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GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

GOTHENBURG STUDIES IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

13

THE DILEMMAS OF EXILE

MARITA EASTMOND

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS GOTHOBURGENSIS

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Chilean refugees in the U.S.A.

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ACTA UNIVERSITATIS GOTHOBURGENSIS

Gothenburg Studies in Social Anthropology 13

© Marita Eastmond, 1997
ISBN 91-7346-312-4
ISSN 0348-4076

Published and Distributed by

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS GOTHOBURGENSIS
P.O. Box 5096
S-402 22 Göteborg, Sweden.

Printed in Gothenburg by
Vasastadens Bokbinderi AB, 1997

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PREFACE

The present text is in all its essential parts the text of my doctoral dissertation submitted in 1989. At that time, as I was concluding my liminal existence as a doctoral student, many of the Chilean exiles in the study were preparing to conclude their own ordeal and return home. At last, with a democratic opening in Chile, there was a light at the end of the tunnel. They, as well as I, were looking forward to returning to "normal life", although for most, that life turned out to be something very different from what we had imagined.

Many returnees failed to establish economically viable lives in Chile and, in deep disappointment, went back to the U.S.A. There, some joined the group of exiles who, fraught with ambivalence, seem to be forever awaiting "the right moment" to return, while others make repeated attempts to reestablish themselves at home. There are those who commute between the two countries in a more regular fashion: especially older couples with a U.S. pension, torn between the longing to live (and die) in Chile, and being with their children and grandchildren, who have made the host country their home. Some of the young couples, returning to Chile with some savings, new skills, and bold ideas are today running their own small businesses. Such outcomes often required at least some connection to the more affluent strata of the Chilean middle class.

While economic survival proved to be a major obstacle to reintegration, it was not the only one. All of the returnees, as far as I am aware, struggled, and some still do, with a sense of estrangement in the encounter with their country, its politics and, in particular, with the Left. The home they had imagined proved to be less than hospitable, and the sense of dislocation, so familiar from the first years in exile, re-emerged on return.

An important focus of this study has been the reorganized social relations following displacement and the symbolic construction of the Chilean exile experience. The dilemmas and discourses of exile that the study identifies are in many ways the unique expressions of the Chilean Left in a particular moment of history. However, today the Chilean experience can

also be recognized within a more general paradigm. I am referring to the field of study of diasporas that has emerged in the last decade as part of an increasing interest in transnational community and identity formations. Diaspora identities are based on a collective history of dispersal and a continued orientation to a homeland, a condition being invoked today by a wide range of dispersed populations with different historical situations. In Chilean and other similar discourses of diaspora, the present is symbolically constructed as a liminality, framed by displacement and the desire to return to the lost home. In this condition, their homeland, culture and history are essentialised and celebrated, and the relation to the host country is depicted as one of distance or alienation. The discourses seek to mediate the tension between here and there, past and present, loss and hope, in the Chilean symbolism represented as a struggle between life and death. The collective identity is rooted in the notion of the homeland but realized through multiple transnational links connecting dispersed communities in many places and extending to the homeland. Significantly, a common predicament for many invoking diasporic existence is also the ambiguous relationship between ideology and lived experience, between life as it is and life as it should be, and an ambivalence towards the imagined future as it appears to become realizable.

As the Chilean case demonstrates, even as return in a physical sense is accomplished, translocal existence, as a form of life and a mode of thought, may persist, for some as a continuing sense of disjuncture. The dilemma of exile, grounded in a notion of a significant but unrealized connection to a home, may well continue over time and irrespective of place.

Göteborg, May 1997
Marita Eastmond

Acknowledgments
I am indebted first of all to the community of Chilean exiles for making this study possible. The assistance of others, in later stages of the work process, was equally important for the completion of this study. My gratitude to Professor William Arens, Dr. Ulla-Britt Engelbrektsson, Professor Roy Willis, Dr. Andrew Gray, Dr. Hans Antlöv and the other colleagues at the Department of Social Anthropology at Göteborg University who read and commented on the manuscript. The cover illustration, entitled Resistencia, is by Patricio Madera. Very special thanks are due to Marc Eastmond for designing the cover lay-out. The study was made possible by a grant from the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

1. INTRODUCTION
Refugees, Power relations and Existence

Ours is the century of the refugee (Said, 1984). Since the 1960s, there have been increasingly massive population movements from and within Third World countries, reflecting complex postcolonial processes engendering conflicts and social upheavals. In particular, the exodus of political refugees from repressive Latin American regimes in the past few decades has been unprecedented. In a world of escalating refugee problems, social science is challenged to address the issue, to develop concepts and perspectives to better understand the human responses to drastic and involuntary social change. This study is concerned with the particular dilemma of Chilean exile. The aims are to explore the experience of exile and its cultural expression for a population of Chilean political refugees in the United States of America.

The study of refugees and exile spans over diverse disciplines and encompasses a wide range of issues and perspectives.[1] However, it is increasingly being recognized that analyses of causes and solutions must include the perspectives of the refugees themselves (*e.g.* Harrell-Bond, 1986; Colson, 1987). To redress the imbalance of the more typical macro-oriented research, social anthropological studies can provide urgently needed insights into how refugees understand and act on their predicament, using and adapting the social and cultural resources at their disposal. Furthermore, with its attention to the interlinkages between domains of social experience, anthropology is of particular relevance for this kind of enquiry. Social science may, in turn, benefit from the study of the processes associated with forced migration and expand our understanding of the dynamics of social change.

As a sociological concept of current usage, "forced migration" is a broad category that includes a variety of forces of expulsion or "push factors." In contrast to those who leave freely, in search of a better life, refugees usually flee or are expelled from their homeland, often at short notice, knowing

little of what awaits them. And while all migrants may nurture a desire to return home some day, refugees are usually unable to do so by legal and political constraints beyond their control.

Not surprisingly, the definition of a refugee is not only difficult, but also deeply controversial. Distinctions are ambiguous and have political implications[2], often subject to changing policies by host countries. Not all involuntary migrants are recognised as refugees in the narrower legal term of present international policies[3]. The Chilean refugees of this study were forced into exile as active supporters of a political movement at home. "Exile," which is not a legal term, has historical roots in the ancient political institution of banishment, while "refugee" is a concept new to this century. In the popular connotation of these terms, exile alludes more to the individual fate, connected to moral and ideological consciousness and action. "Refugee," on the other hand, conjures up images of the wretched masses of displaced people, faceless victims of mass population movements in the contemporary world. (Said, 1984, Lundberg, 1989). The Chilean exodus of large numbers of politicized actors combined both these dimensions.

While causes and consequences are diverse and complex, common ground in the refugee condition would seem to lie in the forced uprooting from a familiar reality and the open-ended uncertainty of existence in a country other than one's own. The ambiguity of definitions and the struggle with identities over time, compounding legal, ideological and existential dimensions, reflect the essence of this condition (Tabori, 1972). Whereas the legal and political status may change, the condition for the individual may, in existential terms, last a life-time.[4]

A study of the social and cultural responses to forced uprooting and exile must identify the historical contexts and larger socio-political processes that generate refugees and structure their condition in exile. These involve both the country of expulsion and the country that receives them. All forced migration is an expression of domination and control, and must be located within the context of power relations. Circumstances are often complex and varied, involving *e.g.* foreign occupation or conquest as in the case of Palestinian, Afghan or Tibetan exile, or internal conflicts and directed persecutions of different kinds. The vast exodus of refugees from the Latin American left in the 1970s stemmed from failed revolutions of popular governments, replaced by authoritarian military regimes. Thus, there are important historical and structural differences between exile groups. Some, like the Palestinian exile, span over many generations, affect an entire people

and occupation of native land, with a need to maintain their entire political center in exile.

Similarly, responses and strategies of exiles take different forms, depending on traditions and perceptions of the refugees themselves, and the circumstances and resources at hand in the new setting. One collective response may be organized opposition, even armed resistance such as *e.g.* South African or Palestinian exile movements. Struggles are also fought on the symbolic level, as in the case of Tibetans (Nowak, 1984) or the Hmong revival movement described by Tapp (1988). Symbolic resources are vital means of resistance, not only in a power struggle with the oppressive regimes, but as maintenance of cultural identity. As in the case of all displaced groups or "movements of the disinherited" (Worsley, 1968), power relations and existence are closely intertwined.

Chilean Political Exile

In Latin America, exile has been a recurring historical feature since independence. Chilean governments have often used it in the past as an instrument of political control over the opposition. However, unlike previous periods of exile, the expulsion of opponents following the military coup in 1973 was of a much larger scale and not quickly followed by amnesty (Angell and Carstairs, 1987). The events in countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile (*e.g.* Collier, 1979) reflected new militarized and authoritarian regimes emerging in response to radical political currents in the 1960s and 1970s.

In their aim for economic and political transformations, the new Chilean regime employed systematic repression to eliminate the left, which they characterized as "the Marxist cancer." Many exiles went directly from prison, detained without trial or commuting sentences for exile. Others fled from detention orders or similar forms of persecution, including dismissals from their jobs. Many since have left as the new economic policies have made survival very difficult. Chilean exile in the 1970s was characterized by extensive persecution, flight and dispersal of large numbers of political opponents in countries all over the world. International agencies had resettled about 30,000 Chilean refugees by 1979, including many detainees in prisons and concentration camps throughout Chile.[5] Most were resettled in other Latin American countries or in Europe. A government decree law in 1975 made it possible for those who had been tried and sentenced for political reasons to apply to have their sentence commuted to exile. The

majority of the male Chileans of this study were among the approximately 3,000 prisoners who left under this program. Their return was prohibited without government authorization. In the Chilean exile communities that formed in the diaspora, political resistance became an integral part of reconstructing life in exile. As members of a political movement, the Chileans had a relation to the political struggle in Chile which formed the basis for collective organization and identity in exile. As with many politicized exile groups, return to Chile took on a special meaning, as part of the political project for return to a democratic order (see *e.g.* Fagen, 1973; Patterson, 1977). In view of the instability of Latin American military regimes in the past, the Chilean exile was not expected to last.

United States as host country

Survival in exile, physically and politically, involves the hospitality of and recognition by a host. A vital concern of many refugee populations is that of community and cultural maintenance. General conditions of settlement, including state policies and support structures greatly influence the outcome. In passing the Refugee Act in 1980, the U.S., like many other Western nations at the time, distinguished between refugees and immigrants as a matter of law and policy and established institutional support structures of settlement. The majority of refugees admitted since then have been South-East Asians.[6] Before 1980, refugees were accepted on a case to case basis, and the provision of assistance was a private rather than public responsibility (Howell, 1982). Recognition of refugee status by a host country usually reflects foreign policy considerations. While large numbers of Cubans or applicants from former allies in South East Asia have been admitted to the U.S., those arriving from *e.g.* Haiti or El Salvador have usually not been granted refugee status.[7] Comparatively few of the exiled Latin American left were resettled in the U.S. In 1976, by an ironic twist of political fate, Chilean refugees were admitted to the United States, which they perceived as the major enemy and ally of the Chilean dictatorship. As "paroled refugees," the total of four-hundred Chilean exiles and their families were assigned a conditional residence status.

The host country may differently facilitate refugees' own hopes and strategies.[8] This process is an interactive one, in which arriving groups have to negotiate their presence and a viable identity vis-a-vis their hosts. The role of the host country in shaping, maintaining or changing the projects and self-definitions of refugees has only recently been paid attention to.[9] The history of the U.S. as a country of permanent resettlement (many

refugees, such as those fleeing Nazi Germany, had no country to return to) conflicted with the return orientation of the Chilean refugees. Assumptions of settlement programs may oppose refugees' own culturally informed strategies and efforts to organize their lives. What may appear to the hosts as tradition-bound behaviour causing adaptation difficulties may in fact be collective coping strategies and efforts to maintain cultural identity in exile.

The fate of an exile population over time is also bound up with the developments in the home country. Within a political movement, some will maintain their struggle against the oppressive regime in exile (as *e.g.* South-African and Palestinian organizations. Others will become marginalized as interior political opposition takes over the political initiative (*e.g.* the Spanish Republican exiles described by Fagen, 1973). With time, the struggle of some groups becomes fragmented and merely symbolic as members are dispersed and integrate into the host society. However, although "adjustment" is often equated by the host with integration and seen as a matter of time, refugees cannot *a priori* be assumed to be reconciled with their fate in the new society. The threat is always one of political marginalization and alienation. Baskauskas' study (1981) of Lithuanian refugees after some thirty years in the U.S. show how refugees' loss of their country can remain a significant dimension of their lives and communities after many years in exile.[10]

Focus and Framework of the Study

Considering the number of Latin American refugees fleeing from the new military regimes in the 1970s, research is scarce, in particular with respect to socio-cultural dimensions of exile. Studies on the Latin American left in exile have focussed either on the political crises at national level or on personal responses to uprooting and exile. Kay's (1987) study of Chilean refugees in Scotland connects these two levels of the dilemma and explores gender issues and social change from the point of view of women in exile. Lundberg (1989) studied the experience of young, intellectual Latin American exiles in Sweden and Western Europe through the concept of personal careers. Despite a different emphasis, these two studies provide useful comparative material.

Very little is known, however, about the social and cultural life of the many Latin American exile communities established in different parts of the world.[11] This study is concerned in particular with how Chilean exiles attempt to reconstruct their lives and organizations in exile, understand

and express their collective predicament. Many exiles are victims of concentrated attacks by the state upon their bodies and minds. How are these experiences interpreted, resisted and represented? Thus, this is an enquiry into the major themes of exile as a problematic reality, as perceived and represented in a small local community resettled in Northern California. It focusses on the social and cultural processes through which the exile experience, located within a particular historical setting and socio-political context, is given structure and meaning.

While vulnerability and dependence often mark the social position of refugees, at least initially, they are not resourceless. Refugees are not passive victims going through the stages as macro-oriented adaptation models would seem to suggest. They negotiate the terms of their condition with the social and cultural resources at their disposal. A guiding assumption of this study then is the view of human beings as social agents in the historical process, as opposed to perceiving them as being passive receptacles of meanings and determined by social structures. Even within the massive contraints that confront displaced refugees, they continue to strive to "author their lives" (Myerhoff, 1986). As Jackson points out, "people... make their own destinies within a social and historical context which has already been made by others at other times..." (1982:1) and, "in other places" one might add, in a world of migrants and refugees.

The exile experience

Chilean exile emerged out of a political crisis at structural levels which entailed personal crises in individuals' lives. Exploring their experience as collective process involves examining the cultural and ideological frameworks in which exile as problematic reality is interpreted. Equally relevant are the group processes in which such meanings are collectively created, upheld, contested or modified over time. The "exile experience" as used here refers to an inter-subjective process in which exiles collectively interpret, negotiate and act on their condition in the social context of the host society, but also in a complex and ongoing relation with the home country and the past.

Socio-cultural change in conditions of forced migration is both more complex and ambiguous than linear models of "refugee adaptation" assume.[12] Psychological studies of Latin-American refugees have compared individuals' responses to such change with the responses to bereavement (*e.g.* Muñoz, 1983). The perspective of this study suggests that personal crises may be shared and culturally constituted through a variety of expressions in social and ritual interaction. The multiple contradictions of imposed change

confronting an exile collectivity will be explored with the concept of liminality as coined by van Gennep (1908) and elaborated by Turner (1967; 1969). In particular the notion of ambiguity is useful here. However, unlike the predictable outcome of ritual transitions as part of the normal social order, exile is a response to the disruption of the social order itself. Return and reintegration, while part of the exile ideology, is far from a given outcome. Exile is essentially open-ended, a condition which generates new uncertainties and dilemmas as the duration of exile is prolonged. With social and cultural change in the new country, the very premises of that ideological project may be challenged.

Ritual and ceremony are collective means to focus on a problematic reality, to hold it up for special symbolic commentary. Such performances may also structure experience and meaning (*e.g.* Kapferer, 1986). These occasions are a form of collective expression of the exile experience as well as a force in shaping and negotiating its meaning, (Bruner, 1986) and defining a collective exile identity. These themes are explored through different performances of expressive culture, such as music and drama, and the annual commemoration mass in the exile community. The performances involve symbols and rituals in the context of social process, *i.e.* the emergence of forms of articulation is part of an interaction with ongoing social and political processes. While these occasions draw on symbolic forms and meanings developing among the opposition in Chile, they take on new meanings in the local exile context, "inventing traditions" in Hobsbawm's sense (1983). In response to imposed social change, such collective acts also attempt to hold firm such processes (Moore and Myerhoff, 1977; Eastmond, 1988a) and to resolve symbolically the contradictions and ambiguities attendant on the situation.

Exile as total social fact

Exile, as one of the most profound dilemmas of the human experience, is "...that unhealable rift between a human being and his native place, between the self and its true home" (Said, 1984:49). Exile represents a social disruption at structural levels which leaves no domain of social experience untouched, with profound and existential consequences. In the words of the Argentinian writer, Julio Cortázar, exile is the kind of political phenomenon which "touches bottom" in humans' lives. The condition affects the lives of refugees in all their vital dimensions—social, cultural, emotional and even physical—as it ruptures the basis of the social world of those affected and attacks their ontological security.[13]

Uprooting and displacement involves a sequence of ruptures with the familiar and lived-in reality. In the Chileans' case, this was part of the political strategy of the regime that expelled them. Imprisonment and torture, followed by expulsion in different ways sever the connection to social networks and cultural contexts that sustain meanings and identities and give people a sense of control over their lives. This experience of compounded rupture and loss was described by the Chileans as *desnudos*, as being dispossessed, divested of everything. In exile, the process of social disintegration threatens to be further reinforced. In many of the industrialized Western host societies, the more individual-oriented ideology and settlement policies underscore personal self-sufficiency, and undermine refugees' traditional social ties and bases of collective authority. A response to rupture and forced change is the attempt to re-establish the social and cultural bases threatened by disintegration. For the Chilean exiles, this was not only a cultural survival strategy but also a form of active resistance to the new military regime in Chile; it was a means to resist the threat of dispersal and disintegration. Physical survival, but also the maintenance of family, political organization, community and the values and visions of the movement defied their perpetrators' strategy of annihilation. Aspects of social life which in Chile had been part of everyday routine, took on new and forceful meanings in exile, as symbols of the heritage that must be preserved. Life in exile became public, as the condition touched every part of social life

Ambiguity: The problems of time and place

Forcibly removed from the native land, but with a project to return, lives are put "on hold" in exile. The past and the future are the important reference points. The future seems to extend directly from the past[14], with the present as a temporary anomaly, a suspended existence. As Brecht's poem on exile (1964) so poignantly states, the present only makes sense in terms of exile as provisional existence. Thus, looking forward is always looking back. This dichotomy of time and place infuses the exile experience. The tendency may be to freeze the past and live in "two worlds," with an "unhealable rift between the self and the its true home" (Said, 1984:49). This can leave "the mover in limbo, unable and unwilling to become fully part of his life in exile for fear that in doing so he will forfeit his life in his 'native place'"(Abu-Lughod, 1988:62). For the Chileans, the response was both emotional, a reaction to forced separation and loss, as well as ideologically motivated, a construct promoted by the political movement. The personal and the poli-

tical was intimately intertwined, with the past inescapably present, in memories and traumas, in continuing obligations to those left behind, and to the unfinished political project. Like the guards in Dante's inferno, whose heads and bodies are facing different ways, exiles, too, tend to be "betwixt and between" in an ambiguous existence (Turner, 1967). They exist in two realities, yet not fully in either.[15]

Dilemma: Continuity and change

While change is an inevitable fact of social experience, it holds a deep moral dilemma for political exiles, often associated with betrayal. Continuity, on the other hand, holding on to a past that no longer is, may mean increasing alienation and anomie. Not only is life in the American context changing, but the Chilean reality is also changing in their absence. The threat involves a double estrangement, in an existence which is permanently provisional, often depicted symbolically as social death. For the individual, the uncertainty and multiple ambiguity entails not only a crisis of meaning but also one of identity. The situation creates a struggle to resolve the paradox, to "come back to life" as one Chilean exile put it, to create new meanings out of the contradiction between past and present.

