related, the Church began the Peace Committee less than a month after the attack in order to help people who were suffering from the harsh effects of the military coup and later, of the general repression. The Peace committee began by offering help to people who lacked jobs or other general resources, but also provided legal aid for people whose family members had been detained or gone missing.

Furthermore, the Church was able to impede the regime's repression of the opposition by virtue of its religious and authoritative position. Although all other civic organizations were monitored or shut down, the Church was able to operate fairly independently of the government and thus to provide a place where people who opposed the military coup could gather and be safe. As the Vicariate became a threat to the

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<sup>220</sup>Fleet and Smith, 119.

Pinochet regime and thus was under pressure to close down, Cardinal Silva and the Church hierarchy were able to protect the organization, because an attack against the Vicariate would have been perceived as an attack against the Catholic Church as whole, an act that even the brazen Pinochet would not attempt because of the international censure that would ensue. Hence, the work the Vicariate did opposing the regime was able to continue because of the protection the Catholic Church offered.

*Alienate Opponents from Expected Bases of Support*

The Church was at the forefront in leading the effort to expose the gross injustices of the military regime to the world, and thus to stem its financial support as well as its legitimacy from international backers. The Church was able to do this in two main ways: first, by gathering, recording and disseminating meticulous information about the repression, and secondly, it was rarely questioned when it presented this information because it was detailed and because it had the backing of the Catholic Church, an international institution widely recognized as legitimate. According to an Americas Watch report in 1987:

“The Vicaría’s work of documentation and analysis has not only served as an archival history of repression in Chile but has also provided a model for reliable, conservative methodology. The program of analysis records all cases undertaken by the Vicaría; these cases are the source of its published statistics on repression. The reports produced by the analysis program are an essential reference for human rights monitors in Chile and abroad and for such specialists as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Chile.”<sup>221</sup>

As testified to in this statement, part of the reason the information was perceived as credible was because it was so meticulous.<sup>222</sup> Indeed, the Vicariate’s work was used in

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<sup>221</sup>Ensalaco, 61.

<sup>222</sup>Lowden, 42.

many prominent and widely read international human rights reports, such as the ones published by Amnesty International as well as Americas Watch.

A specific example of the Vicariate using their information and legitimacy to deprive the Pinochet regime of support was when the Peace committee and the Vicariate provided information to the US Senate in 1976 regarding the human rights abuses that were so prevalent. The Kennedy Amendment, which suspended arms sales to Chile, was approved in large part due to the information on human rights abuses provided by the Peace Committee and the Vicariate. The respect granted them as Church organizations “served to lend considerable weight to the argument that the Pinochet regime should be treated as a pariah.”<sup>223</sup> Furthermore, in 1977 the United States issued a drastic cut in aid funding from \$20.6 million in 1976 to \$0.6 million in 1977.<sup>224</sup> In turn, the Chilean government reacted by releasing 302 political prisoners. Even more dramatically, in August of the same year the government declared DINA to be dismantled and to be replaced with a new organization, the National Information Center (CNI). The abolishment of DINA drastically reduced the number of disappearances. In this way the information provided by the Vicariate and legitimized by the Catholic hierarchy was able to deprive Pinochet of certain measures of support that in turn led to small changes in his behavior and to advantages for the opposition.

#### *Maintain Nonviolent Discipline*

The Church was highly influential in this factor because it clearly guided the opposition to resist in a nonviolent manner. Although there were a few sporadic

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<sup>223</sup>Lowden, 61.

<sup>224</sup>Ibid., 62.

incidents of violence, this did not pertain to the majority of the opposition groups.

Indeed, the Church condemned violence harshly due to moral objectives but also due to pragmatic ones. They realized that violent resistance simply gave the military junta a legitimate reason to increase violent repression. In 1979 the Permanent Committee issued a letter stipulating that it was people's duty to disarm sinful structures "without violence or hate but with firmness."<sup>225</sup>

One of the most powerful ways the Church discouraged the use of violence was the policy of the Vicariate that stated it would not defend victims of the regime who were themselves guilty of violence. This was a considerably influential policy, since the Church provided free and fair protection for almost anyone who was a victim of the regime. The reasoning for this policy was two-fold: first, the Church did not want to do anything that may seem to even be tacitly giving its support for violence, and secondly, "the analysis within the Vicaria was that such actions were counter-productive and did no more than strengthen the regime by offering it a pretext for its repression."<sup>226</sup>

*Assess Events and Options in Light of Levels of Strategic Decision Making*

Almost immediately after the coup the Church, which was the only Chilean institution that had the freedom to still operate, formulated a plan to help foreigners and Chileans escape or bear the repression of the military regime. There was also an official body of different church representatives created to make decisions for COPACHI. The initial strategy was defensive in nature and designed to not directly confront the military regime. As more and more information was accumulated and produced by the Peace

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<sup>225</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>226</sup>Ibid., 76.