Uprooting and displacement will inevitably transform people, their way of life, social relationships and the meanings they ascribe to them. But in this process, exiles are nevertheless agents of their own destinies. They will inevitably resist, in ways that are culturally relevant to them, to the conditions imposed upon them, negotiate their presence and formulate their strategies. To paraphrase Jackson (1982), the exiles have not chosen their predicament, but they choose themselves within it. As the Chilean exiles themselves put it, "We are survivors, not victims." This study examines that choice, the struggle and anguish that goes with it and its social and cultural manifestations.

A Note on Method: Working with Survivors

Anthropological enquiries into how other people understand themselves and their world rely on interpretation. In this endeavour, I have used different techniques and kinds of data. A good deal of information has been obtained from informants' accounts, matched by participant observation in different contexts of interaction. To explore vital concerns and cultural themes in a society or a group, attention should be paid to what people tell themselves, and others, about themselves (Rosaldo, 1986). For this pur-

pose, cultural performances of different kinds are used to explore symbolic themes of the exile experience, as being at once a collective expression of this experience and an active part in its cultural construction. Furthermore, life histories contributed to a greater in-depth understanding of themes of exile in individual lives and the changes and dilemmas over time. They provided other insights as well, which I will return to below.

The period of fieldwork covered only part of the extensive exile period. I entered the field nearly a decade after the Chilean refugees had arrived. Events preceding that point had to be built on reconstructions with a wide range of informants. Retrospective accounts, as edited past, have obvious limitations. Though they may provide that which is recalled and meaningful to the narrator, they also represent a reworked understanding of the past in the light of present experience. However, to some extent I was helped by the fact that the exiles were extremely conscious about change, because of the dilemma it involved. Often, informants would spontanteously comment on how their own perspectives on some particular aspect had changed over the years. Also, where accounts of past events in the community varied between informants, these were explored further until a reasonably coherent and plausible picture emerged. I was greatly helped in this by the views of outsiders such as the volunteer workers with long and intimate knowledge of the Chilean community since their arrival.

My interest also included the relation exiles maintained to Chile, and fieldwork was extended with a month and a half in Chile. Apart from getting a general "feel" for Chilean culture in Chile (as opposed to exile), the visit gave me a chance to trace family and other networks, appreciate social backgrounds and obtain an idea of the meaning of relationships to exiles from the relatives' points of view. I also visited one of the families from the community who had returned home. Another vital source of data emerged from the forms and themes of political expression among the political opposition inside Chile. They provided new perspectives and insights on the cultural performances in the exile community.

Considering the political vulnerability of these refugees, worried about infiltration, trust between them and the fieldworker was fundamental. Some exiles had recently had their names appear on the lists issued by the military regime of those who could not return. My personal contacts with Chilean exiles and many years of "solidarity work" for Chile with Chileans in Sweden helped to validate my reliability in this respect. My background was easily checked, which suggests the active and extensive contacts among the Chilean global diaspora.

Conspiracies of silence

In every society and group there are no doubt "conspiracies of silence," areas of experience not willingly or easily talked about, especially with outsiders. For all refugees in alien contexts, there is always a problem, which is not merely a matter of language, in conveying their past to outsiders. In the case of the Chilean exiles, the painful experiences related to the violations of bodies and minds is such an area.

Very few of the exiles would spontaneously speak about their traumatic experiences in Chilean underground detention centers and prison camps, or other personal losses they may have suffered. After the coup, most of them had lived close to death in different ways; fearing for their own lives or grieving the loss of others. I never probed the issue further if a hesitation on the part of an informant was noticed. The reluctance to explore painful fragments of the past seemed to be stronger for men than for women. The difficulty partly lies in the nature of the experience as such—a profound violation and dehumanization (Allodi, 1980): an unspeakable ordeal, out of ordinary human experience, and not easily shared. The ensuing pain and loss may be especially difficult to articulate in a culture that denies men expression of such emotions. There are also cultural barriers to enhancing the personal experience. The exiles usually hastened to add that his or her case was not unique and that there were many more who suffered the same fate. Much of the anger and emotional force that is part of the experience (Rosaldo, 1984) may thus be repressed. One woman summed up the dilemma by pointing to visible scars on her body, remarking that "... the *real* ones do not show."

Only in the case of a few men and women were these troubled areas of past ordeals approached, in the context of their life history. Such accounts then came into the flow of the biographical narrative, but only to the extent that informants volunteered such information. The life history provided a more contextualized account, also facilitated by the trust that had built up between the informant and myself over the months of working together. However, as an outsider, I do not hope to grasp the full meaning and impact of these experiences or to be able to convey them to others. I should, however, raise some points about the nature of this kind of ethnographic encounters and the perils and possibilities they entail, for both parties, in the understanding and representation of self and Other. The issue is relevant to the current concern in anthropology about the role of the ethnographer and reflexivity in the ethnographic process (*e.g.* Crapanzano 1977; Rosaldo, 1984; Rabinow, 1977; Freeman and Krantz, 1980.)

In contrast to autobiography and biography, a life history is a collaborative effort (Langness and Frank, 1981:61). The relation between narrator and ethnographer (involving trust, interpersonal affinity, previous experience or *Vorverstehen*) structures the outcome. The encounter may also contain a dynamic that affects those involved, their relation and their interpretations (see Devereux, 1967).

Although not a conscious research strategy on my part at the time, the life history situation was similar to the method of testimonies used in psychotherapy treatment of survivors. This method recognizes the importance of telling someone who has the patience to listen (Allodi, 1980) about all the horrible and repressed details of one's experiences, within the context of one's biography. Some encounters also rely on mutual support between victims sharing their stories. (*ibid.*, Schlapobersky and Bamber, 1988). The retelling of lived horrors was painful, and left both the narrator and myself exhausted and distressed for long periods. But the encounters also held creative and transformative aspects. Narrating one's story holds potential for self-discovery and "narrators not only repeat but also create themselves in the process" (Langness and Frank, *op.cit.*:93). This may have particular relevance for victims of violence and repression, where "speaking out" may not only be a means to self-affirmation but also a political act.

It was impossible not to be deeply moved and affected by the stories and the resilient struggle to overcome the ordeals they revealed. Unexpectedly, my own personal experiences entered into the process. Accounts of violence and loss, of living with unresolved grief resonated with my own experience of personal loss a few years before at the tragic death of my long-time and intimate Chilean friend, who had suffered severe torture and died in exile. My intimate knowledge of his history turned out to be an important source of insight into the effects of repression. Moreover, the exchange of grief and sympathy, the mutual resonance of bereavement that evolved between narrator and myself (especially in the case of one female informant) created what Allodi refers to as "a shared space" and a special bond. This space is one in which personal experience "can be given expression, distance and catharsis" (1980:231). Such distance was effected for the informant by formulating experiences into words and later reading my transcriptions of his or her account. Parallel to this, I began writing about the life and death of my Chilean friend and my experiences of these events (Eastmond, 1988a). Some informants shared and commented on these materials. However, our positions and grief were not the same, and my ability to comprehend and translate the compounded experience of personal violation suffered by these

individuals is limited. Yet, the "shared space" provided an opportunity to enter difficult and painful areas of experience with a few informants.

In the process, some of my own reactions to loss and death became clearer and more meaningful as they were confirmed by those of others. These insights, in turn, formed a new basis for interpreting the experience of the exiles. I learned that such experiences, difficult to talk about but deeply felt can create a special bond between people who share the experience: A death can touch one deeply although one has no close personal relation to the diseased, because it resonates with one's own personal losses.[16] These areas of personal experience had significance in the social processes and cultural themes of the community. The tacit understanding of the predicament of a fellow exile based on one's own experience, and the special bond of sharing the unspeakable, stand out as important bases for community among survivors. Given the limitations on both expression and interpretation of unique and painful experience, symbolic forms of individual expression, such as informants' dreams, artwork, and poetry have provided valuable insights into the imagery used to depict the experience.

The need to "listen as a human being" does not necessarily preclude the role of the ethnographer; rather, I would argue, it presupposes it, given that the premises of the encounter are made clear.

The ethical problem of identification of a small community of politically vulnerable informants is a serious one. Fictionalizing names of persons and places has not been considered to be sufficient. Sensitive material, at the discretion of those providing information, has therefore been left out. Where they do not significantly alter the contents, certain other details have been changed and compounded.

Layout of the Study

The Chilean exile is situated within its historical and socio-political context in chapter 2. The social drama of Chilean society that led up to the military coup and exile, is a collective past and a social bond which provide the context in which lives are meaningfully lived in the present. The revolutionary hopes and fervour during the years of the *Unidad Popular* and the defeat and repression that followed constitute a common heritage. Chapter 2 presents this past, partly based on exiles' lived experience of this period. Individual stories will run as parallell threads in the narrative, to demonstrate general features of the exile experience as well as its variations. Chapter 3 outlines the transition from Chile to the U.S. with a particular focus on the legal and

political framework of U. S. policy and the local context of arrival and settlement. This chapter presents the exiles and their own experience of arrival and of the first years, the transition from political actors, actively constructing "a new society" in Chile to dependent refugees, without definite social and legal rights in the new country. It is also a commentary on the role of local support structure in influencing the ways in which refugees re-establish their lives.

Born out of political defeat, exile entailed a defense of persecuted values and political visions. Chapter 4 addresses the major concerns of exile in the first years, as expressed in the formulation of the "exile project," and how it informed social organization. Essential in the reconstruction of political opposition after the coup, was the affirmation of the political struggle. "Resistance" entailed not only support of the struggle in Chile but also their cultural survival as a group. The culture of the popular movement acquired a vital and extended significance in exile, as a life-line to *la patria*. This cultural identity was also the means by which they defined themselves as a group distinct from other social categories in the ethnically diverse environment of northern California. Chapter 5 explores the mobilization of expressive culture in the form of music, song and drama in the local community. This culture draws on the rich traditions of the popular movement, recreated and elaborated in exile, portraying a cosmology or revolutionary ideology within which the life and suffering of the individual exile become meaningful.

Not surprisingly, politics is a pervasive theme in exile communities, and political strife seems to be endemic. Politics is vital, a matter of deep ideological convictions and sentiments, but also an expression of personal status and identity. Chapter 6 examines these political processes in the community, with a particular focus on party politics and the problem of leadership and control in exile. Exile politics, while responding to the events in Chile, also has its own dynamic. This dynamic is closely related to the process of social change which transforms the context and meaning of political practice in exile. This context of everyday life is outlined in chapter 7. Silicon Valley, dominated by intense economic activity and a lifestyle reflecting the booming electronics industry was the epitome, for the Chileans, of the capitalist enterprise. However reluctantly, entering the labor market and becoming economically self-sufficient, was a major force of accommodation and change for individuals and households. The chapter describes those changes which affected patterns of social relations and challenged meanings previuosly taken for granted. Chapter 8 addresses these

changes with a view to their meaning for the Chileans themselves. Change was monitored and evaluated by the exiles, in the light of cultural understandings of Chilean exile identity and its obligations. The first part is concerned with how the contradictions between ideology and social experience were handled by the community. It outlines the moral discourse and exiles' attempts to resolve the dilemma. The succeeding discussion explores how the ambiguities and existential dilemma were subsequently manifested in individuals' lives. The focus on the "internal landscape of exile" provides another vantage point for evaluating the meaning of political commitment and unresolved traumas, and what may be called "the exile's paradox." The chapter summarizes the common ground in an ambiguous existence that exiles describe as "existing, not living." It depicts a struggle to regain a full life, "*una vida plena*."

The 11th of September, the day of the military coup in Chile, provides a summarizing symbol of the Chilean opposition, in Chile as well as in exile, in the struggle against the military dictatorship. The final chapter examines the wider symbolic universe of the discourse developing in the Chilean opposition. In an apocalyptic discourse, the struggle is depicted as a battle between forces of life and death. With thematic focus on power relations and existence, a set of key symbols integrate meanings and groups from such diverse domains as Marxist ideology and Catholic religion. The commemoration of this day in the exile community is set within this wider symbolic framework but takes on expanded meanings and new functions as it sums up and resolves symbolically many of the contradictions and ambiguities of exile existence. The exile experience is thus incorporated into this political discourse through which the social meaning of exile is constituted by return.

However, the exile experience is defined by its essential uncertainty, a "journey without visible return" (Délano, 1977:86). Eventually, the uncertainty encompasses the definition of exile and identity itself. The question "Once an exile, always an exile?" (Gottfurt, in Tabori 1972:34) is a difficult and disturbing one. As in Solana's film about Argentinian exiles,[17] writing the end of the story is part of the dilemma.

Notes to Chapter 1

[1] For a good review of the diversity of issues and perspectives, see *e.g.* Gallagher (1986); Morgan and Colson (1987); Outhwaite (1988).

[2] The distinctions between economic and political motives, between voluntary and involuntary migration are neither clear-cut nor uncontroversial. While usually crucial to the fate of an asylum-seeker, as a sociological tool, the legal distinctions used by governments are not always appropriate. According to *e.g.* Richmond,"... the majority of population movements (in the modern world) are a complex response to the reality of a global society in which ethnoreligious, social, economic and political determinants are inextricably bound together." (1988:20)

[3] The definition of the UN Geneva Convention of 1951 focusses on persons with a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion by their own countries. The Organization of African Unity convention in 1969 expanded this definition to include those fleeing from external agression and other social disruptions in their country. See Zolberg (1983) and Zolberg *et al.* (1986) for a discussion of refugee-generating processes and current policies.

[4] The question often asked by refugees is when exile can be considered ended. When conditions at home allow return? Does a decision not to return, or assuming new citizenship, turn the exile into an immigrant?

[5] Angell and Carstairs (1987) note the difficulty of obtaining official figures. In 1984, CIDE, the Centre for Research and Development in Education, Chile estimated a figure of 200,000-250.000 Chileans in exile. In 1988, the Chilean bishop in charge of migration and exile for the Catholic church reported that 1,677,000 Chileans were living abroad for political and economic motives, most of them in other Latin American countries. (Chilean Commission for Human Rights, 1988).

[6] The focus of current social research on South-East Asians (making up 75% of all refugees since the 1980 Act) and on issues of settlement in response to new, institutional assistance programs reflects these changes. See e.g. Howell (1982).

[7] Approximately 600 000 refugees from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam were admitted between 1972 and 1982. Around 800 000 Cubans have been accepted by the U.S. since 1959 although those arriving in 1980 (the "Mariel lift") were admitted but not given refugee status (Howell, 1982). In 1988, the approval rate for Salvadorans was 2.7 percent while Nicaraguan, Ethiopian, Chinese and most Eastern European asylum-seekers all had acceptance rates of over 50 percent (Baden, 1989). The situation also reflects the reluctance on the part of the U.S. as with most other Western governments to act as country of first asylum.

[8] The Tibetan refugees in India have been able to develop their own institutional basis and maintain an exile identity and project for return, which has not been possible for those settled in Switzerland, due to pressures to accommodate to Swiss society (Colson, 1987)

[9] See *e.g.* contributions in Howell (1982) and Morgan and Colson (1987) on the interaction of public policy and refugee settlement. See also case studies by Kaminski (1980) and Björklund (1981) of refugee settlement in Sweden.

[10] Jagucki (1983) found that Polish refugees in Great Britain since World War II were negatively affected by events in the home country some forty years later. He also noted that: "The refugee, all too often, becomes a refugee all over again in old age" (in Rack, 1988:291).

[11] Fairley's study of the performances of a Chilean musical group in exile is a notable exception (1989). Furthermore, the exile condition as a theme permeates the work of the large number of Latin American writers in exile. These have been valuable sources of information on symbolic themes of Latin American exile.

[12] According to Schein (1987) much research on refugee assimiliation in the past has assumed a linear progression of adaptation and change, portraying refugees as passively going through preordained stages. Such models overlook cultural change as an outcome of active interaction between refugees and host, and that assimilation into the new country may be problematic for the refugees themselves. Adjustment is not necessarily a function of length of stay.

[13] With a similar insight of exile as a profound transformation, Joseph Brodsky, the exiled Russian poet affirms that "exile takes you further in one night than you normally come in an entire lifetime" in "The condition we call exile" presented in Vienna, December, 1987, cited in *Dagens Nyheter* 28 July 1988 (my transl. from Swedish).

[14] Compare the temporal categories in utopian thought, Vlachos (1978)

[15] Cf. Roa Bastos (1981:18) the exiled Paraguayan writer, "...he who believes he has two countries has none." The duality of the exile experience is a persistent theme in exile literature. For a review, see Avellaneda (1981).

[16] Rosaldo (1984) discusses how lived experience of bereavement on the part of the ethnographer may facilitate certain kinds of insights. See also Eastmond, (1988a).

[17] *El Exilio del Gardél* (Gardel's exile), is about a group of exiles in Paris who are setting up a play about their lives but are unable to find its conclusion.

2. A CHILEAN DRAMA: THE RISE AND FALL OF UNIDAD POPULAR

> "I have faith in Chile and her destiny. Other Chileans will rise above these dark and bitter moments, where treason would force itself upon us. Keep remembering that much sooner than later, broad avenues will open again for people worthy of building a new society.
>
> Long live Chile!
>
> Long live the People!
>
> Long live the Workers!"

The image and words of the last speech from Salvador Allende, President of the *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity, UP) are streaming out of a video-screen. The images show the dramatic events of the bombing of *La Moneda*, the presidential palace, during the military coup d'etat of the 11th of September 1973. The present occasion is part of the annual commemoration by Chilean exiles of the event which led to the defeat of their government and their eventual expulsion from Chile. Children are hushed and conversation halts as the familiar scenes recur on the screen. Allende's voice barely cuts through the background clamor of helicopters, tanks and gunshots as he makes his farewell to the Chileans that have supported him.

> "I will pay with my life for the loyalty of the people. But I'm certain that the seed which we have sown in the minds of thousands and thousands of Chileans cannot be forever held back. They have the force, they can crush us, but the social process cannot be halted, either with crime or with violence. The history is ours—and it is created by the people."

The brief scences capture the political drama of the defeat of the popular movement and the death of their president, *compañero* Allende. This was a profoundly tragic moment in the history of the movement and carries tremendous emotional force. The historical project to "construct a new Chile," a process the supporters of the *Unidad Popular* have been passionately living for three years, is being crushed by military force. With

brutal clarity, the event illustrates the main features of the drama: The violent overthrow of one government and the illegitimate imposition of another. Allende, as democratically elected president, represents the constitutional right to govern and dies at his post, in the presidential palace, rather than surrendering his democratic mandate.

This is the legacy of Allende and the 11th of September is a key scenario, in Ortner's sense (1973), for the emerging opposition. Allende's speech to the people also contains an ideological paradigm and a strategy for action. He draws on the ideology and traditional themes of the Chilean working class, as he summons the people to continue the struggle for the transformation of society. This is the historical mission of the workers, mediated by his own sacrifice. The Chilean exiles said of Allende "*El supo morir*"[1] and thus confirmed that they had understood the meaning of his act. Allende still provides a highly emotive model of commitment that evokes the multitude of martyrs and heroes in the violent history of the Chilean working class. However, Allende is at this point the embodiment of the two parallel traditions in Chilean politics, expressed in the concept "The Chilean Road to Socialism": The legalistic and stable parliamentarism, relying on constitutional order, versus the violent history of class confrontations and massacres of workers and peasants (*e.g.* de Vylder, 1974).

The coup is an undeniable feature of the political past that cannot be changed or denied. It is a key reference point in the ongoing political process, elaborated in the political articulation and symbolic representation of both the regime and the opposition. The fall of the *Unidad Popular* is commemorated, with local variations, in Chilean exile communities all over the world. For the exiles, the date marks the beginning of a social drama which is also the dramatic turning point of their own lives.

The Military Regime: The Politics of Terror

The scale of repression and violence that followed the military takeover was unprecedented in Chilean political history. Almost overnight, a long and stable democratic tradition was shattered by massive and brutal military action. The "mission" as the military saw it, was to install the new social order and dismantle the economic and political structures of *Unidad Popular*'s Chile. Congress was closed indefinitely and all Marxist parties declared illegal. In this violent transition from one social structure to another, the supporters of the government had to be either eliminated or controlled. Disappearances, assassinations, imprisonment, and torture were means of

eliminating the popular movement. As many as 30,000 may have been killed in this transition, and about 80,000 were taken political prisoner in the first six months, (Angell and Carstairs, 1987). The massive, direct persecution of individuals also affected the wider population of *Unidad Popular* supporters. Many suffered the loss of family members, friends or political comrades, as well as jobs and other means of security and existence. The profound disruption in the lives of so many also served to discipline the population. The effects of terror made it possible for the regime to consolidate its position and institute its new political and economic order in Chile.

To understand the profound tragedy of defeat for the Chilean popular movement, one must understand the significance of its aims and the drastic consequences for those who supported it. The following excerpts of exiles' life histories as retrospective accounts, are intended to convey this lived experience. The aim is not to document and analyze the political process *per se* which has already been done elsewhere.[2] Rather the focus is on the exiles' own experience and their interpretation of the significance it had for them as participants at the grass-root level of the process.[3] Their understanding of this past is relevant to how they shape their lives in exile. In order to provide background and context, the main features of this social drama of Chilean society are interwoven with exiles' accounts.

The Popular Movement and *Unidad Popular*: The Chilean Road to Socialism

"There are certain historical periods in which the tempo of events quickens, when a multitude of long-standing contradictions suddenly conflate to produce a particular result." (Valenzuela, 1976:viii). The words describe the tense and shortlived period of the *Unidad Popular* government of Chile 1970 to 1973.

The *Unidad Popular* was a coalition of five political parties from left to left-center, with the Communist (PC) and Socialist (PS) parties providing the backbone. The coalition was created in 1969 at the height of a long economic and political crisis in Chile. The 1960s saw the rise of revolutionary doctrines in Latin America, inspired by the Cuban revolution in 1959. In Chile, continued economic stagnation had frustrated the expectations raised by the Christian Democratic government and its reform program, and spawned mobilization and militancy among the lower classes. A whole array of new organizations emerged outside of the structure of political parties, unions, student and church groups. Mass actions, including strikes and illegal land seizures by farmworkers, slum dwellers and industrial workers, drew

new groups into the process, in the city and countryside. The political polarization in the country deepened as traditional political organizations among the left were radicalized and activated. An upsurge of militant forms of mass confrontations reached a peak in 1970, the year the UP was elected to form the new government of Chile. With a slim victory at the polls, the popular movement entered its unique and hazardous road to democratic socialism.

The program of the *Unidad Popular* was a profound constitutional transformation of Chilean political and economic structures. The program was an unprecedented Chilean attempt at a peaceful transition to Socialism, *la vía chilena hacia el socialismo* (the Chilean road to Socialism). In brief, the central objectives were to overcome foreign dependency, economic stagnation and social inequality. The necessary condition was to dispel U.S. imperialism and the domestic oligarchy which were identified as chief enemies of the proposed new order. The Chilean production apparatus was concentrated in a few large corporations, dominated by foreign, mostly U.S. capital (de Vylder, 1974). Immediate measures to implement this program were agrarian reform and the nationalization of key industries, banks and landed estates. The government extended state control and worker participation in foreign and domestic monopolies. In its program, it envisaged a new institutional order, the Popular State:

> "A new power structure will be constructed through a process of democratization at all levels and an organized mobilization of the masses."[4]

The "new conception of government" proposed a massive incorporation of the people into State power; the slogans were *poder popular* (popular power) and *participación popular*, (popular participation). Existing mass organizations and above all the well-organized labor movement, were mobilized while others were created in almost all sectors of civil society, incorporating workers, employees, peasants, slumdwellers, housewives, students, professionals, intellectuals, and craftsmen. This mass mobilization as part of a new power structure organized "from below," was a crucial instrument in consolidating the new government's position. The slim victory at the polls in 1970 had given the *Unidad Popular* the legal right to rule but not full power. While the new administration controlled the executive branch of government it had only a minority in Congress.

The popular movement spawning the project for Socialism was by no means homogeneous as it integrated individuals from different organizations,

social strata and political backgrounds. However, the political working class parties provided the main direction. Its roots were in the labor movement, which had a long tradition in Chile and had gained considerable force in the polarization of Chilean politics in the 1960s. The common project was a Socialist Chile, but ideological differences of strategy between parties of the left ranged from the reformist, peaceful road of the Communist Party to the ultra-left, revolutionary strategy of the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) which remained outside the government coalition. Long-standing ideological tensions also existed within the government, between revolutionary and reformist strategies which, after the coup, erupted. Active support and class-consciousness also varied within the lower strata. The most articulate and militant were skilled workers, mostly in mining and industry (Petras, 1976; Valenzuela, 1976). But even among these workers, as Petras points out, the trade union consciousness was not the same as socialist consciousness. Thus, hopes and involvements had different emphasis for different kinds of social actors. For many peasants, slumdwellers, workers and housewives, equal distribution of the basic necessities of existence probably had greater priority than the theoretical issues of socialist consciuosness of the politically more sophisticated workers and intellectuals (Caviedes, 1979)[5]. Despite these differences, the experience itself was profound in the lives of most of its participants. As one exile put it,

> "We felt that Chile was the center of the universe at that time, that we were part of an important historical project... The Chilean people took its destiny into their own hands."

Although central in each exile biography, the experiences and perspectives of this period are not uniform, but vary with the social location and involvement of the actor. The accounts below aim to convey the variation but also the commonality of the experience of this turbulent period: Their participation, as social agents, in the construction of a new society; the intense activity and hopes attached to this historical project, and the drama and disruption that followed its defeat.

Tierra o Muerte (Land or Death)

In the morning of the 11th of September in 1973, Alberto Rivera, an old peasant in the southern province, switched on his transistor radio and heard

the news of the military taking over in the capital. He and the other farmers of his settlement had been expecting this for some time.

> "I heard that the armed forces were bombing *La Moneda* and that *compañero* Allende was inside, refusing to leave his post. I remember well his words when he spoke to the people for the last time. He told us that they (the military) were cowards, that we were the government of Chile and that he would not leave *La Moneda* alive, that they had to kill him first. And they killed our President and we, the people, knew that we were going to suffer..."

For the small peasants and landless farmworkers like Alberto Rivera the *Unidad Popular* victory had brought hopes of real change. The agricultural sector was stagnant and underproductive, with a traditionally unequal landholding structure in which *latifundistas* (large landowners), who were a small percent of the population, owned over 80% of the land. About half of the agricultural work force was employed on such *latifundios* as wage laborers (*inquilinos*) or share-croppers (*medieros*) under exploitative conditions. Another 25% of the rural population owned *minifundios*, tiny plots that could not support a family (NACLA, 1973). A thorough and rapid agrarian reform was one of the priorities on the agenda of the new government for a structural transformation of Chilean society. Expropriation of idle land was immediately started and redistributed to small peasants, through cooperative reform settlements (*asentamientos*). With CORA, the government agency for agricultural reform, and the local branch of the Socialist party, Alberto helped organize a resettlement on expropriated land in his province. He brought along many other small peasants of his area. "They were barely surviving there, living totally poor. We all had very little land, and the soil was no good. For the first time we had an opportunity to work and earn a living." The reform settlements received government credits, seeds and technical assistance. Each family maintained an individual plot for a house and a garden.

In addition to land redistribution, the reform program emphasized peasant organization and participation in local and regional planning. In some areas the reactions of landowners were violent. Sabotage (such as landowners burning crops) was not uncommon as the tensions that had long existed in rural Chile between the landowning elite and the landless peasants erupted. Members of the new settlements in the district organized a union to defend their interests under the name of *Tierra o Muerte* (land or death). Alberto was in charge of the union, which was closely allied to the Socialist Party.

As a long-standing member, he was appointed inspector of the district to settle minor land disputes.

> "Now the small farmers and farmworkers could bring their complaints against the injustices of the rich, the *patrones*. One *patrón*, a German, had closed off a road for a poor farmer. On the very day we organized the Union we went to see him at once. The road had belonged to the farmer for years, but the poor did not know the laws and could not defend their rights. So I said to this man, who had once been my own *patrón*,
>
> "Your neighbour is complaining that you cut off his road. You have to open it up."
>
> He looked at me as if he didn't believe his eyes. Then he asked:
>
> "And what official authority do you have?"
>
> "I am the *Inspector* now," I replied.
>
> "Ah! Then I must congratulate you!" he said, *bien agringado* (with the sarcasm of a gringo).
>
> The *patrón* turned to the court for redress, but to no avail. The Socialist Party supported us in a declaration about rural roads. Then I simply issued the order for him to open the road and he had to follow suit! What a victory that was!"

In the afternoon of the 11th of September, the day of the coup, Alberto heard over the local radio that he was wanted by the police. For ten days he stayed in his house, waiting. He knew he could not get away and decided to give himself up, but he had no idea what to expect. Would they take him up into the mountains and finish him off? As a child he had often witnessed the police take his father or other workers employed on the estate up into the mountains to be beaten up at the request of the *patrón* when he suspected theft or other acts of disloyalty.

> "Four *carabineros* (military police) took me away, at gunpoint, as if I was a criminal. They brought me to an interrogation center and beat me heavily with canes until I lost consciousness. The military were convinced that we had received arms from Santiago and organized resistance in the mountains. I was placed in a cell for two weeks; it was so small I couldn't move. The charge was possession of arms and subversive political activity and they condemned me to death. The truth was that I had no arms. We had absolutely nothing in the settlement with which to defend ourselves. They condemned me to death by *fusilamiento* (execution by a firing squad). I had faith in God that he would help me but I said, 'if they kill me, they kill me.' But it was all so absurd; these *carabineros* were local folks, they all

> knew me. They knew I was the son of a poor *campesino* (farmer), just like they were, and that I had simply been defending poor families like their own."

Two months later, Alberto was still waiting. Would he live or die? At this point he was informed that his sentence had been changed to ten years' imprisonment. He spent three and a half years in a prison in a remote province where he never received a visit. These were bitter years for him: the hunger, the cold and the loneliness are his most distinct memories of this time, "At times I felt I might as well be dead." Much bitterness was directed to the enemies of the *Unidad Popular* government but also to the peasants of his settlement for "lack of political consciousness."

> "The government was always telling us on the radio to work hard and produce more, to make the project work, but many did not heed these calls, or understand the seriousness of the situation. They were irresponsible and drank too much, without thinking about tomorrow... The military coup (*el golpe*, lit. "blow") has been a very painful lesson for the Chilean workers."

Constructing a New Chile: A view from the barrio

Many workers saw their parties and trade union organization grow and become more militant in the years of the *Unidad Popular*. The traditional "vindicationist" policy of the trade unions, *i.e.* concern with social and economic improvements, was to be shifted to issues of power and industrial democracy, echoing the battle cry of the period, *poder popular*. The mass mobilization was often directed by the parties on the left. In many industries and rural estates, however, workers and peasants were ahead of the government and the parties in pressing for change.[6] The industrial workers were given a key role in the transformation and mobilization process. The case of the Torres family illustrates well how the movement involved not only the workers in their sphere of production but also the domestic sphere of women and children.

The Torres family lived in a typical Santiago working class *barrio* (neighbourhood) which, like many of its kind, bore the name of the nearby industry which employed most of the men. The barrio formed a close-knit support network, of neighbours, workmates and kin. The men were also organized through the trade union, and many were active in the party with which their union was associated. The males were the principal breadwinners,

if employed at all. The women, as housewives, had the main responsibility for running the home and raising the children, and when possible taking in sewing or laundry work.

The social changes in the *barrio* are described by the wife, Margarita. From her perspective, the significance of the project of the *Unidad Popular* was at the local level of the *barrio* and its extended domestic sphere. The public sphere of politics and production was still largely and more directly the concern of the men.

> "We were always like one big family, all of us in my *barrio*, we helped each other out. My sister lived nearby and my husbands relatives as well, our four children were raised there. My husband worked at the factory for many years, as a mechanic. We got by, but there was much poverty around me, people struggling to make ends meet. Under Allende I saw that many were coming out of their misery. Many more had jobs, and wages increased. All the children were given free milk every day now, and proper health care...Everybody was involved in our *barrio*, participating with the government, my whole family, even my children at school. People belonged to different political parties but we all supported the *Unidad Popular*. Many of the youngsters joined the party youth movement. We organized a neighbourhood council in the barrio to improve housing conditions, and many took part in organizing local health and educational programs... The men spent a lot of time at the factory, there were workers' meetings and committees and new responsibilities. Everybody talked politics, we learnt that the people had rights. All these things made us believe in Allende. We had great confidence in him."

The industry in question was owned by a U.S. corporation. When production was slowed to create supply shortages and destabilize the economy, the government intervened and later nationalized the vital industry. Subsequently a government manager was appointed and workers were elected to serve on an Administrative Council. There were several other committees and channels of direct worker participation. Nationally, intense battles were fought over the issue of industrial expropriation between the left and right, in Congress, mass media, courts and factories (de Vylder, *op.cit.*). As the industrial sectors increasingly came under state control, a large scale counter-offensive of sabotage and strikes was waged by the right-wing opposition, assisted mainly by U.S. corporate interests. In addition the U. S. administration moved swiftly to protect one of its largest investments in the western hemisphere. Their policy of destabilization was aimed at the weakest

points of the popular government, the economy. The blocking of credits, loans, aid and imports was supported by covert operations to foment unrest among the middle class (*e.g.* Farnsworth *et al.*, 1976).[7]

At Eduardo Torres' factory, production was disrupted by the U.S. blockade of crucial imports of material and spare parts. In the factories and in the *barrios*, so called *comandos comunales* were formed to maintain production and food distribution and to prevent sabotage. In the mounting attempts to weaken the government and create political unrest, many foresaw the possibility of a military coup. "*Ya viene Yakarta*" (Djakarta will come), scrawled on the walls of Santiago at the time, used the Indonesian example of communist repression as a sinister symbol foreboding the massacres to come. However, few were prepared for the massive brutality with which it was carried out.

One night, shortly after the military takeover, the *carabineros* came to the Torres' house and picked up the husband and eldest son.[8]

> "We were all asleep as they came. They threw in smoke bombs and everything turned red in an instant. They shot our dog as they rushed in with rifles and had us line up against the wall. It was a nightmare, a pure nightmare. They dragged my husband and son out into the street, quite openly, as if they were delinquents—they who had never done any harm to anyone."

Margarita spent twenty-two days searching for her husband and son. As with many other detainees at the time, there was no information available on their whereabouts.

> "Twenty-four hours a day I was asking for them—at police headquarters, at the military regiments, the Red Cross, the Ministry of the Interior, hospitals, and mortuaries. I walked through all the streets where corpses were being thrown out and looked for them. Those were twenty days of anguish. I finally found them, in a concentration camp in Tres Alamos, in a terrible condition. Both had been beaten and tortured badly."

Like many other prisoners, they had been moved several times between different torture centers and prison camps. In the camp, prisoners could interact and also receive visitors. They were charged with subversive activities and possession of arms, and imprisoned for two years until they later could commute their sentences to exile. During that time, like many other women, Margarita had to keep the rest of the family together and fed. As her husband had lost his job at the factory with his imprisonment, they were evicted

from their house, which was company property. She suffered a constant fear that, going to visit her husband and son, she would find that they were no longer there. She knew of cases where husbands just "disappeared." She also feared that, once released, they would be assassinated. A means of eliminating opponents "off record" was evidenced by bodies found in rivers or on the streets a few days after release from prison. For Margarita, exile was a "*tabla de salvación*" (rescue and last resort) and a necessary sacrifice on her part to save the lives of her family. The suffering, she hoped, will not have been in vain. She also mentioned another sacrifice, that of Allende:

> "Until this moment, we carry a tremendous pain in our hearts for the tragic fate of our president. He was the only president who ever cared for the poor, the most needy, the dispossessed. I am convinced, I have absolute faith that his example will be followed by other men, and that our poor country will have a better future. Allende lives, through the example he set for us, the three good years his government gave us. It is hard to imagine there will be another leader like him."

Elena's story: From civil servant to "enemy of the State"

Elena came from a well-to-do family in the north and had moved to the capital on her own, despite her family's objections. She married there, had a daughter, and later divorced. Life in the capital had confronted her with a new and very different reality than that of her protected childhood. These new experiences formed the basis of her commitment to the popular movement.

She worked as a clerk in the public administration, while studying at the university. There, she became part of a highly politicized student body, the outcome of the radicalization of middle-class youth in the 1960s. They combined a sophisticated theoretical interest in Marxism and Socialism with an emphasis on political practice, which meant participating with workers, peasants and housewives in a multitude of grass-roots organizations. A focus of some debate concerned the *Unidad Popular* strategy for change: not all of its supporters believed in the gradual, legalistic road officially envisaged by the government. Many students were part of organizing workers and peasants to push for a more revolutionary strategy of socialist transformation.

Elena remarked on the enormous activity that seemed to appear everywhere during the period of Allende: "People started working together...

participating with the government." In the public administration where she worked, employees formed committees in all departments to improve functions and quality of services. Elena was part of several such committees. She also joined volunteer groups that would go out on weekends to the *poblaciones* (shantytowns) to assist neighbourhood councils in immunization campaigns and health education.

> "We would teach the mothers how to use the dry milk the government was distributing—to feed it to her children and not to give it to her husband to draw lines on the soccer field."

She was also active in special housing projects organized with the inhabitants of the *poblaciones*. Economically, things also changed. For the first time Elena received a salary she could live on. Price controls kept prices down although an emerging black market affected the situation. At the hospitals, the staff could no longer turn anyone away. Now everyone had a right to medical attention, wheras before, "the many without social security (*indigentes*) could die on the streets."

The politicization led to intensified interaction that drew new groups into the public arena of participation. There was, among the most politically active, a conscious construction of a new political culture. The collective was stressed over individual interests. Egalitarian social relations were to break with class-based forms of social interaction, expressed, for instance, in new forms of address (*compañero/a*) and by more informal ways to dress. Patterns of dress were traditionally a conscious mark of class in Chile. Government-subsidized mass media were developed to make information and literature available to workers at low cost,

> "...people started reading, educating themselves. Now the workers could even go to universities for the first time in our history."

Peñas[9], gathering large and active audiences, were important meeting places that promoted the politicized culture emerging in support of the popular movement. As with the mass media, the cultural movement was part of constructing a new culture, "a new man," revitalizing the tradition and history of Chilean workers, peasants and indigenous people[10]. Commenting on the flourishing and recreation of indigenous, pre-Hispanic culture, one informant noted that in his intellectual circles of the left, it became particularly fashionable to buy and decorate their homes with such artefacts. However, the new musical movement was perhaps the most forceful cultural form of ideological support of the government:

> "*La nueva canción*" (the new song) of the Parras and Victor Jara blossomed now. When Allende came into power there was this popular spirit of building a new Chile, and the music expressed this whole venture."

For many of the politicized actors, these were exciting times, a daring social experiment, in which people were actually living their ideology, and as such were practicing their ideas of a new society. They were, however, also confusing and disruptive times, with deepening polarization among the population. Tensions mounted with escalated attacks of the right, fuelled by the congressional election campaigns in 1972. Thousands of people were called out in demonstrations on the streets of Santiago. This was also a struggle between two ideologies and versions of reality, fought with symbolic shows of strength in public rallies, (Kay, 1987). For Elena, at work,

> "... there were real fights between leftists and the opposition—a deep dividing line emerged right through all categories, from directors to janitors. Large marches went down the corridors to protest the government, with signs and slogans, shouting. They had meetings, we had meetings. Suddenly old friends at work turned into enemies. It was very difficult in the end to keep the units functioning. There was a point at which we could not proceed further but struggled to maintain the advances we had made with Allende. We were living so fast at the time. A million new things happened in those thousand days of the *Unidad Popular*. And with the military coup we lost it all."

The End of the Road

One day after the military coup, Elena was picked up by military police from her office and brought to the National Stadium. The stadium, which functioned as a mass interrogation center, was already filled with thousands of other political suspects. She was kept there for twenty-five days of intensive and violent interrogation. Small mementos in a little box by her bedside tell part of the story of that time: An empty pack of cigarettes, a tattered page of prayers distributed by a visiting priest and a small note smuggled in to her, scribbled in bold letters that her daughter was fine and in the care of a neighbour. It also contains the legal documents issued by the military junta of her charges of political subversion and, eventually, release. This was the first of her detentions. Among her most distinct memories is a scenario that seems to capture the essence of her experience.