Committee, the Church began to re-evaluate the military regime's repression. As the Church leaders realized that the repression was systematic and widespread, and as the Committee for Peace came under attack by the government, the Catholic hierarchy developed a new plan. In a formal assessment that took place on at the 1976 New Year Council of the Vicars of the Archbishopric of Santiago, Cardinal Silva proposed a new institution to the council, who recognized the need for an organization like the Peace Committee to exist, but they also recognized that it would need to have more protection in order to be safe from the government. Thus they unanimously created the Vicariate of Solidarity with its special status as an organization that belonged exclusively to the Catholic Church. Hence, before a separate political opposition was able to form, the Council of the Vicars formed a committee that made decisions for the opposition organizations, the Committee for Peace and subsequently, the Vicariate of Solidarity.

*Adjust Offensive and Defensive Operations According to Vulnerability*

There are many examples of the Catholic hierarchy changing tactics in an attempt to adjust to the military regime's level of repression. Perhaps the most crucial change, related above, that occurred was when the Peace Committee was closed down by the government in 1975, and the hierarchy realized that an ecumenical structure associated with the Catholic Church was not sufficient protection from the Pinochet regime. Hence, Cardinal Silva decided to create the Vicariate, an institution that was similar to the Peace Committee in the work it did, but he decided to make it distinct from the Committee in that it had "the full institutional and hierarchical authority" of the Catholic Church to protect it.<sup>227</sup> In order to accomplish this Cardinal Silva made the Vicariate a specifically

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<sup>227</sup>Ibid., 51.



Catholic organization created by the institution of the hierarchy. Furthermore, Cardinal Silva placed the Vicariate headquarters in a building adjoining the Cathedral in the center of Santiago, hence giving it public prominence and institutional legitimacy in its location next to the main Catholic Church. Although “the Church had lost a tactical skirmish with the government, the strategy of the cardinal was shrewd and foresighted. The new Vicariate of Solidarity was more closely tied to the official Church than its processor, making it both easier for the bishops to control and harder for the government to smash without directly attacking the core of the Church itself.”<sup>228</sup> Cardinal Silva and the Catholic hierarchy was thus able to adapt and respond to the closing of the Committee for Peace by creating a new institution that would be even more effective than the previous committee because it was given the direct protection of the Catholic Church.

Another example of the Catholic hierarchy’s ability to adjust to different levels of repression is the initial emphasis on rescue operations with the ecumenical organization, CONAR. In order to pursue defensive action on behalf of the people who were being oppressed, a pact was made between the military regime and Cardinal Silva. Less than a month after the coup, Cardinal Silva met with the four military leaders of the regime in which the new government promised that they would not limit the institutional freedoms of the Church, if the Church agreed to accept the legitimacy of the government and to help in the reconstruction of Chile. The Cardinal, realizing that all other social institutions that could help in the current emergency situation had been shut down, agreed in large part out of the desire to preserve the Church’s freedom in order to carry out

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<sup>228</sup>Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile*, 318.

social and religious programs.<sup>229</sup> In 1976, when the United Nations had already censured the Pinochet regime for human rights abuses and the international sphere was carefully watching, the hierarchy adjusted to the increased freedom by publicly calling the regime's legitimacy into question and denouncing the frequent human rights abuses. Hence, the Church adjusted to vulnerability with defensive measures that enabled it to continue its basic work of helping Chileans who were suffering from the repression, and adjusted to decreasing vulnerabilities by going on the offensive against the regime.

*Sustain Continuity between Sanctions, Mechanisms, and Objectives*

In the first phase of the resistance where almost all opposition occurred under the protection of the Catholic Church, continuity between objectives, mechanisms and sanctions was provided by the Church. The primary goal was the protection of civilians, especially those who were affiliated with left or center political parties since it was these people bearing the brunt of the repression. Many of the Catholic leaders believed that the repression was sporadic and in large part due to overzealous officers at the lower levels of command. Thus, the primary mechanism initially used was conversion; the tools used by the Church were defensive in that they helped to take care of the people who were suffering, but they were largely focused on persuading government officials to protect human rights by informal means such as private meetings where Church clergy would petition a government official on behalf of a particular person, and through formal means, such as the statements the Church hierarchy released encouraging the government to ensure respect for human dignity. As the repression continued, however, and the Catholic Church became convinced that human rights would not be protected without a

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<sup>229</sup>Ibid., 290.

new constitutional and democratic government, the re-establishment of democracy became the new goal. The Church began to focus on mechanisms of accommodation and coercion, such as hunger strikes, convincing international allies to cut off aid, and even excommunication.