One night after interrogation, she was taken outside into the stadium and later forgotten about. She spent the night hidden between two benches at the very back, trying to make herself as small as possible, invisible. The night fell with a dark open sky over the vast, empty arena and a strange silence. She was terrified and experienced a total loneliness. It was very cold and her body was still wet and shaking from the repeated electric shocks she had received. She eventually fell asleep and was woken up by the sound of heavy boots. A young guard found her; surprised and confused he offered her a packet of cigarettes (the one she has kept). She was taken to the hospital with a high fever, but sent back after recovery for another week of interrogation.

> "It was a very strange sensation of being there that night, all by myself—that terrible silence. I woke up the other night, with that same sensation of complete loneliness and silence... it was just as unreal. No pictures, no words... For a long time I have not had nightmares now, just that awful sensation... This is how it is, repeating itself..."

The account evokes the vulnerability of one solitary individual confronting an unpredictable and superior force which controls all, even life itself. This lived experience manifests itself in an infinite number of ways in the lives of many exiles, sometimes triggered by seemingly trivial things. For Elena, the strange night repeats itself; and

> "It's the same with being cold: I cannot bear cold: I don't care if I'm hungry, tired, too hot or sleepy, I just cannot bear being cold..."

After her release from the stadium, Elena returned to living alone with her small daughter. It was a very lonely and restricted life, as she was almost obsessed with the need to provide security for the two of them. At home, all their activities were carried out in her bedroom,

> "because the light from the bottom of the door could not be seen from the outside. The apartment looked dark; I imagined that if the military came again, they would think nobody was at home."

Indeed, she tried to be at home as little as possible. She spent weekends with her daughter strolling around in public places and felt secure thinking that she looked like an ordinary Chilean housewife rather than a suspected "enemy of the state." They came to arrest her a second time, a year later. Elena was taken to one of the torture centers of the DINA (National Intelligence Department) for ten days, and kept *incomunicada*, *i.e.* no in-

formation on her whereabouts was released by the authorities. She was later transferred to one of the many camps for political prisoners. The organization of repression was now much more effective and techniques more sophisticated. Whereas her first encounter with the regime, in the Stadium, had been brutal, at "Villa Grimaldi"[11], she found the methods "calculated and cruel."

One day at work, two officers of the DINA appeared with an order for her arrest. As they walked out of the building, her co-workers were looking on in silence. Elena assumed that the purpose of this public arrest was to frighten the rest of the staff and thus impose self-censorship. The agents placed her in the back of a pick up truck while making sarcastic and threatening comments about what to expect.

> "They wouldn't answer my questions about where they were taking me but taped my mouth shut and put a *venda* (blindfold) over my eyes. But I had a feeling that I knew where we were going. Villa Grimaldi was close to where I was living at the time and I knew the way well...I was terrified, absolutely terrified, but in spite of the blindfold my senses seemed to register every detail. I was never an easily excitable person, and I managed to keep myself under control."

Elena was placed in a long narrow room, without windows. There were four beds *(camerotes)* in the room. It was winter, she had no coat and the room was very cold. The tape was removed from her mouth but she was still blindfolded, and the woolen blindfold soon caused a terrible rash on her face. She later developed a persistent allergy to wool. In the room with her were three more women, two teachers from the Communist Party, and a very young girl accused of being from the ultra-left, a *Mirista*. Elena remembers no names, because "one learns to block out names." The blindfold had to be kept on at all times, even between interrogations, but when there were no guards watching, the women would take them off and talk. Through a crack in the door they could glimpse a garden outside. They could also see the men as they were taken in for interrogation, guarded by German shepherd dogs.

The second night at Villa Grimaldi, they came for Elena. This was the first in a long series of "interrogations." She was brough to a room, still blindfolded and sensed herself surrounded by many people.

> "I could smell the man in charge of the interrogation. He appeared to be a short man, through the bottom of my blindfold I could see the tip of his red tie and his brown suède shoes. He smelled of

"Lana," a men's perfume—(the kind Raúl was wearing the other day, that smell still makes me sick)."

She was told to sit on a chair for questioning but her straight posture was seen as arrogant and offended the man, who told her "Big Lady! You'll change your posture soon enough!" There were also women present, assisting the act. These female DINA-staff, Elena remebers, "were very very cruel." Nevertheless, as Elena repeated that she had no answers to give, the brutality of the interrogation escalated. With mouth taped and placed on the *parilla*[12], wellknown to most of these victims, she was given repeated electric shocks. She felt as if her mind separated from her body. While she could not control her body as it cramped and shook with heavy voltage, she tried "to keep her mind." She has no idea of how long these sessions lasted, an hour or "an eternity," but a medical expert was always present to indicate her breaking point. After the first session, her body reacted so violently that they thought she was having an epileptic attack. When no information was forthcoming by violence, other methods were resorted to. At the end of one session, Elena remembers that a woman torturer told her,

> "You don't want to talk? Tomorrow you will talk. We will have your daughter here. And we are going to give her the same treatment that your are getting. I have already been to your house, I have seen her. She is a cute little girl with curly, black hair and full cheeks—nice, red cheeks—and you will see what she will look like when we are done with those cheeks!"

They never acted on the threat as it was a trick. Elena's daughter did not fit the description. She was immensely relieved and drew new strength from the certainty that they still had not detected her daughter's whereabouts. (The girl's godmother had swiftly taken her to the countryside at the time of Elena's arrest). Using family members was a common device of pressuring prisoners. One night they brought in a big, heavy woman from one of the poor *barrios*. Her husband was a factory worker and had been seized by the DINA. The agents had later contacted her and told her to come and see her husband. She had put on her best clothes, and was smelling strongly of cheap perfume. The room was now getting crowded and Elena showed the women how to get the most out of the few narrow beds and blankets. She had learnt in the Stadium to put them together, and sleep close across the beds. But this woman was too big and smelled so strongly that she put the solidarity of her inmates to a hard test. Elena recalls,

> "They had brought her in to make her husband talk—but she had no idea of what was awaiting her. They often did that—torture or rape the wife in front of her husband. I met a few of these women in prison. This one was a simple woman from the *barrio*, she was happy and too confused to understand. She believed she was going to see her husband in the morning..."

Another well known technique from similar performances elsewhere, was the building up of dependency relations, based on the total vulnerability of prisoners. After each session, Elena's torturers would be nice, polite, bring her medicine, valium, and sometimes choice food and wine. One of the female DINA agents would come in at times and make friendly small talk, to convey the impression they could rely on her. Elena and the other prisoners had learnt to answer and behave so as not to oppose or anger their perpetrators unnecessarily in order to avoid retaliations during torture. On one occasion the woman in question asked Elena about her favorite color and she answered "blue." Much later, during interrogation, with Elena strapped down to the *parilla* but refusing to speak, the woman told her "You said your favorite color is blue?" She answered that that was correct. "Then how would you like a blue eye?" and punched Elena with a hard fist in her face.

Between life and death

The lived experience of the prisoners illustrates what could be referred to as the existential dimension of political terror: The ambiguity and fear of existing "betwixt and between" orders of reality, sanity and madness, life and death.[13]

The torture center was located in the busy center of the capital. Everyday life was continuing outside, perceived by prisoners through sounds of traffic, birds, or glimpses of tree-tops and telephone wires through a crack in the door, which contrasted to the terrifying order of reality on the inside. There was a similar contrast in the anguish and terror of clandestine jails and brief moments of intense, almost passionate experience of being alive (see also Partnoy, 1986; Timerman, 1981)[14]. As prisoners, they lived an interim existence, removed from ordinary categories of social life. As *incomunicados* (their whereabouts unknown), like the disappeared[15], they lived intensely and painfully but did not officially exist anywhere.

The outcome was uncertain, the superior force was unpredictable. Dependency patterns, the almost symbiotic relation between torturer and

victim (see *e.g.* Benedetti, 1976) as well as forced drugs, amplified the effects of confusion about "reality." The ambiguous realm of existence between life and death was made forcefully explicit through mock executions, escalated torture (in and out of consciousness alternated with recuperation), and pronounced death sentences never carried out.

Eliciting intelligence is only part of the strategy for political control. As Bamber points out (1988), torture has its own rationale, as a power strategy of the State. The different techniques aim, more importantly, through dependency, forced confessions, betrayals and other forms of dehumanization (see *e.g.* Allodi, 1980) to alienate a member from the movement and ultimately, from himself or herself.

Resistance

Resistance was an increasingly difficult balance between silence, *i.e.* not providing information, defying the power, and avoiding pain. For the individual victim, the process involved maintaining distance and a sense of reality as well as a sense of dignity in the face of repeated humiliations. A recurring theme in accounts is the effort to maintain some control. Elena's "disconnection of body from the mind" was a coping technique known in psychology as "splitting." For Elena, this was a way to "maintain sanity." The other preoccupation was that of controlling information, to avoid betrayal of the group. Personal resistance also concerned the relationship between the individual and the movement. Repression and torture, like exile later, were in different ways seen as a crucial "test" of the commitment; resistance was part of reaffirming the collective over the individual.

A young exile, Juan, describes, rather matter of factly, this dilemma of knowing just how much to say to avoid pain and protect one's *compañeros*. Juan had been the leader of a political student organization, engaged in clandestine work, when he was detained. In the interrogation sessions questions were interspersed with shocks of electric current when he refused to answer or answered insufficiently. There was always the terrible dilemma, he said, of figuring out how much to say to escape more electricity:

> "If I started to give some information, for example names of *compañeros*, they would think I really knew more and increase the voltage. If I didnt't talk at all, the same would happen. How to make them think I really didn't know much and that they were wasting their time?"

At the same time, he claimed, this need to think helped him maintain self-control. Pragmatic concerns and matter-of-fact approach to prison

experiences was another survival technique, which we know from accounts of concentration camp existence (*e.g.* Glas-Larsson, 1981). Prisoners applied rational categories of everyday life to a reality in which these categories had been annulled. This coping technique was sometimes continued long after the experience but counter-productive: busying oneself with the practical matters of everyday life was one way to evade confronting a painful past.

In the prison camps, where victims were sent after detention centers, a strong sense of communality and different kind of support systems developed, including the pooling of food and other scarce resources brought by visitors. This group solidarity was extremely important in maintaining a sense of self in prison and also their firm identification with a political movement which provided reasons as to why they were being assaulted.[16] Some Chilean exiles reported that the interrogation sessions actually reinforced their political convictions and relations between group members. The prison camps constituted a kind of "communitas" and forged strong personal ties, often across party boundaries and maintained long after prisoners were in exile.

Trauma as "inner liminality"

Elena had resisted the brutal and unpredictable violations on her person. But something vital went out of her life. Torture is a profound assault on a human being, the violation of the person, physical and social. As Stuart Turner points out (1987), those who survive are inevitably changed. The experience may remain for a lifetime, as an inescapable inner reality, sometimes described as an inner void, co-existing with outwardly well-adjusted lives. This void suggests another dimension of liminality: an ambiguous realm of existence between trauma and "normal life." Like exile itself, the condition is open-ended. Reintegration into full life is not a given outcome.

The 11th of September, the day of the coup, shattered one mode of existence and marked the beginning of another. For the supporters of the popular movement, it entailed a major transformation not only of Chilean society but also of individual Chilean lives. Exile was another powerful instrument of political control and means of social exclusion. The final chapter returns to the annual commemoration of the 11th September in the exile community, as the occasion summarizing this transformation.

Notes to Chapter 2

[1] The phrase contains an ambiguity in Spanish: "he knew how to die" but also "he knew that to die was the right thing to do," as political obligation and historical necessity.

[2] See *e.g.* Touraine (1973); de Vylder, (1974). From a historical perspective, see *e.g.* Valenzuela and Valenzuela (1976); Caviedes (1979). From the perspective of the UP government, see *e.g.* Zammit (1973); Debray (1971). The reality of the UP period is necessarily a contentious one, considering the battle of opposing views. Most of the literature cited reflect ideological support for the *Unidad Popular*, but include critical analyses of its strategy and performance.

[3] These accounts reflect partially idealized versions, perhaps as statements of the magnitude of loss suffered, and the orientation to the past developed in exile. However, exile has also meant much self-reflection and a painful process of critical evaluation of this political past by many actors and political groups.

[4] Program of the *Unidad Popular*, in NACLA (1973)

[5] Compare the successful slogans of the Christian Democratic Party in their campaign in the 1960s for *Techo, Abrigo, Comida* (Roof, Clothing and Food) among the working classes (Caviedes, *op.cit.*).

[6] See *e.g.* Valenzuela, (1976) on the ambiguous role of Chilean labor and trade unions in this process. While many unions were militant and promoted workers control, others resisted and continued to pursue traditional limited socio-economic goals.

[7] See also *e.g.* NACLA (1972) and Latin America Bureau (1983)

[8] This and the following sections of Margarita's accounts are quoted from an unpublished interview conducted by Julio Moliné, of the local public television KTEH in 1981.

[9] Historically, *peñas* were temporary huts constructed by peasants to provide a communal space to celebrate fiestas and holidays (Casa Chile, 1983a). They were "reconstructed" in the cities, in particular Santiago, during the 1960s. An English equivalent is difficult to find, but the closest translation, suggested by Fairley (1989), may be that of an English "folk club."

[10] This awareness of constructing something new among the left was also reflected in the naming of children: Vladimir, Fidél, Emílio or indigenous Andean names, the names of revolutionary heroes of other times and places inspiring their own struggle.

[11] This villa was a large, elegant house in the center of Santiago, which was used by the DINA as a secret detention and interrogation center.

[12] A framed metal grid used for the application of electric current to prisoners.

[13] These accounts are from the victim's perspective. See also an account by a former member of the Chilean Air Force Secret Service (Martinez, 1985).

[14] In Timerman's case, this occurred when seeing a human eye through a crack in the wall to the next cell; but he never found out if it was a male or a female

prisoner. Partnoy recalls "the smell of damp earth made her come to grips with the fact that she was still alive. She inhaled deeply and a rare memory of freedom tickled her cheekbones." (Partnoy, 1986 in Agosin, 1988:186).

[15] "The disappeared" refers to a special category of detained Chileans whose fate has never been confirmed by the Chilean authorities. *e.g.* Amnesty International, 1981.

[16] The experience of survivors of Nazi concentration camps that were identified political opponents (*e.g.* Communist Party members) suggests that ideological convictions and organizational experience were vital sources of resistance (Helen Bamber, personal communication).

3. TRANSITION: FROM CHILE TO THE USA

> "Navigation delivers man to the uncertainty of fate; in water, each of us is in the hands of his own destiny."
>
> Foucault
> *Madness and Civilization*

The transition to exile acutely illustrates the pains and perils of involuntary displacement. Admission as refugees to the U.S. also held its own particular paradox for the supporters of the Chilean revolution. This chapter outlines the socio-political realities of transition, and introduces the exiles and the local context of settlement in Northern California. The period of arrival and settlement was one of turmoil and anguish, but one also infused with intensity and comradeship. The nature of the local support structure allowed Chileans to begin reconstructing their lives and mobilizing their resources as a collectivity. The period is a vital element in the genesis and collective memory of the exile community.

From prisoners to parolees

Two years after the coup, in response to mounting international criticism of the rampant violations of human rights, the Chilean regime issued decree law 504. The law, referred to as *extrañamiento*, permitted political prisoners to apply to commute their sentences to exile provided other countries would accept them. With this form of banishment, the regime combined the elimination of opponents with an attempt to give an image of return to normalcy.

For Alberto Riveras, as for many others in Chile after the military coup, decree 504 provided a chance to escape the uncertainty and suffering of prison and concentration camp. Others, like Elena, had been released but lived in constant fear of new detentions and persecution and lacked the basic security of a normal life. Most had applied for asylum to other countries

than the U.S. but the urgency to get out of prison and to be reunited with waiting families, and the painfully slow processing, created a pressure to accept the first country offered. Moreover, there was no guarantee that other offers were forthcoming. There was also a preoccupation from the opposition parties to get militants out of prison and, if necessary, into the safety of exile. Exile was seen as a political necessity to reconstruct the movement and to organize resistance. The offer represented a temporary refuge, survival and safety elsewhere, until a democratic order was restored in Chile.

The situation was plagued with uncertainties and confusion, as reflected in old Alberto's account:

> "My death sentence had been converted to 10 years imprisonment. ...I spent three and a half years in a prison in the far south, under terrible conditions. It was always cold, and I was always hungry. I had no visitors who could bring me food and things from the outside—it was a miserable life, if you could call it life. Then I heard from other inmates of the *extrañamiento* program and they helped me apply. After that I was moved to a Santiago prison and waited there for eight months for a decision. I also waited to hear from my wife—she and the children could have joined me in exile, but they never did. She had abandoned me during my years in prison, and I left alone... it was my only chance to survive.
>
> Suddenly, one day, I was simply taken to the airport. They said I had been granted a visa to the U.S. I had applied to different countries, but the U.S. was the offer I got... I had no idea where in the States I was going to, not until I was put on the plane and handed a bunch of documents; but it made little difference, I did not know anyone in that country. I felt relief when the plane took off—after nearly four years, I was free! But what would happen to me there? Somehow I would have to make it, I told myself; I was not afraid to work, I had worked hard all my life. I would find someplace to live and forget the terrible years. I needed freedom, but to be free is also to be able to work and earn one's living, to have something to eat and dress a little decently. But I was getting old, I did not speak the language, I had no family and didn't know a single soul over there. All I had was the small packet I was carrying, with some clothes."

The reluctant host

The United States admission of Chilean political refugees in 1976 was a long and complex legal process that involved the highest levels of the administration. Hearings in the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugee and

Humanitarian Problems in Chile, news media covering the military intervention in Chile, and a call by UNHCR for the urgent admission of Chilean exiles together exerted pressure on the State Department to take action. In November, 1974 the State Department finally agreed to recommend to the Attorney General's office that applications be accepted for a limited number of political refugees from Chile. However, no action was taken due to mounting congressional opposition and the case was blocked in a conflict between the State and the Justice Departments over potential security risks. As a result, no blanket order was issued by the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Services), which was the expeditious procedure for other and much larger refugee groups such as Ugandan-Asians and South-East Asians.

In June 1975, the State Department finally endorsed the Chilean refugee program.[1] The Secretary of State personally assured that the security risk was minimal and that "... it is not proposed to bring in Communists, terrorists, or economic distress cases" (*Washington Post*, August 13, 1975). Thus, congressional concern was eased by promises of restrictions on numbers of admission and a thorough scrutiny of backgrounds on a case by case basis. However, the complex approval routines meant long delays for those waiting in Chilean prisons.[2] Applications for admittance were made from prison for those interned. The ICEM (Inter-Governmental Committee on European Migration) handled a large number of the Chilean refugee cases. They assisted applicants with necessary paperwork and acted as liason between them and the State Department in Washington D.C. Screening was conducted by U. S. embassy personnel who interviewed applicants and ran a local security and health check. A final decision on eligibility for admission was then made by Attorney General's Office. An ICEM official throws some light on the political criteria employed: "Professed Communists and known revolutionary extremists would not be admitted by reference to the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952." On the other hand, "...professed members of three now outlawed political groups that backed Allende and that were all more militantly Marxist than the Chilean Communists were not specifically barred. These included members of the Chilean Socialist Party." (*Los Angeles Times*, October 15, 1975).

The Chilean refugees were accepted under the Immigration and Naturalization Act Section 212 (d) (5) and assigned a temporary status on entry as "parolees." This category marked a holding state which did not guarantee permanent residences status. Moreover, each applicant had to sign a declaration of non-intervention in the political affairs of the United Sta-

tes to be accepted. Travel costs were to be reimbursed when refugees were resettled and economically self-supporting.

A One-Way Ticket

Once legal clearance was issued, events moved quickly. Departure from Chile was abrupt. Family members were given very short notice to allow them to pack the necessities and to say farewell to friends and relatives. The prisoners were brought directly to the airport to be reunited with their families, sometimes after years of separation. They were then put on an airplane and handed the necessary documents. Some knew little more about their destination in the U.S. than the eventual location and the person meeting them there. Departure was an emotionally turbulent moment; the euphoria of being alive and together as a family was mixed with sadness and anger surrounding their exit. They were being expelled from their own country, divested of their rights as Chilean citizens, issued with a passport stamp barring reentry, and a one-way ticket to a country of which they knew little but feared the worst. With this initial step, they were embarking on a much longer and unsettling experience than they could have imagined. The U.S. at the time was pictured in ideological and necessarily generalized terms. A central symbol of their political struggle, the U.S. was the imperialist giant. In the Chileans' own description, with the words of the Cuban poet José Martí, they were landing in "the Belly of the Beast."

"The Beast" extended a reluctant and unhospitable welcome. In addition to conditional legal status, no federal assistance program was established for the Chileans, as was the case for recent Indochinese refugees. Chileans would have to rely on voluntary sponsors, such as church organizations or private persons who undertook to assist the refugee until economically self-sufficient. The U.S. Catholic Congress, the World Council of Churches and the International Rescue Committee were major funding agencies in the Chilean case. The availability of local sponsors was decisive for the area of settlement.[3] A Catholic priest had played a pivotal role in securing the release and admission of the Chilean refugees to the USA, through his contacts with lobbyists in Congress. He headed a parish in Northern California and ran a local solidarity committee for Chile. With the support of the funding agencies, his Church of Sacred Heart became the local sponsor for the largest single group of Chilean refugees. The group numbered about one hundred of the total of four hundred exiles with their families. Another hundred families were settled in communities around the San Francisco Bay Area, in the same region of Northern California.

"In the Belly of the Beast"

The fall months of 1976 saw a steady stream of Chilean exiles arriving to Sacred Heart's Church. They were placed in temporary housing in an old convent next to the church that provided the basic necessities for survival. The newcomers were mostly families with young children. About one third were single, mostly young men. There was a smaller number of older couples and single men like Alberto Riveras. Two thirds of the men were skilled or semi-skilled manual workers from the cities and towns of industrial and mining districts in Chile. As workers of textile industries, paper mills, chemical plants, coal and copper mines they had, like Eduardo Torres, been actively participating in constructing socialism during the Unidad Popular. As is common in Chilean working class, the women had been housewives, with little working experience outside of the domestic sphere. Women had been less directly involved in party politics, although many like Margarita, had taken active part in the popular mobilization in her *barrio*. One third were students or white collar workers in the public sector, and of lower middle-class background. The women in this category, like Elena, had held employment, been active members of political parties and three of them came with their own refugee visas. Three of the men had been enlisted members of the Chilean Armed Forces during the *Unidad Popular*.

The exiles came from different parts of Chile. Except for a few men who had been in prison together, most did not know each other on arrival. However, their social background and political experience were a compelling basis for a sense of shared fate and collectivity. The majority of the exiles were expelled through the deportation decree without the right to return. Ten families had come via Argentina, where they had fled after the coup. Altogether, the exiles represented a broad spectrum of the Chilean left. Apart from a few local-level trade union leaders, most were rank and file militants or supporters of parties. As part of the organized working class, they had formed the backbone of the trade union movement and the largest parties of the *Unidad Popular*. As participants of the popular movement, they were now all in opposition to the new military regime in Chile, angry and vindictive, preparing to build up political resistance and to return as soon as possible

Arriving destitute and distraught, allowed only a small suitcase each, the exiles were aptly referred to by their local sponsor, the *Padre*, as "the people who came with only the shirts on their backs." Disorientation and a profo-

und sense of loss marked the experience of arrival. Most families had at least one adult who had lived through prison and concentration camps in Chile. Some had spent only a few months detained, others the entire period between the coup and their expulsion from Chile. Torture, both physical and psychological, was part of nearly everyone's prison experience. Long sentences of ten or more years were not unusual and a few had faced death sentences. The political persecution in Chile had taken its toll on the whole family. Their condition during the first year was described by Gonsalves (1978) as "massive trauma" ascribed to the combined effect of persecution in Chile and the experience as refugees. But there was also an immense relief at being physically safe and, for the families, to be together again after the uncertainty of long separation. A strong conviction about returning home in a very near future was shared by most.

"Desnudos"

Banishment and removal from one's native land invariably involve many facets of rupture and loss. *"Desnudos"* is an image sometimes used by the Chileans to describe their experience on arrival in exile, a profound feeling of being dispossessed. The experience had many dimensions. Materially, they had nothing, deprived of what little they had owned as Chilean workers. Banished from society, their legal rights and social position as citizens had been annulled. As political actors building a new Chile, the coup had shattered their life-project and their hopes for a new and better society. A rupture of this kind was part of the experience of all members of the popular movement after the coup. However, expulsion removed exiles physically as well. A geographical and social exclusion cut them off from the social and cultural universe of the familiar and left political comrades, relatives and friends to fend for themselves in the aftermath of social upheaval. The experience was a massive and sudden bereavement, a loss "of our country and our loved ones," which they grieved along with their many dead. *"Desnudo"* may also connote a rupture at a deeper psychological level. As mentioned earlier, torture and other forms of violation, aim to divest victims of human dignity and personal control. The experience may disconnect them, with various intensity and duration, from a sense of reality and self. Uprooting and displacement intensified such reactions of estrangement, leading to disorientation, distrust (Gonsalves, *op.cit.)* and a sense of events as "unreal." The phrase *"llegamos desnudos"* (we came dispossessed) encompasses this compounded experience of loss. The words suggest a sense of exposure and vulnerability of arriving in the U.S. as a marginal collectivity of refugees.

Betwixt and Between: "Náufragos"

The conditions of admission placed the exiles in a precarious legal and social limbo. "Parolee" was an ambiguous and conditional status, which carried no guarantees of either financial support or final legal adjustment. (It was to take three years before their designation was converted into permanent residence status.) The exiles suspected surveillance by U.S. authorities and by Chilean intelligence. These fears reflected not only the paranoia of political refugees escaping persecution. The history of exiles in the U.S. from other Latin American dictatorships indicates that they were not beyond the reach of the long arm of the Chilean military junta.[4] Shortly after arrival of the Chilean exiles to the U.S., a Minister of the ousted Allende government, Orlando Letelier, was assassinated in Washington, D.C., by agents of the Chilean regime. This event aroused considerable anxiety among the Chileans as to their own safety and an elaborate alarm system was installed in the convent. A few months later, another unsettling incident occurred. One of the Chileans, on returning to the U.S. from a visit to Central America, was detained at the border. Charged with conspirational activity, he was imprisoned and later deported to a third country.

As parolees, denied the rights as citizens to return to Chile and with only conditional status in the new country, they were, in a very literal sense, in limbo. *Náufragos* (shipwrecked) is the exiles' image to refer to their condition during the first years in the U.S. *Náufragos* evokes an image of a group adrift between continents or systems in a turbulent flow of events beyond their control. Their placement in a convent underscored their marginal position. In the uncertainty of their condition, however, the convent and the *Padre* provided sanctuary from outside dangers, real or imagined. Poems in homage to the *Padre*, describes him as the savior of the shipwrecked Chileans, offering refuge and a home in his parish. The situation offered opportunities of vital companionship with other exiles, and constituted the genesis of the exile community. On the basis of a common ideological framework and predicament they could begin to formulate the experience and organize their response.

***A Community of Fate:* "Los olvidados"**

Persecution and traumatic experiences before leaving for exile created disorders similar to those noted in other concentration camp survivors. Gonsalves' study (*op. cit.*) of the Chileans one year after arrival reveals reactions of mourning, survival guilt and anger, producing depressions, sleeping disorders, mental numbness but also aggression and paranoia, along with

a variety of somatic expressions. The reactions were a combined effect of persecution and the feeling of displacement. Children also suffered acute effects of terror. Many had witnessed the widespread political violence following the coup, and some had lived through the horrors of nightly assaults by military squads coming to arrest members of their family. The trauma that many were living implied a commonality of fate and psychological affinity similar to that of concentration camp victims described by Wiesel:

> "...it was considered taboo, reserved exclusively for the initiated. Those who have not lived through the experience will never know. Those who have, will never tell. Not really, not completely."[5]

The experience, hardly communicable to others, inevitably set them apart from those who have not been through the ordeal. Unlike their political condition as exiles and parolees, their inner, mental condition was less acknowledged. There were also cultural barriers, especially for males, to admit mental disorders. In the convent, however, a small group, who referred to themselves as *los olvidados* (the forgotten) began to discuss their experiences.[6] Elena recalls how they tried to help each other out:

> "We came so destroyed, physically and mentally. We felt that only we could understand what the other was going through. But it was easier for me as a woman... Men seem to deny the painful memories... they worry about their image... But in the nights, one could hear them scream in the convent, terrible screams, or weep and I would go and sit with them, talk to them and try to help them out of their nightmares."

The first months in the convent, were marked by *ad hoc* solutions and personal anxieties. Disorientation followed the disruption of normal order and uprooting from the familiar and lived-in social reality. A sense of waiting, of "just hanging around" was common. Crowded together in the convent as families and singles, the women busied themselves with household chores, while the men sat around, recapitulating the events that had brought them there, and devising strategies for action. However, there was also a strong sense of togetherness (*convivencia*) and mutual support. The atmosphere was one of communitas (Turner, 1969) which, for liminal groups, emerges out of sharing an extraordinary experience. The intensity of the experience and mutal dependence forged social ties and fuelled a spirit of comradeship resonating with the traditional and cherished values of the politicized Chilean working class. All were equally reduced on arrival to a common status as

refugee, equally deprived, "*desnudos*." This condition seemed to annull the importance of other social distinctions at the time, including party affiliation, normally an important aspect of social identity. The discourse was one of unity; a sense of shared fate, a group set apart from the surrounding society, with a special history and purpose. Resources were pooled and shared. However, there were also disputes and squabbles over distribution, felt to violate the ethos of solidarity, but probably a response to scarcity and the general insecurity of their situation.[7]

Local settlement context: Sacred Heart as sanctuary and support structure

The Chileans arrived before the adoption of the U.S. Refugee Act in 1980, which created special institutional structures for settlement assistance. The absence of such arrangements and institutional control probably worked to the exiles' advantage. At any rate it corresponded to their own goal of minimum involvement with U.S. authorities. Although complaints were heard from Chileans about unfair restrictions compared to generous assistance programs for Cuban and South-East Asian refugees[8], there was a strong apprehension about becoming dependent on the "U.S. system" and "absorbed by the Beast." Nevertheless, the problems the Chileans were facing were tremendous. They had no economic security and did not speak the language. In addition, they felt physically unsafe and had few allies in the new country. There was no existing Chilean community of the same political persuasion to introduce them to life and politics in California. Survival was a struggle and exiles had to depend on forms of mutual support, self-help, and voluntary contributions.

Large-scale and centralized operations of refugee settlement tend to be both impersonal and inflexible regarding refugees' needs and involvement. The support structure that developed at the local parish had neither much structure nor material support to offer, but was nevertheless effective, both from the point of view of the host (the primary goal being economic self-sufficiency) and the refugees (emphasizing survival and independence).

The parish of Sacred Heart is located in a poverty-stricken and depressed area of the fast-growing urban sprawl of "Silicon Valley." The neighbourhood is predominantly Mexican but functions as a stop-over for a variety of newly arrived immigrants and refugees. As a result, Vietnamese and Central-American refugees were coming in to the area along with the Chileans. The church had a tradition of social assistance to its *Latino* newcomers but also to others in need. It ran a soup kitchen for the destitute and a small health

clinic with staff who spoke one's own language and, importantly, did not ask for a medical insurance or Aliens card.

In the old and abandoned convent next to the church where the Chileans were housed, the basic necessities were provided on arrival. Daily maintenance (such as cooking and cleaning), however, was the responsibility of the Chileans themselves. Materially, conditions were limited, with only a modest annual sum provided by the voluntary funding agencies. However, the *Padre*, as local sponsor, recruited a small team of experienced volunteer community workers, politically sympathetic to the Chilean cause. Together with the Chileans they set up a Support Committee that managed to cover the most immediate needs of the newcomers. The Support Committee, according to their program statement, was to be "sensitive to the cultural differences and the trauma of psychological and physical dislocation" of the Chilean refugees, and aimed to "facilitate entry into our systems, learn the use of public services, with a minimum of discomfort and thereby enable the refugees to survive in our society and at the same time, accomplish their political goals." Most of the assistance was obtained through informal contacts. The *Padre* mobilized his large network of influential contacts in various agencies and the Support Committee similarly organized volunteer professional services as well as material aid to the refugees. They ran collection campaigns in the parish for clothes, household goods and Christmas gifts for the children. The Chileans themselves took active part in this support work, setting up a parallel committee, so that goods were distributed on the principle of "equality and according to need." Medical services were badly needed, especially dental treatment for those exposed to oral electricity during torture. Spanish-speaking physicians and counsellors who volunteered their services were recruited. On a similar basis, an assistant was recruited to teach them English, which none of them spoke and few understood. However, this plan was not very successful, as there was a strong resistance on the part of the Chileans. They were not in the U.S. to stay, "like the Vietnamese or the Cubans. And besides, why learn the language of '*los imperialistas?*'"

Relations between Chileans and the support group were not always smooth. There was much aggression and paranoia directed toward "the American system" at the time and sometimes directed toward the volunteer workers. The demanding attitudes of the new exiles bitterly claimed that, as partly responsible for their plight after the coup, "the U.S. owed it to them." At the same time, the goal of "facilitating entry" into the U.S. system was controversial and demanded much negotiation between the two groups,

even with respect to accepting public assistance. The clash was between the ideas of funding agency officials, promoting goals of individual adaptation and permanent settlement; some felt that the Chileans should get on with their lives in the U.S. and realize that return was "a dream most refugees hold on arrival but which almost never comes true." In view of the history of instability of Latin American dictatorships, however, the Chileans' return orientation was reasonable.

Nevertheless, the local support structure was flexible enough to allow negotiations and reduce the impact of such conflicts. Its effectiveness lay in the combination of a number of crucial features, which made the refugees active in directing their settlement. It provided safety and very personal guidance into the new system, perceived as hostile by the refugees. The volunteers had a personal commitment and some of them spoke or started to learn Spanish. Importantly, they had informal relations to wider assistance networks. The availability of existing minority networks in the area, in this case particularly the *Chicano* community, comprising informal and institutional support structures, and a tradition of volunteer assistance were vital elements. The resulting arrangements were adaptable and allowed for participation by the refugees themselves in defining the needs and in organizing their own settlement. This included a "space" in which to rebuild and interact with their own organisations. Despite much economic distress and initial hardship, the local arrangements compensated to some extent for the federal financial restrictions on settlement, and mediated constructively between the Chileans and the institutions of American society.

Many of the exiles were from towns and cities in Chile, but life at home was nevertheless very different from the fast-moving urban environment of "Silicon Valley." First impressions are dominated by high-technology industry, intricate traffic patterns and seemingly endless shopping areas. None of them had owned a car in Chile and almost nobody knew how to drive. The exiles bought a communal vehicle to start with, but soon learnt the restrictions of life in California without a personal means of transportation. Shortly thereafter, the Chileans obtained drivers' licences and cheap, second-hand cars. However, there were drawbacks: Breakdowns and accidents were frequent and the *Padre* received calls at all hours of the night from Chileans involved in some accident, unable to speak the language and not knowing what to do. Symbolically, many of these collisions were with Vietnamese refugees, the other newcomers in the area and disliked by the Chileans for political reasons. The adjustments seem to have been more difficult for the older exiles. Alberto, for instance, was hesitant to venture

outside at first. Afraid of getting lost, he never left the convent out of sight. A woman trying to interpret the directions on a vending machine was laughed at as she stood talking to the machine—she thought the "dime" ("tell me" in Spanish) slot meant she should tell the machine her order. She cried in shame over appearing so "backward."

The Church provided an environment in which the Chileans felt relatively safe and at home. As avowed Marxists and anti-Church establishment, the large majority were not active Catholics, in particular the men. However, Sacred Heart was not associated with either the Catholic establishment or with the American power structure. It held labor-organizing classes for minorities, ran a *Latino* credit union, and the Chileans' political experience was welcomed. The credit union, from which Chileans were also to benefit, offered not only loans at low interest rates but also practical skills with respect to finance and power in U.S. society. Thus Sacred Heart took on more extensive functions than a normal church and acted as a multi-dimensional welfare agency of a very radical kind. The Support Committee functioned for three years until families were largely self-supporting. Within that period, the volunteer social worker was able to ascertain that Chileans, until they could find employment, were in fact eligible for public assistance, with access to welfare, food stamps, and medical assistance. After strong reluctance to "become dependent on the U.S. system" the exiles accepted this offer. However, entering the labor market, a much-desired goal by many other immigrants, was seen as a mixed blessing by the Chilean exiles.

With its emotional turmoil and intensity, the first year of arrival and settlement represents a very special time in their collective history: "when we were all like family," or "when we all needed each other." The time is held up as the ideal of community and solidarity against which change and disintegration is condemned. The *Padre* and Sacred Heart occupies a central place in the symbolic universe of the community. In the many poems dedicated to this experience, the *Padre* was "like a piece of wood extended to the shipwrecked." Sacred Heart offered refuge and a home to the Chileans, "*los náufragos del exilio*."

Chile presente!—*Exile as absence*

While exile and the convent provided a sanctuary, it was also an extention of confinement. "It is like a prison camp but with a larger patio. We will not be free until we can return home, to a democratic Chile," were the words of a refugee at the time. Exile, at this stage, was a temporary absence; Chile was the paramount social reality and the only possible future. Temporarily

displaced, to paraphrase their own imagery, their own navigational charts pointed unambiguously to Chile. "The first year was terrible" says Margarita, "our bodies were here but our hearts and minds were in Chile." The "life-line" was sustained through fervent letter-writing, telephone calls, newspapers and magazines, and in thoughts, dreams and the intensive interaction with other exiles. "...we liked nothing in the new country, nothing made us happy and our minds were in Chile. All we could think of was going back, returning home." Most were confident that their absence would be of short duration. Like the saying "to keep one's suitcases packed," reluctance to make permanent living arrangements or enter the labour market were all expressions of this conception of exile as a temporary absence. This absence had a somewhat different focus for men and women, reflecting their different roles and social experience in Chile.

For men like Eduardo, the industrial worker from Santiago, the experience of loss centered on the political defeat and the ordeal of imprisonment. Through the coup, he was displaced from his role as political actor but also as breadwinner for his family, both important for male identity and self-respect among Chileans. Margarita, his wife, who, like the rest of the women, had been a housewife in Chile, grieved the loss of her social world of friends, neighbours and kin that made up her daily life in the *barrio*. Margarita also feared for her children in exile, and her words reflect the mood of many women in the beginning, who felt that the first year in the new country was

> "terrible and full of grief; I missed so much my *barrio*, and my country... I was afraid my children would take a bad road in the U.S. In Chile we have this idea of this country as the center of drugs and perversion..."

The conflict between these realities, the American and the Chilean, was also experienced in obligations to families and *compañeros* left behind. From the beginning this seemed to be an issue charged with anguish and guilt. Exiles often remarked at the time that "we eat while in Chile others go hungry" or "we live while others are dying." Numerous parcels of whatever could be spared from their own meagre existence went home to parents and other relatives in need. The severe criticism of the comforts and pleasures which surrounded them in the U.S. were said to "lead to the decadence of the North American"(Gonsalves, *op. cit.*) also alluded to their conflict of adaptation. In exile, life should be lived as a necessity so as not to betray those who stayed behind.

The environment itself contributed to the perception of the present life as highly transitory. The social structure of the region is dominated by a rapidily expanding high technology industry. Rapid demographic and economic growth, with large numbers and different ethnic groups coming continously into the area, has made the social and physical environment diverse and changing. Silicon Valley characteristically exudes an impression of fast change and a multitude of newcomers, people "on the move." The milieu itself represents superficial attachments and lack of "local tradition" (see chapter 7).

Exile as liminality

As the image of *náufragos* suggests, exile was perceived as a transition, a dangerous and uncertain passage between fixed points.[9] This image is easily associated with the anthropological concepts of rites of passage and liminality, as developed by van Gennep (1908) and elaborated by Turner (1967, 1969). Liminality is defined as the phase "betwixt and between," in Turner's words, a state between separation from one social state or group and reincorporation.