### *Conclusion*

Thus, the Catholic Church impacted every single one of these factors, although in varying degrees. The most significant contributions that were attested to in this research were the Church's formulation and articulation of general and specific objectives for the opposition to focus on, specific criticism of the Pinochet regime's human rights abuses that delegitimized its standing among Chileans as well as the international community, the creation of strong opposition organizations that collected information on victims, provided aid, and supplied a place where people of different political persuasions could come together and work for human rights, the large number of external connections that provided it with resources, and the work of creating a united opposition.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusions

From this research we can conclude that in the case of the nonviolent resistance to Pinochet, the Catholic Church was indeed an important factor. Considering that it had at least some degree of impact on every single one of the twelve fundamental principles that are central for a successful nonviolent movement, the Catholic Church was definitely important in the success of the nonviolent action that peacefully voted Pinochet out of office. Hence, if scholars are to discover when nonviolence can be effective, they must add religion as a factor to their analyses.

While we may be reasonably certain that the Catholic Church exerted a strong positive influence on the nonviolent action in Chile from 1973-1988, this research obviously does not mean that religion will always have a positive influence on nonviolent opposition. Indeed, in other places in Latin America where similar regimes existed, such as Argentina, the Catholic Church did very little to oppose the regime. Why, then, do some churches choose to oppose repressive governments? Perhaps a review of the particular circumstances that made the Chilean Catholic Church able and willing to oppose the regime will shed some light on this question.

First of all, by 1973 the Chilean Catholic hierarchy was independent from the government and had adopted a neutral stance towards the nation's political parties. Although Vatican II encouraged this separation from the state, there were also a number of specific occurrences in Chile that fostered this separation. The movement of the general population away from the right, the increasingly different viewpoints of clergy,

and finally, the people's disenchantment with the PDC, the political party closely associated with the Catholic Church in the 1960s, all served to reinforce the Second Vatican Council's encouragement to be distinct from the nation. We can conclude then that before a religious institution can serve as an opposition, it must be at least somewhat separated from close political ties with the government.

Although the Catholic Church had taken a neutral stance towards political parties by the 1970s, it was not neutral regarding values. Indeed, the Church hierarchy continued to promote justice and human dignity by calling attention to the plight of the poor and of the workers and by promoting reforms that would help the disenfranchised people of Chile. While outside forces, such as Vatican II, had helped to reinforce the clergy's interest on social issues, changes inside the Chilean Church had already moved it towards more social engagement. Organizations such as Catholic Action had successfully drawn a large number of Catholic's attention to Chile's social ills as evidenced by the emergence of Falange, the Christian centrist movement, over 20 years before Vatican II occurred. Furthermore, the Catholic Church also valued nonviolence, peaceful negotiations, and the process of democracy. Without these values guiding the Church's response to Pinochet's regime, it is uncertain whether it would have risked persecution by and alienation of the military government for the issue of human rights.

Finally, the Catholic Church was highly respected within and outside of Chile. This, in turn gave it legitimacy when it criticized the Pinochet regime in Chile, or when it issued calls for aid and weapons to be suspended to Chile in the international community. Without the respect given to the national as well as to the worldwide Catholic Church, it

is likely that Pinochet would have been able to persecute it relentlessly without fear of repercussion.

Hence, we can see that the Chilean Church's independence from political parties, its concern for social issues and human rights, and its world-wide legitimacy were all important preconditions for its opposition of Pinochet. This explanation for the Chilean Church's actions, however, is in no way encompassing. Indeed, it may be highly profitable for scholars to more closely examine why it is that some religious institutions and beliefs foster nonviolent action while others do not. Increased academic work in this area may help nonviolent activists to create the conditions by which more religious individuals and institutions would support nonviolent action as a response to social or political problems. I anticipate that this research will encourage new studies that examine the role religion may have played in other instances of nonviolent action. Indeed, considering the prominent role the Catholic Church holds in places such as Poland and the Philippines, it is likely that the Catholic Church may have also wielded great influence in those specific instances of nonviolent action. Ultimately, my hope is that further research in the area of religion and nonviolence will contribute to a more peaceful world by providing a way for individuals, whether religious or not, to seek justice through nonviolence.

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