The exiles perceived themselves to be, and in some very real ways were, "betwixt and between" social realities. There were different dimensions of this liminality. Exile was depicted as a temporary absence between separation from their native country and return. The present military dictatorship was perceived as an interim anomaly before a return to democratic social order. Personal traumas of repression was yet another dimension of liminality; an inner state between rupture and psychic reintegration. All three dimensions were in different ways symbolically represented as interim conditions, with reintegration as a "return to life."

The liminality of exiles, however, has different implications from the categories of rites of passage. Unlike the predictable outcome of a ritual order, exile is open-ended. As a response to disruption of the social order itself, it is unplanned and involuntary, and there is no guaranteed return and reincorporation, nor any ritual specialist to ensure a safe conduct. In contrast, the danger and threat associated with the liminal condition of these refugees were precariously real.

The idea of ambiguity inherent in liminal states is useful here. As suggested by the notions of *destierro*, sometimes also as *destiempo*[10], exile is suspended existence, removed from normal time and place. "Exiles," in this perspective, were an ambiguous social category. On the threshold between two worlds (sometimes compared to the "disappeared" in Chile), they existed in both,

yet not fully in either. Although the exiles' mental navigation charts pointed to Chile, their fate as *náufragos* was uncertain—hopes and despair, conviction and doubts co-existed. Disappeared or forgotten, the shipwrecked were absent, temporarily lost—an absence, it is implied, which in its extension held the threat of permanent loss and social obliteration.

For uprooted and displaced refugees their condition entails a painful search for control and meaning. As suggested by Turner, liminality invites reflection and introspection. But the intensified social bonds with others in the same predicament and the upsurge of symbolic proliferation is not a ritual elaboration with a wellknown outcome but part of a struggle to make sense out of a profound disruption and regain control over their lives. Exile necessarily involves change, sometimes involuntary and profound transformations of individuals' lives and identities. Such transformation will conflict with the exile ideology of temporary absence and transition. The contradictions between continuity and change, ideology and social experience in prolonged exile further compounds the ambiguity of their condition.

In this qualified sense, liminality and ambiguity form the context in which life in exile is defined and reconstructed. The political process that led to exile has existential implications, for the social group as well as for the individual. As the images of *náufragos* and *olvidados* suggest, power relations and existence are both central themes and interwoven strands in the cultural construction and representation of exile. Along with the themes of victimization and the danger of annihilation runs another one. As Turner points out, nakedness (*desnudo*) as a symbol of liminality, ambiguously points to both beginning and end; death and dissolution as well as new life and growth. There was not only despair and disorientation but also hope and conviction reflected in the expression "we are survivors, not victims." The exiles saw themselves as agents of their own history and part of a movement whose collective resources and resistance would bring about political change and their return home. This conviction fuelled the creativity and intense efforts of reconstructing lives and organizing resistance in exile. They and their government may have foundered, yet their visions had not. The following chapter examines more closely this project and its ideological premisses. An important part of this project was to keep the two worlds separate. The present was a preparation for life in the future, as projected through the past.

Notes to Chapter 3

[1] This announcement coincided with the adoption in Chile of the decree 405 by the Military regime, which facilitated screening of refugees by U.S. authorities before admission.

[2] *The Washington Post* echoed Senator Kennedy's criticism in Congress over the "...faulty, tardy and ineffective U.S. cooperation in the resettlement of Chilean political prisoners and refugees" (October 15th, 1975) and reported, "The same bureaucratic machinery that quickly facilitated entry of more than 100 000 South-Vietnamese has bogged down repeatedly on the security implications of the comparatively minor Chilean case..." (June 8th, 1975).

[3] Other considerations as well appear to have determined their location. The *Miami Herald* (August 23rd, 1975) reported that the Chilean refugees would probably not settle in southern Florida where large numbers of Cuban refugees had settled, but were "likely to go elsewhere, due to the anti-leftist Cubans and the tropical climate."

[4] Documentation shows that dictators in the past have used their embassies for political intelligence and control of exiles and for relations with American politicians and Congress (*e.g.* Ameringer, 1974).

[5] Cited in Goldman, *et al.* (1981).

[6] "Oblivion" is one definition of limbo, according to *Concise Oxford Dictionary*: "Region on border of hell, where pre-Christian just men and unbaptized infants are confined; prison, durance, condition of neglect or *oblivion*" (my emphasis) "The forgotten" thus suggests another dimension of liminality.

[7] With reference to such responses in refugee situations, see *e.g.* Harrell-Bond (1986).

[8] The Chileans were aware of the comprehensive federal resettlement assistance channelled into the local social services for a growing population of Indochinese refugees in the county. This included job training, education, and low-interest loans to small businesses.

[9] This metaphor of exile is found in Latin American exile literature, see *e.g.* Vásquez (1988) or Cortázar (1972). These images are not only part of a political discourse but also relate to exiles' lived experience of danger, disruption and homelessness.

[10] "*Destiempo*" has entered the Chilean exile discourse (Riquelme, 1987). It was suggested by Wittlin in Tabori (1972:34). See also Lundberg (1989).

4. RECONSTRUCTION AND RESISTANCE

October, Oh spring
return me to my people.
What will I do if I cannot see
a thousand men,
a thousand girls,
What will I do if I can't wrap
around my shoulders
a portion of hope,
What will I do if I can't walk
with the banner
that from hand to hand
in the line
of our long struggle
was placed in my hands?"

Pablo Neruda
"*Cuando de Chile*"[1]

The explosive changes following the coup also had their effects on the routine of daily personal life. The ensuing persecution not only broke up families and social networks but also cut off thousands from their livelihood. For the exiles, this rupture was doubly profound.

Organizing resistance, in the sense of defying and reordering existing power relations, was slow and difficult in Chile. The demobilization policy of the new regime had devastating effects on the organizational bases of the movement. As a consequence, heavy responsibility rested on the shoulders of the survivors, to defend and re-establish the historical project that began with the *Unidad Popular*, to return to a democratic order. Parties pinned much hope on their dispersed militants in exile to provide impetus and resources in this struggle. The exiles in the U.S., however, were facing personal dilemmas of their own. Arriving as traumatized and penniless aliens to a new country, considered to be "enemy territory" at that, they had to

find means of livelihood, reassemble their families and organizations and create new social networks. In contrast to the movement at home, they also had to define themselves in a socially meaningful way in the new society.

The seed that was planted

Responding to social upheaval and dislocation, groups draw on and adapt their specific historical experiences, traditions and cosmologies to understand their situation and reconstruct their disrupted lives (e g Worsley, 1968; Lincoln 1987; Tapp, 1988). The Chileans had a political "project" that clearly structured life and social organisation in exile. While the Hmong refugees from mountain Laos described by Tapp (*op.cit.*) formed a revivalist movement, observed their religious rituals, studied their holic scripts for guidance and hope, and celebrated their national heroes and martyrs, the Chileans prepared for a worldly political struggle, studying Marxist analyses and debating the "correct strategy" to oust the dictatorship. Thus, they saw themselves as agents in the political process they were living. In response to uprooting and dispersal, values and visions of the past were not only guides to problematic reality in the present but also symbols to be defended. In documents, speeches and collective events, the Chilean exiles were reminded of the last words of their President: The seed (*semilla*) planted in the "minds of thousands and thousands of Chileans cannot be forever held back." The historical process could not be halted and they as members of the popular movement had a vital role to play in it. The political fervor, the apocalyptic vision and tone in the conviction of a triumphant return, pervaded the political rhetoric of the Chilean opposition at the time. "Today, because of the resistance struggle in Chile, it is possible to count the days of the falling of the murderer fascist junta... The future is ours, *compañeros*!"[2] At the time, this was a far cry from the truth.

The Exile Project: Linking past and future

Patterson, in a study of Polish exile communities, noted that "... in other types of immigrant or minority communities, political associations may be considered as just another sector of social organization. In political exile communities, the entire associational network tends to be infused with this political orientation" (1977:233).

Reconstructing personal lives and institutions in Chilean exile had an intensely political focus. Grounded in the highly politicized model of so-

cial reality of the Chilean left, personal fates were political and demanded a political and collective resolution. Exile was a *castigo,* a punishment and extension of political repression. In the words of one exile, it was "...a weapon to destroy the response of the leftist forces and to disperse the popular movement." It was the reason for their present predicament of economic distress, social insecurity and isolation in an alien country. Political defeat and exile was a shared fate that formed the basis of collective organization and identity in the U.S. In view of the dispersal strategy of the Chilean regime, survival and organization were in themselves a way to defy their perpetrators. However, beyond considerations of political opposition, problems of survival were acute; the mobilization of their collective resources was seen as a necessity at the time. As discussed, the formation of the Chilean Refugee Committee to resolve such problems was facilitated by the local conditions of settlement. But reconstruction and resistance relied on the mobilization not only of material and social resources but symbolic ones, as well. Political groups assumed vital organizational and normative functions in this process. They contributed significantly in formulating "the exile project" in which political goals and obligations were paramount.

A militant's commitment

Many of the exiles had left prison with a clear idea of their obligations and the hopes others had for them. Many discussions of an opposition strategy were carried on in prison. Whenever a militant was about to leave for exile, his political tasks were discussed and defined beforehand. The party line was an important guide, sometimes a clear directive. Overriding concerns were rebuilding the damaged party organisation and providing financial support, as well as creating favourable publicity about the struggle in Chile for the outside world.

However, as Juan, a young student and militant recalls,

> "...it was definitely always a time with an end date. There was not a single exile who, on leaving his country, did not have the idea of returning." For the party militant, "...return was a responsibility, an obligation and a personal desire."

Personal history, having been a political prisoner and an activist in the movement, entailed a moral obligation:

> "We all left Chile in very high morale. To be a political prisoner was for many something they carried with great pride... so we made a

> commitment to the others, staying behind, saying 'I have to leave but I will return."

Resistance was the prerequisite for their own return, to resume their lives in Chile. Not all the exiles had formal obligations to a party (perhaps about one half of the men and only a few of the women) but all shared a general commitment to political change and return. In addition the personal obligations to those left behind were a deeply felt common concern. Relatives, friends, political *compañeros* remaining in prison, were relying on their help and support.

In the political discourse of the first years, the parties of the left did not speak of exile as such; rather, the opposition and forces of resistance were seen as temporarily divided into those working "in the interior" (in Chile) and those "in the exterior." In marking continuity in this fashion, exiles were not to be a distinct social category. The Socialist party spoke of a *derrota transitoria*, a temporary defeat. Exile as transition was a realistic expectation considering the long tradition of stable liberal democracy in Chile.[3] To preserve the vision and ideals of the revolutionary project would provide continuity in a disrupted present.The parties of the *Unidad Popular*, organizing a broad anti-fascist front of opposition at the time, summoned all exiles to organize for "this great responsibility that we, as a united front of the popular movement, have not only to ourselves but to the Chilean people, and the future, of Chile[4]." The exile project was expressed as a set of obligations in exile; to preserve ideology and commitment to political change, manifested in acts of solidarity with Chile, resistance and return.[5]

The legacy

To uphold and to defend persecuted values and visions of a new Chile was not only a political obligation and an ideological strategy but also an attempt to maintain cultural identity. For the Chileans, this heritage, defined as the politicized culture and the revolutionary project, was, in many respects, an outcome of rather recent years, the radicalization of the 1960s and instituted by the *Unidad Popular* and the popular movement.[6] Nevertheless, these years had been a transformative experience and turning point in most exiles' lives. With the explosion of hopes that constituted the Chilean "democratic revolution," they had all lived the vibrant moments of triumph of its social vision. That was the time when the ideals of equality, collectivity, solidarity and popular participation had been government policy, aiming to "create a new man," a new society. These were also the ideals for which they had all

suffered, in different ways, after the coup, in some cases almost lost their lives; these were sacrifices not so easily dismissed. Rage at the social injustice done (Gonsalves, *op.cit.*) rather affirmed these convictions.

Many ideals of the movement, such as solidarity and collectivity, as aspects of social relations, were an integral part of the Chilean working class culture. These were cherished values promoted by the organized and politicized working class, as well as aspects everyday practice. The "social organisation of poverty" relied on relations of interdependence and networks of mutual support between families. For the middle-class supporters of the *Unidad Popular* such ideals may have been more abstract than real experience.

The meaning of solidarity

Ramón, a miner from a small mining-town in the North, learnt the meaning of "solidarity" in his very early years.

At the age of 14, he started working in the mine, like his father before him. He was sad to leave school but accepted that an education was out of the question on his father's meagre income with six children to support. From the time he could remember he had helped out with the family economy, selling newspapers in the morning before school and then other odd jobs. His family was always in need but never starving. At 14, he worked 12-hour shifts in the mine, like the other men, "but they paid us for 8, when they paid us at all."

In the mine he learnt what it means to be a man, to be a miner. With the simple technology used, the work was tough and dangerous. Today he suffers from silicosis from breathing the silicon-powdered air of the mine shaft, "like most of the other miners," but he still recalls the work in the mine with some nostalgia. Among the memorable experiences was the solidarity, perhaps "greater among miners than any other kind of workers.

A vivid memory is their own strike of 1970, one of the longest in the Chilean coal miners' history:

> "It was hard on the workers, holding out for 96 days. Families would help each other out as much they could and each family would go to the union for one meal a day. Even so, we all suffered during the strike, and came out of it very weak. My father refused to work a single hour. Nobody would go. Any miner who tried to work was taken down to the union where the appointed strike committee would question him and teach him about the need for unity, to act as a member of his class. In some instances, they cut off a piece of a

> strike-breaker's ear, to serve as a lesson, for all to see, about the importance of strikes and workers' solidarity..."
>
> "Of the 11 years that I worked in the coal mine, I never once received a complete salary at the end of the month: there were always days deducted for absence, such as a day of solidarity strike with other workers. We miners were always ready to show our solidarity with the other workers—those of the copper mines, construction, the railroad or whatever other union that happened to be on strike."

Most families, like Ramón's, knew the sacrifices demanded by a strike. Political practice and experience of collective coping with adversity served them well in meeting the new hardships of exile. As the Chileans held their frequent meetings in the basement of the Convent, the *padre* was impressed with the rigourous application (perhaps very consciously) of these ideas in practice: "The strong sense of collectivity and community: self-criticism, communality, equality—pooling resources, working together—even family problems were dealt with in terms of how it would affect the community as a whole," adding, "here were Socialists acting like true Christians. This is what Christianity is all about."[7]

Similarly, the terms of address common during *Unidad Popular* to mark political consciousness and new social relations, *compañero* and *compañera*, were initially maintained and emphasized in exile.[8] "Politics" and political consciousness comprised practice and political theory in necessary interaction. While someone with theoretical sophistication (*una persona preparada*) was highly valued, practice was strongly emphasised, especially among the many exile workers and trade unionists. Theoretical and rhetorical skills, without deeds and practical results, were deemed useless. As Ramón's account shows, solidarity was more than a theoretical concept. It was part of a practice that involved most aspects of these workers' social interaction.

Resistance to assimilation

The idea of resistance and return also influenced the exile orientation towards the host society. They saw their role as different from the traditional immigrant arriving in the U.S. The exiles had not come by their own choice, nor were they looking for a better and permanent future. As revolutionaries, they held, "we have a special history and a conscious purpose in being here."

The irony of their situation entailed a dependence on a host society which they had been actively resisting at home in their political struggle. As Marxists and anti-imperialists, the U.S. represented the imperialist giant that had

long drained the Latin American continent of its resources while dominating its politics. As a consequence the U.S. was perceived as having played a crucial role in the defeat of their *Unidad Popular* government.

The ideology that evolved was *no absorbarse* (lit. "not to absorb oneself ") and *mantenerse puro* (keep oneself pure), *i.e.* not to be co-opted by the system but to retain one's ideology and commitment to the Chilean revolution. Gonsalves (1978) refers to the idea of the "decadence of the North American," with its emphasis on individualism and conspicious consumption. Of course, the lifestyle of Silicon Valley magnified this impression. These conceptions of the receiving society emphasized the contrasting values the Chileans ascribed to themselves. Thus, the life of a Chilean exile was "*una vida sencilla*," a simple life, without excesses, a life in accordance with one's social class, as workers. This implied "*no al consumismo*," the rejection of conspicuous consumption. In their view, the exploitation of Latin America had contributed to the affluence of the U.S. Thus, any surplus the exiles could extract from the new country was not only their due, but was to be returned to Chile rather than enriching themselves. The preservation of family and political organizations, the creation of community in exile were seen as important goals in securing the continuity of Chilean traditions and resisting absorption. Many aspects of daily life such as language, food, and family life took on a new and political significance they had not had in Chile.

Organization in Exile: Chilean Refugee Committee

> "The United States is a difficult country and we find ourselves removed far from our customs and history, tastes and desires. As individuals we are limited to change this reality, but together we can act to advance more rapidly..."[9]

The Chilean exiles came not only with trauma and loss, but also with considerable organizational skills and experience of coping, as a collectivity, with hardships. The Chilean Refugee Committee (CRC) was an expression of the practical need as well as the ideological imperative in collectively solving the problems of the exiles' situation. The CRC involved the mobilization of all exiles into one organization to resolve two major and immediate concerns, *i.e.* resettlement and political resistance. There was a clear consensus that both issues needed a collective strategy. With respect to political work, not only militants charged with special responsibility to

support their organization at home, but everyone was "eager to do something for Chile." The CRC was to represent all exiles, and everybody, irrespective of political affiliation, was seen to have a contribution to make. The spirit of sharing a common fate was easily translated by the political organizations into appeals for unity and joint action. These came to dominate the tone and direction of much Committee work especially as party militants were elected to key positions in the CRC.

The CRC acted as an interest organization to coordinate needs and articulate demands, and political parties assumed traditional mediating functions familiar to the exiles.[10] The authority of political organizations was, in the strict sense, over militants only. But as Kay (1987) has noted, the political parties were seen by most exiles as providing a vital link with Chile. These organizations represented the spearhead of resistance and political opposition and provided not only information about events at home, but also considerable normative pressure. In the uncertainty of the new situation, parties provided maps of problematic reality and furnished hopes for collectivity and return.

Committee Structure

A broad outline of the organizaton of CRC gives an idea of how tasks were perceived and structured. The Committee worked as a parallel to the Support Committee, which consisted of North American volunteer workers. The exiles identified five problem areas and corresponding task groups were established. Each task group included members from both Committees (Fig. 1), except for the the political task group, which was exclusively under Chilean control.

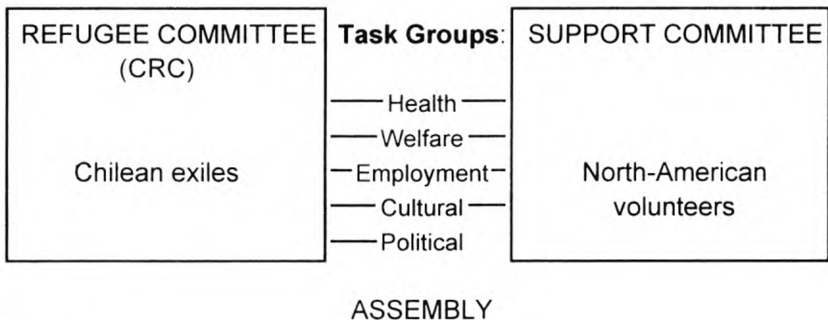


Fig. 1

According to the statutes of the two Committees, the Assembly consisted of all members and was the decision-making body. Members of task groups were elected by the Assembly, received their directives and reported to them, to discuss and approve all important matters. The Assembly met once a week, for 3 years, in long and, at least initially, well-attended meetings. Matters were to be discussed in "open and democratic fashion," each was "expected to offer his opinion, criticisms and self-criticisms" in the spirit of unity and comradeship. The active participation and contribution of each member was proscribed. Misconduct of elected members could be sanctioned through suspension from their position or expulsion from the committee.

Task Groups

The most immediate survival needs were dealt with by the Health and Welfare groups. Reflecting the sexual division of traditional responsibility, exile women were most active in these groups, coordinating health services and the provision of basic material needs and other matters of household economy. The responsibilities included the pooling of resources between exiles by demanding contributions and administering small loans, and also involved maintaining a communal car for transportation.

The task group of employment coordinated information and assistance with respect to employment and available training programs. While the Chileans were highly ambivalent about entering the job market, the Support Committee members channelled them into contact with local labor unions and favorable employment training programs at the local center training low-income and minority groups, primarily for the electronics industry.

These three task groups were primarily directed at the problems of settlement. The tasks of groups concerned with culture and politics were central issues of the "exile project." The task group for culture organized public cultural events such as music, dance and drama or videos about Chile, as part of the aim to create publicity and raise funds for the Chilean cause. Activities organized to "preserve Chilean culture" and transmit "political consciousness" to the younger generation, were also vital components of this project. Saturday school was established for children, with a focus on their mother tongue and political history. Children's mime and dance groups formed and children were taught traditional Chilean dances, which were performed at different public events.

As previously mentioned, the political task group was the exclusive domain of the Chileans. The objectives were twofold: first, to collect financial resources for direct aid to the Chilean opposition and second, to create publicity and relations with the media and other organizations in the U.S. to mobilize support for the struggle in Chile. The Support Committee assisted by arranging contacts and visits to local trade unions, church groups and other likely sources of support for the Chilean cause. They also helped organize larger fund-raising events and *peñas*.[11] The mobilization of support for political goals in Chile became an acutely contentious issue. Not surprisingly, this task group soon became an arena for political competition and conflict. The political unity in the rhetoric of the oppostion parties at the time conflicted with the concern of disrupted political organizations to self-affirmation.[12]

The primacy of the political goal was reiterated in the meetings of the CRC. Matters of livelihood and family economy were subordinated to the political goal:

> "Let's define NOW and WHY we are here, comrades. I will answer this question: I am not here so that I can pay my phone bills or other bills, and to justify such an existence for reasons of expulsion from my country. Such self-justification is counter-revolutionary! We are here to work for the comrades and the organizations risking and losing their lives in clandestine work. We are all here for political work. With this goal I am living here, not to indulge in the good life..."

Exiles reminded each other of their obligations to Chile by constant references to the conditions of those left behind. Having escaped entailed a commitment:

> "We are POLITICAL exiles... It's necessary to remind the *compañeros*, if they have already forgotten, in what disastrous situation we all found ourselves in Chile, coming out of prison. And how wretched survival was then. For this is the situation today, at this very moment, for millions of our *compañeros* there."

Many of the issues brought up for discussion in the CRC were first discussed in separate party groups. Thus, parties took an active part in articulating norms and values on a broad range of issues. This included "the proper stance" to adopt with respect to the new country, the display of homosexuality[13] in the area, and to Christmas traditions as "commercialized and consumerist"[14]. Norms concerning personal conduct and lifestyle were also

negotiated within this collectivity. Family problems such as domestic violence were taken up by the Committee. To "preserve the family" in exile was stressed as vital. Defined in an ideological framework, these spheres were interrelated, subordinated to the political goal as all had a bearing on the political struggle. The line between personal, domestic concerns and collective and political interests became diffuse. Considering the transparency of life in the small and tight-knit community, personal life became public and highly politicized.

Social Organization

About six months after arrival, most families had moved from the convent into their own housing. Approximately sixty households, consisting mostly of young nuclear families, moved into the low-rent areas around the Sacred Heart's church. Some exiles, initially resettled in other areas of the U.S. joined them, drawn by the availability of party associates and a Chilean community. Some single men moved on to a nearby city, seen as having greater "political potential," with more active leftist groups.

The settlement process integrated the exiles into a dense interactional and support network. Even though families began to receive Social Security and public assistance and became more responsible for their own household economy, they remained connected to collective organization of resources, through CRC and informal self-help arrangements. These included pooling of resources of different kinds, such as sharing a house, child-care, transportation. Reflecting their idea of settlement as transitory, families did not want to spend money on furniture or unnecessary household items and were reluctant to enter employment. Living with one's "suitcases packed" was a saying that reflected not only a political stance but a rejection of life in the new country.

The community that emerged resembled in many respects the local neighborhood support network of the *barrio* which the working class families had left behind, interconnected through kinship, marriage, political affiliation and friendship. In Chile, there had also been reciprocity and mutual assistance organized more formally in local neighbourhood organizations in which the representatives of political parties of the left connected them to the wider society. In this social system, work and politics were elements in the public male domain, while the private, domestic domain of family and household was the main orientation of working-class

women. Family and political associations were ties and loyalties carried over into the new context. These institutions provided vital points of reference in a disrupted existence and structured interpersonal relations. The *solteros*, the unmarried exiles, were said to have suffered the most acute loneliness and disorientation on arrival. As unmarried, they had all lived with their families at home, so that a single household was something of an anomaly. The single men who stayed on moved in with families in the community or with each other until finding a female partner. Other members of the community thus became new "relatives," replacing the lost ones.

Political affiliation also structured personal relations. The majority of the exile men had been members or supporters of some political organization and union. Party affiliation was an important means of social identification and of particular relevance in the exile context. Those without party affiliation or obvious sympathies were ambiguous and treated with suspicion until they had proved their reliability. Only a few of the women were militants of a party. They were young, and most had a student and middle-class background. While the female *compañeras*, generally (and the working class women in particular) were not expected to be militants or as politically active as the men, they were expected to support, and often did, their partner's political commitment. For a few exiles who had spent time in prison together, there existed a special bond, subsuming other differences. Particularly close ties of friendship and support developed between families and individuals of the same political affiliation.

As the political groups organized their members and supporters into local groups, to many women's dismay, the men seemed to spend all their time in incessant political activity, debates and meetings. The women were left to deal with the household and children's adjustment on their own.[15] Many women were clearly not very willing to "sacrifice" family life to politics anymore. At the same time, in many cases there was considerable strain in resuming traditional family roles. Several of the men were definitely marked by the effects of torture and the women had changed as well. With their husbands in prison, sometimes for long periods, many of them had been forced to act as family head and make all the important decisions. Thus it was difficult to return to a more dependent role. In conflict with the ideological goal of "maintaining the family" in exile, there was much pressure on family stability, manifested in domestic quarrels, even violence and separations.

Creating Community

A community is more than a network, the ethnographer's tool to describe social relations. A community includes peoples' conceptions of themselves as a local group, a sense of belonging and awareness of themselves as in some way distinct from others. The political idiom of social organization reflected the goals of the political project: the maintenance of families and political parties and their integration in the construction of one, united community of political exiles, above sectarian and household interests. To support these ideals, Lenin was quoted by community members regarding the universal worker family in which "... all workers, men and women, will be above all else, brothers and sisters" and "the children will be the children of all."

However, under the circumstances, forging ties of community was facilitated for a number of reasons, not least by the existence of the negatively perceived surrounding society. For some time, at least, the real and the ideal seemed to be one: A highly integrated and exclusive social unit with a strict boundary to American society, held together as much by economic and emotional needs, as by ideological imperatives. The settlement at Sacred Heart gave exiles their own history as a local group, distinct from other Chilean exile communities. The *Padre* at Sacred Heart played an important role in the community. He was said to regard the Chileans as his family, they were his "orphans." To them, he combined the qualities of paternal provider, political ally and moral leader. He embodied all of their own essential values: humility, community, political commitment and solidarity with Chile and Latin America's poor. He embraced a radical political interpretation of Catholicism (liberation theology) and shared the Chilean's revolutionary perspective. The Chileans referred to him as *Padre* or *Companero* and sometimes, jokingly, as *Comendante*, although his leadership was not of a direct, political kind. As its "genitor" he remained a symbol of community, celebrated annually on the anniversary of his death. His presence was invoked in most community gatherings as an essential element in the public memory of the community about which there was no disagreement. This and other celebrations of community are still held at Sacred Heart, as sanctuary and symbolic home of the Chilean community. Such events have become structural features constituting a "calendar" of the exile social world.

Ties of family, political affiliation and friendship extended beyond the local community. They integrated the Chileans into a larger network of exiles communities throughout the U.S. and beyond. In the Chilean diaspora, it was not uncommon to have kinsmen, particularly in one's own ge-

neration of brothers, sisters, cousins, dispersed as exiles in different parts of the world. On occasions, such as party anniversaries, cultural events or the visit of Allende's widow, members from different exile communites in the region came together.

Exclusiveness and boundary

More than a group defined by locality, the Chileans constituted a moral community. The exiles perceived themselves as set apart, in transit, different from other groups whether immigrant, American or Chilean in the surrounding society. Their moral exclusiveness lay in their special history and purpose as political exiles and Marxist revolutionaries involuntarily placed in the U.S. This politicized identity defined membership in the community and marked their distinctiveness to other groups in the host society.

Membership was thus defined by the status of political exile, with a political consciousness and a commitment to Chile, as demonstrated through active participation in the communal organization and activities. By the same criterion, two resident Chilean families without refugee status but with an active commitment were seen to belong to the community. Similarly, a few North-American women, mostly of the left, who married Chilean men were integrated as a kind of quasi-members insofar as they displayed a personal commitment to the Chilean cause. The Mexican spouses, however, were often seen as apolitical, and were not equally accepted in the Chilean moral community. Most of these men retained their close relationships with friends and political associates in the Chilean community. Some six Chilean families arriving with exile status but without demonstrating a political commitment were soon marginalized and were purported to be "economic immigrants, caught up with the American dream." Thus, the Chilean political heritage, more than anything, became a symbolic marker of Chileanness in exile, defining belonging and social boundaries. To defend a national identity and to articulate the distinctiveness of the movement, in contrast to that promoted by the new regime, was an essential part of the political struggle.

Inevitably, the formulation of a cultural identity was also a question of what was viable in the new context. The Chilean exiles found themselves for the first time as a national minority, part of a diverse environment and had to place themselves as a socially meaningful category with respect to other ethnic groups in the area. Such "ethnicity-building" (Björklund, 1981) involved articulating a group identity and defining boundaries to other groups. Many exiles report that they soon learnt to distinguish between

"the government" and "the North-American people." They met more "solidarity" than they had expected in the U.S. Nevertheless, Chileans contrasted themselves through their political culture (*cultura politica*) to the "apolitical North Americans," as well as to other refugee groups, and in particular in relation to Mexican immigrants. Entering the *Latino* Credit Association, created at Sacred Heart for the newly arrived Mexican workers, the Chileans soon took charge. In this area they demonstrated their organizational experience and skill, in contrast to the mostly rural immigrants. However, their stance was ambivalent. Many of the Mexican immigrants lacked "political consciousness" but they were also "oppressed workers." As Xavier recalled,

> "Out of Chile we became aware of our chauvinism, that the struggle for liberation concerned not only Chile but all of Latin America."

The Chileans found more affinity with the *Chicanos*,[16] or with recent refugees from Central America. Some of them joined support groups for El Salvador and Nicaragua, and took active part in the *Chicano* movement.

Their politicized exile identitity was articulated in public events of different kinds frequent in the first years and well attended mostly by politically sympathetic North-Americans and *latinos*. The political dimension was consistently present, whether in the form or topic of speech, a cultural performance or handicraft made by Chilean political prisoners, or simply in the fund-raising function of a social event.

However, there was restricted "space" in their new environment to negotiate this politicized identity. While it was the major boundary marker towards the surrounding society, their political history and identity were not very relevant or viable outside of the local parish and solidarity committees. While a vital concern to most Chilean exiles, interest in political affairs (and, presumably, in particular the revolutionary politics of the Latin American left) was very low among the population of Silicon Valley.[17] The Chileans were largely an "invisible" ethnic category in the wider society: They were usually lumped together as part of the Hispanic minority or misclassified as Mexicans, by the majority. Not recognized as a separate minority, they were unable to draw any resources from the host society on a group basis[18]. The next chapter describes the cultural strategies with which the Chilean exiles sought to draw attention to their political struggle and define, for themselves and others, their collective identity as exiles.

Notes to Chapter 4

[1] Neruda (1952) in Casa Chile (1983b).

[2] Pamphlet issued by a group of local exile parties in January 1977

[3] The military were highly professionalized and had only intervened once, briefly, in the in the 1920s.

[4] Local pamphlet, January 1977.

[5] Mottos of "solidarity with Chile" and "resistance" also marked different oppositional strategies among reformist and revolutionary political groupings at the time (see chapter 6).

[6] This was especially so for the young generation of the middle-class, who came to support the ultra-left. But the radicalization of the Chilean labor movement beyond traditional vindicationist programmes was also a result of more recent social changes.

[7] Personal interview held with the *Padre* before his death in 1982 by a Chilean reporter, Julio Moliné. Mr. Moliné gave me access to this unpublished material.

[8] Kay observed that this term of address became more frequent in exile; also that it was more often used by men than women, as part of men's more politicized language, but involving "little modification of the sexual division of labour in the family."(1987:160).

[9] Subsequent quotes in this section are from minutes of assembly meetings of the CRC.

[10] Especially during the *Unidad Popular*, parties were present in the multitude of local associations that emerged, from neighbourhood committees to soccer clubs, structuring debate and activity.

[11] A *peña* is a social-cultural event which expresses the close assocation between Chilean expressive culture and the political project that grew out of the *Unidad Popular* period, (see chapter 2, footnote 9). The *peña* is a common feature in Chilean exile communities.

[12] This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6. Here I am more concerned with the ways in which an essentially politicized model of social reality in exile is promoted. However, the process of affirming the political was part and parcel of a competitive bid for supporters between different groups and aspiring leaders.

[13] The stigma attached to homosexuality in the *machismo*-oriented Chilean society included a view by the left of homosexuals as "*momios*," *i.e.* reactionary and politically unreliable.

[14] There was a tendency to adopt a stricter ideological stance, a puritanism in the exile project, than what had been actual political practice at home. Kay (1987) made a similar observation with respect to the ideology of family maintenance among Chilean exiles in Scotland.

[15] Gonsalves (1978), from a psychological perspective, suggests that the intense activity reflected different strategies to avoid facing the painful realities of their condition, to hold off grief and paralyzing depression.

[16] *Chicano* is sometimes used to refer to second generation Mexicans in the U.S. With the *Chicano* political movement, it has also taken on a political connotation. The Chileans usually refer to *Chicanos* in this political sense.

[17] See further chapter 7

[18] A comparison with Chilean exiles in Sweden is interesting. Chilean refugees constitute a visible and wellknown group among the Swedish population. They are recognized as a national group by the State policy of cultural pluralism,with access to government funding for ethnic-based organizations. This situation has led to the formation of a multitude of Chilean "cultural associations," each with their separate political alliances. Chilean political organizations have also maintained vital resource links with groups of the Swedish left. The development has tended to institutionalize the political fragmentation in exile.

5. THE MOBILIZATION OF CULTURE

Ah, homeland, unburdened,
ah my spring,
ah when
ah when and when
will I awake in your arms
drenched with sea and foam.
And when I am near you
I will take you by the waist,
no one will be able to touch you,
I will be able to defend you,
singing,
when I am with you,
when you are with me, when,
ah when.

Pablo Neruda
Cuando de Chile

For those expelled from their homeland, dispersed and threatened with obliteration, the preservation of a sense of community has a special urgency. Traditions, customs, and history become essential to their collective identity. Preserving and transmitting their cultural heritage becomes a vital link to the home country, and a lifeline to their survival as a people. Moreover, this process has a political dimension. Cultural identity can be effective as a political symbol for "movements of the disinherited" (Worsley, 1968). Such groups celebrate and recreate themselves as a people and their heritage. Legends, myths, rituals and other collective activities are used to dramatize their claims, to assert and sometimes reconstruct symbolically their lost social order (see Lincoln, 1987). Strategies may have a religious focus as in the case of Tibetan refugees (Nowak, 1984) or Hmong refugees (Tapp, 1988) or that of a Marxist political struggle. In either case, as the Chilean image of the *semilla* (seed) indicates, the past celebrated is one that points to a certain future (*cf.* Kapferer, 1988).

Preserving the Past, Creating a Heritage

In exile, Chile took on a new and dramatic significance, as the symbol, *par excellence*, of all that had been lost and must be regained. Chile became an object of devotion. The verses of Pablo Neruda, a "patron" of the cultural movement in Chile and supporter of the *Unidad Popular*, were read and cited by exiles everywhere. Neruda was said to interpret their feelings for their country, "*en la distancia*," especially the homage to Chile written during his own exile in the 1950s. Through his vibrant and powerful poetry dedicated to his country, often symbolized and personified as a body, Chile attained an almost physical presence.

The presence of Chile was recreated among the refugees in the U.S. in a multitude of other ways. Homes were filled with mementos of Chilean culture, objects of folklore (*artesanía*), pictures of family and of President Allende. Food, music, dressing and speaking took on a special significance and conscious value. The formulation of a cultural heritage in exile necessarily involved a selection of elements from tradition and history. As indicated in chapter 4, the way of life and thought to be preserved as Chilean exiles was debated and defined in the first years. The selection was structured by considerations of the political aims but also negotiated in terms of what was socially meaningful in the host society. For instance, "Chilean Spanish" was an important marker of contrast to Mexican Spanish in the local exile context. "*Preservar nuestra cultura*" was a vital aspect of the exile project, the link between the past and the future. In this sense of "created heritage," Chilean culture became a rallying focus as well as a means to express their distinctiveness in the struggle against the military regime.

This identity in exile was essentially fashioned out of the ideals of the popular movement and the leftist ideology. A Saturday school started for the Chilean children in the first year, emphasized Chilean political history and the Spanish language. Expressive cultural forms such as music and folklore dances were seen as important elements of their Chilean identity.

The collective reconstruction of the past in new contexts was therefore a creative process, one that involved a rearrangement of traditional symbols for new functions. Such forms may be "invented traditions" in Hobsbawn's sense (1983). The many artistic forms of expression, for instance, drew substantially on the "tradition" of the cultural movement which emerged in support of the *Unidad Popular* in Chile. In exile this tradition was recreated to incorporate the experience of an exiled opposition and adapted to the new context.

Roots in the Popular Movement

"Dale tu mano al índio *dale que te hará bien* *te mojará el sudor santo* *de la lucha y el deber* *La cópla no tiene dueños* *patrones, no más mandar!* *La guitarra americana* *peleando aprendió a cantar"*	(Give your hand to the Indian give it so that you'll do well You will soak in sacred sweat of struggle and of obligation. The folksong wants no owners, patrones, no more commands! The American guitar Fighting, learnt to sing.)

"*Canción para mi America*"
Daniel Viglietti

The expression of Chilean identity in exile reflects with new vigour the nationalist theme already present in the leftist discourse, in particular as it evolved and fashioned an identity during the 1960s and early 1970s. The Socialist project of the Left and the *Unidad Popular* in Chile sought liberation in national terms from foreign economic domination and from cultural imperialism. Part of this struggle was the rediscovery of a popular, authentic Chilean culture. (*Unidad Popular* restricted foreign cultural influence and banned imports of foreign records to promote local music. This culture of the worker and the simple peasant, the Indian, the poor and the powerless, lent legitimacy to the political claim for *poder popular* (popular power). The Socialist revolution was also to be their liberation from the domination of the landowners and oligarchy of their own country. This ideological base provided new content for old forms. The cultural expressions that emerged in this period, especially the musical movement known as *la nueva canción chilena* (the new Chilean song), well illustrate this mobilization and adaptation of traditional cultural forms in search of political liberation and national identity.[1]

The *nueva canción latinoamericana* was a multifaceted and heterogeneous continental movement of poets and musicians with roots in the changing Latin American societies of the 1940s and 1950s. The movement emerged in Chile in response to growing politicization, and entered the larger political arena with its first festival at the University of Santiago in 1969. Politicized lyrics in traditional musical forms, often portraying the guitar as a gun in the struggle, were produced by a new generation of musicians, committed to social change. The music rediscovered genres of traditional folk songs and dances, mostly of Hispanic or Mestizo origin. Taken from the rural communities, where they were no longer performed and transposed into

the urban settings, they were given new functions and meanings. Tradition was revived, as folklore, for new audiences and political purposes (*ibid.*). *Cueca*, the nation-wide traditional folk dance, expressed a new political awareness in titles such as "The coal-miners' *cueca*" or "*Cueca* of the CUT" (Central Trade Union). This creation of a popular culture in close association with the political goals of the political movement and the left, took other forms of artisitic expression, as well. The "war of the walls" was part of the political campaign for the *Unidad Popular*. The Communist Party's youth brigades painted political slogans and images in bold strokes and bright colours on the walls of Santiago. These images were often produced in nativistic style and motifs.

> "It was a new visual expression of the goals and desires of the people... With audacity and economy of line and colour, (the murals) provided a synthesis of fundamental symbols" (Jara, 1983:56, my transl.)

The same intense, simplified style characterized the new music,

> "...without any flourishes other than those that seemed necessary, appropriate and consistent with those found in the rural culture, that was both foundation and inspiration. (The texts displayed a direct but also poetic language), 'the maximum said and implied in the minimum of words.'" (Fairley, 1984:111).

This popular, authentic Chilean identity was portrayed as rooted in the pre-Hispanic cultures of the Latin American continent. The indigenous heritage was acknowledged in a variety of artistic expressions in music, arts, handicrafts, and even in the naming of children. A revival of rhythms and instruments resounded the indigenous theme of *música Andina.* This music represented Andean peasant communities, moving across national borders for trade and festivals. As descendents of pre-Hispanic peoples, they embody regional unity of the Andes before conquest. The theme of Latin American unity was important in the revolutionary ideology, inspired by the ideas of Ché Guevara (*ibid.*). The Indian, proud and valiant in his resistance to conquest, provided a model for the liberation struggle of the 1960s, but also in the resistance movement after the coup. The link between the pre-colonial (pre-Hispanic) and Socialist Chile thus de-emphasized the national liberators of Chile from the Spanish Crown.[2] The pre-conquest martyrs and the movement's more recent ones were the major protagonists in the struggle.[3]

The music groups emerged primarily from the universities. Students and intellectuals, the "vanguard" of the movement, reflected the ideology which called on students to link up with workers and peasants. The content, form and style of *la nueva canción* did bring together and represent the essential components in the social movement, and came to be "simply defined as the voice of the worker, peasant, student, as opposed to that of the patriarch, landowner and oligarchy" (Fairley 1984:109). Inspired by folklore and Andean music, some groups took indigenous names, such as the later internationally renowned *Inti Illimani* and *Quilapayún*[4], performing in ponchos, the common dress of workers and peasants. Some of these musical groups were sent by President Allende as "musical ambassadors" to perform abroad. The indigenous instruments of *nueva canción* were so intimately associated with the *Unidad Popular* that the familiar sound was banned by the military after the coup. The musical movement was also closely linked to the Chilean Communist Party within the *Unidad Popular* coalition, with special figures such as the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda and Atahualpa Yupanqui from Argentina.

After the coup: Culture as Resistance

"Cante, cante compañero	(Sing, sing *compañero*
No tenga temor de nadie	do not be afraid of anyone
Que en esta gran multitud	In this great multitude
el pueblo tiene su valle."	the people have its valley)

"El pueblo tiene su valle"
Isabel Parra

After the devastating blow of the military coup in Chile the politicized culture received new force and dramatic new meaning. Masses of people found themselves on the "wrong side," placed by the military into the category of opponents. In the discourse of the opposition, the nationalist theme was infused with new vigor in the "battle of the Nation," fought with guns as well as with symbols. The left was depicted by the military regime as traitors of *la patria*, and part of a Communist conspiracy. The military was denounced by the opposition as lacking both constitutional and moral legitimacy, violating human rights and selling out the country to foreign interests.[5] Under the new regime, the left found itself in a severely restricted space because of censorship and repression. In recognition of the force of the cultural movement, its manifestations were banned after the coup. Books and records of the *nueva canción* were burnt in public in San-

tiago.[6] Such restrictions (as in the similar cultural void of Franco's Spain) have had the opposite effect of revitalizing traditions in the search for new forms of expression. A resurgence of creative energy and symbolic innovation resulted in a flood of politicized music, poetry, and dramas, as the traditions of the movement were adapted to new political contexts. In this process, there has been mutual inspiration of themes and forms among the opposition, despite the diaspora. A decade after the coup the movement of artistic creation in the opposition is described by one of its most prominent members "as an authentic rebirth":

> "The hatchet blows of fascism succeeded only in provoking buds of creativity, painful if you will, but impassioned and vibrant as well" (Alegría, 1983:30).[7]

"Resistance" acquired two vital functions for the opposition, each presupposing the other. One was the active political struggle to overthrow the regime. The other was survival, as a movement, in defense of the military's attempts to crush it. Expressive cultural forms can be seen as symbolic strategies in contexts of restricted political space that effectively combine these dimensions of resistance.

In exile, cut off from their country and sources of political and cultural identity, the problem of social and cultural maintenance was profound. As exiles, their political task was to actively support the struggle in Chile, to renounce the Chilean dictatorship in the host society, and solicit support of all kinds, ranging from the material to the moral. But, as refugees in a new society, they were also faced with the problem of invisibility and obliteration. The threat was not posed by repression, as in Chile, but by estrangement and, ultimately, by "absorption" into another society. Culture was mobilized in a variety of ways, through political *actos*, musical performances or dramatizations of Chilean history, to draw attention to to their political cause but also to affirm their cultural identity. Expressive culture was part of a more generalized political discourse in exile. Also in the new environment, exiles found their space for expression restricted in some ways. Fear of surveillance added to a general caution of expression. In addition to the language barrier, the Chileans were facing a general public assumed to be largely unsympathetic to a revolutionary struggle for Socialism and who tended "to equate Allende with the danger of Communism." North-Americans were assumed to "lack political consciousness." Of course, with sympathetic audiences, such as local labour unions and North-American solidarity committees, language was more explicitly political and leftist. But

few, even among the politically sympathetic non-Chileans were at home with the complexities of Chilean leftist politics at the time. Nor could they appreciate the characteristically long political speeches in Spanish. The discourse emphasized broader humanitarian concerns over the revolutionary language of political struggle. The political conflict was portrayed as a battle between democracy and dictatorship. As such, their struggle was one for human rights, solidarity and peace.[8] These were also effective and forceful mottos or metaphors, to simplify and make intelligible much more complex political realities. The idioms also served to undercommunicate internal differences and the absense of a clear and concrete strategy among the opposition at the time.

Public political protests often relied on symbolic action, set in the religious context of Sacred Heart's Church. A week's symbolic hunger strike for Chile was held by the exiles the first year as a way to draw public attention to the violations of "human rights and the growing poverty of the Chilean people."[9] Sacred Heart provided "safe space" and extra-worldly legitimation. Presentational symbolic forms, such as music and drama, are also effective as evocative forms that can move an audience in ways that the analytical discursive mode of political speech cannot.

Cultural performances in exile

> "One of the most persistent but elusive ways that people make sense of themselves is to show themselves to themselves, through multiple forms: by telling themselves stories, by dramatizing claims in rituals and other collective enactments, by rendering visible actual or desired truths about themselves, and the significance of their existence in imaginative and performative productions." (Myerhoff 1986:261)

The first years saw an intense and vibrant activity resulting in a flood of politicized music, poetry, drama and other collective activities, performed at traditional events such as *la ramada* (celebration of National Independence) *peñas* or *actos*. Numerous small song groups formed, usually around someone who could play the guitar. Some of them have become renowned. Their names reflect the political heritage of the *nueva canción* and the commitment, as for instance, *Venceremos* ("We shall conquer") alluding to the well-known campaign song of the *Unidad Popular*.[10] Occasional visits by Chilean musical groups provided inspiration and were always

highlights of community life. But there was also innovation, as exiles developed their own resources and created new forms that became a distinctive mark of the local community in Northern California. In their desire to express themselves, and take hold of their lives in a distant land, the exiles had to rely on their own resources. They themselves, became the poets, musicians, and ideologues of Chilean exile (*cf.* Tapp, *op.cit.*).

Kamanchaka: The flowers of hope

"*Que ironía de la vida* *Que tarea más ingrata* *Repartidos por el mundo* *Amando tanto la patria*"	(What irony of life what terrible task dispersed througout the world loving so much our homeland)

"El pueblo tiene su valle"
Isabel Parra

The formation and work of *Kamanchaka*, the musical group of the local community that reached fame beyond its boundaries, illustrate well the regeneration of traditional forms and local innovation. The group was formed soon after arrival in the U.S. by four children of exiles to, as they put it, "express to themselves and others the terrible fate of Chile and the exiles." None could play any instruments on arrival but by listening to recordings of other Chilean groups and inspired by hearing and meeting with visiting groups, they began to absorb the sounds and rhythms of folklore and Andean music. They were soon playing and creating their own traditional music in the genre of the *nueva canción*. Looking back, they describe their experience and task as follows[11]:

> "Exile is an extremely trying experience. At a young age we were asked to leave everything which constituted our lives: the house, the familiar streets, relatives and friends and the culture which had shaped our identities. From this foreign land, all we could do was watch our country destroyed by the brutality of the dictatorship and, at the same time, attempt to understand and accept our new home. We realized the necessity of solidarity, not only with Chile, but with Central America and other oppressed peoples. At the same time, it became clear that we needed to preserve our heritage, not only for our own sake, but in order to consolidate our identities and allegiances. *Kamanchaka* is the fulfillment of these needs."

The musicians, four young men and women, represented different political party positions (through association with their parents more than their own

profiles since they themselves are "committed to unity"). Coming of age in the exile community, well known by everyone, they remained closely identified with the group. They saw as a vital role to help "keep the community together," to "express and maintain the spirit of community."

The group was a standard feature in the repertoire of the local *actos* and *peñas*, but also represented the exile community at larger public events such as Peace Festivals and various local *latino* celebrations. Their aim was clearly political, to reinforce "identity and allegiances" for the purpose of strengthening solidarity and political support for Chile and Latin America[12]. They did this with a music and text that is evocative and vibrant, drawing together different musical traditions of the Latin American continent. The rhythms and sounds of indigenous instruments such as *quenas* (bamboo flutes), *zampoñas* (panflutes), *charango*, *cuatro* (string instruments), and *bombo* (drum) were used with instruments (guitars) of Hispanic origin.[13] Their appearance, performing in bright red *mantas* (ponchos), provided a striking political statement.

Kamanchaka is an indigenous word and refers to the cold fog that rolls in over the coast in the North of Chile in the early morning hours. The term is also the name of a folklore piece by Violeta Parra. A local poet and musician, also an exiled Chilean, wrote of the group (Feña-Torres, n.d.):

> "In its millenium of struggle with the desert, the *Kamanchaka* gives rise to some very tiny flowers which at times, in defiance of the arid dryness, cover our North. In the distance, these young musicians play the same role: They cover us, in this ostracism, with the beautiful flowers of hope."

Kamanchaka in concert

The following is an exploration of symbolic themes by the analysis of a typical concert through its performance structure. Following Fairley (1989) this structure is seen as the negotiation of meanings through the organization of different musical elements, lyrics and spoken introductions, and between musicians and audience within the context of performance.

The concert was performed and recorded for a larger, ethnically mixed audience. The group introduced the pieces and their themes in English and Spanish. The appearance and staging were evocative and the presence of Chile was strongly emphasized. If performing in the Chilean community localities at Sacred Heart, the setting of the stage was laden with elements of Chilean culture which made up the presentational symbols of this culture in exile. Selected national symbols, such as the *copihue* flower, the tools of

fishermen, hats and ponchos of peasants and workers were placed against a colorful background painting of the *Cordillera* (the Andes).

Andean music and folklore, often composed by the group itself using the traditional rhythms of Chile and other Andean regions, begin and end the performance. They celebrate the regional unity and interaction of the peasant communities of the Andes as they express "the happiness and festivity" when "these communities come together to celebrate carnivals, historical and traditional holidays." The middle part is made up of the politicized music and lyrics of the *nueva canción*. These pieces usually draw on the productions of other musicians and singers, such as Isabel and Angel Parra, and in contrast to folklore, use a soloist in exchange with other voices to reinforce the claim that experience is always intersubjective. These lyrics express the suffering of defeat and exile, the struggle and need for popular resistance.

The concert opens with brief instrumental introduction of Andean music or *musica Andina*: *Sikuriada* is a piece composed by one of the members of the group, which

> "acknowledges the traditional pre-Columbian folklore of the Andean region... consists solely of *zampoña* (pan flute) and percussion, the traditional instruments before strings were introduced in America."

The initial piece is here followed by a section consisting of four pieces, which depict and denounce the recent political developments in Chile. The first is Isabel Parra's *Grito serás del Continente* ("The Cry of Our Continent"), introduced with the comment:

> "In our cultural work, we cannot overlook the exile of more than a million Chileans since 1973. This song accurately expresses our sentiments as well as those of the many who have been violently expatriated from their land. It speaks of sentiments of frustration which can only be defeated by the people's will to resist."

In the second selection, *Albazo a los caídos* ("Homage to the Fallen"), the community is celebrating the victims of the present regime. It is explained that the piece is "a tribute to all those *compañeros* who have died for their belief in human dignity and freedom," the "thousands of people assassinated by the military dictatorship in Chile." Written by one of the members of the group, this instrumental piece introduces a new theme within traditional form.

Tres Yerbas Malas ("Three Dangerous Weeds"), from the period of the Unidad Popular, is a simple tale in folklore style of modern political history in Latin America. The song depicts the foes in the political struggle in the image of weeds endangering the revolutionary sowing:

> "The first came from the North, and has subjected my country with his undertakings. The second is the idle landowner, and the third is he who obeys the commands of great capital. These three are now trembling because the people of Latin America are awakening."

Ni toda la Tierra Entera ("Not even the Entire Earth"). This selection by Isabel Parra, according to one of the Kamanchaka members, is the song that best describes the exile experience, as a celebration of Chile, of the exiles' love and longing for their country:

> "Wherever my paths may lead, my steps will always take me back there. I long to be in my land, waiting for you to arrive. Everything stayed in Santiago, my beginning and my end."

Regresando ("Returning") opens the second section, and depicts a kind of turning point. This instrumental composition by a Kamanchaka member finds its inspiration in

> "our overwhelming desire to return to our country. There are still thousands of Chileans who are forbidden to return to Chile and until the dictatorship allows the unconditional return of all exiles, we will continue to denounce this injustice."

The following three pieces are representations of Andean folklore. Two of them are composed by the group, and based on traditional rhythms of different Andean countries.

These pieces are interspersed with a tribute to one of the founders of the *nueva canción*:

Taita Atahualpa ("Father Atahualpa") is included as a tribute to Atahualpa Yupanqui. The song is also a recognition to the composer of this homage, the Chilean musician and exile Angel Parra, who met and played with the Kamanchaka during a visit to California. This piece places the group firmly within the new song tradition, celebrating its continuity and the exchange between performers in the diaspora.

The concert ends with another selection of Chilean folklore about the historical and religious carnivals of the Andean peasant communities *Entre Valles y Colinas* ("Among Valleys and Hills"), and reaffirms the bonds of Andean unity and integration. The concert is usually interspersed with one

or more *cuecas*, by now a well known feature of Chilean exile culture. Its lively rhythms invite spontaneous audience participation of handclapping and, often, a few couples performing the traditional folkdance.

Underlying revolutionary paradigm

The performance celebrates the continuity of movement through the *nueva canción* tradition. Its structure, in the form of the selection and organization of the music and texts presented, alludes to and reinforces meanings concerned with identity (individual, group and national) and history. Together the components form a narrative reflecting a historical process of social transformation, which has grown out of the opposition between groups and fundamental values, at different stages since pre-Hispanic time. (Fig. 2) The combination of separate musical traditions recreates different sectors in the struggle against injustice. Indigenous peoples, students, workers, and peasants are all the protagonists in the historical opposition to the landowning oligarchy, the capitalist, the foreign imperialist. They are the three dangerous "weeds" to disrupt the revolutionary "sowing," and are depicted to represent an opposition between fundamental values.

The text of the songs focusses on the experience of exile and loss but also on human (revolutionary) sacrifice—by those who fell in battle, for a better future for the people. The sacrifice and struggle of a people who are organized and aware are mediating forces to a different future. The happy atmosphere (*ambiente*) and images created by the Andean music is set in contrast to the environment of terror. The music refers to the bonds between peasant communities (harmony, reciprocity)—depicted as the origin or "root identity," according to Fairley (1989) and, through liberation, a common future reality for the Latin American continent. In the historical process thus suggested, the present of repression and exile under the Chilean dictatorship is a liminal period of struggle and suffering. The performance structure, with its revolutionary paradigm, can be seen as a "mythical narrative" in the sense of myth "...as a complex system of images and beliefs constructed by a social group to sustain a sense of their own being... their own profoundly complex historical identity" (Fairley 1989:18).

The paradigm recurs in other performances reinforcing and complementing this narrative. These dramatizations of other political events in the past portray crucial events or turning points in the larger historical process, such as the massacre at Santa Maria, the birth of the organized workers' movement, or the 11th of September, its major defeat. These performances may be seen as an example of what Myerhoff (1986:263) has described as

"authoring selves," re-creating their personal experiences within a historical narrative.

Personal dramas and collective history

While dramatizations of a shared history was an expression of political claims, they also provided means of self-definition and a sense of continuity. Myerhoff (*ibid*:266) has described such "definitional ceremonies" as collective attempts to make sense of disruption and loss in communities which have suffered crises of discontinuity and invisibility or disdain from an outer, powerful society. Like the aging survivors of the Holocaust refugees in southern California in Myerhoff's study, the Chileans did not have witnesses in the U.S. who understood their past, their culture or their ordeal. Only a few, like the *Padre*, knew much about their background. As aliens, and cut off from their homeland and natal culture, they were doubly estranged. Rejected and expelled by the new regime, accused of being enemies of the State, it was essential to present *their* version of history.

Survival and exile also meant the obligation to report their history and present their cause to the outside world. In the beginning, a form of testimony developed, in which Chilean exiles, with the help of interpreters, told their story and their experiences to different American solidary committees, local trade unions, and church groups. They wanted desperately to be heard, but testifying about the horrors they had lived through did not come easy. Testimonies took their toll as exiles suffered the pain of reliving the trauma they were relating. Some also felt awkward, unaccustomed to the attention being directed to themselves as individuals. Perhaps as a result, collective forms of displaying their history and presenting their political claims became a more common form of self-expression. Myerhoff's conclusion that, "Only through the assimilation of experience into a form that endows meaning can such a history be rendered bearable" (*ibid*: 266) is as relevant for those who came out of the Chilean *junta*'s concentration camps as for the Holocaust victims. The collective form was culturally and ideologically more congenial to the exiles, and created an image of shared fate and a sense of belonging, despite estrangement and loss. Collective enactments could be integrated into their group history, repeated and passed on.

"Santa Maria de Iquique"

"Santa Maria de Iquique" represents symbolically the origin of the organized movement of the Chilean workers, perhaps a myth of origin, "where it all began."

The story is told, in the form of a play, or rather a narrative, written by one of the exiles, adopted from a *cantata* produced and performed during the *Unidad Popular* period.[14] As performed it was a condensed English version of the original[15]. The narrative uses a single voice as narrator, interspersed with a collective chorus, to tell the story of the events at Santa Maria de Iquique—the tragic massacre in 1907 of thousands of poor nitrate mine-workers, who staged a protest march for six long days to the port town of Iquique "in search of a little justice and dignity." Many other workers joined their march in solidarity, "carpenters, painters... day laborers, boatmen and bricklayers... unions of just people, poor people." Santa Maria is the name of a school in which they were housed together and told to wait. The authorities of Iquique under the President of the Republic declared a state of siege. Surrounded by military, they were ordered to return home. General Silva Renard, in the service of those controlling the mines, the foreign owners, spoke to them from a balcony, "with contempt and accusations," when,

> "From the school, the *Russian*, a fiery worker
> Responded without vacillating, with a valiant voice:
> 'You, Mr General, do not understand us
> We shall wait, so it costs us.
> We are no longer animals, no longer flock,
> We shall raise our hands, fist high
> We shall give strength, with our example
> And the future will know, I promise
> And if you want to threaten, here I am
> Shoot this worker in the heart.'"

The story reaffirms the legitimacy of the struggle against foreign imperialist control and domestic exploitation and makes a point against the military as allies of the oligarchy. This was where resistance and the struggle for liberation began and these were the first martyrs of the movement. There is some affinity with the exiles, as workers and innocent victims of repression, seeking *justicia* and brutally eliminated. The lesson of the narrative ends:

> "370 000[16] died, one after another. They died with fist in the air, chest forward. But it was not in vain. Because their attitude is projected into the future and it gives us a valiant lesson: It is preferable to die with *dignity* and like true human beings, than to live like dogs, treated like beasts."

The drama set their own ordeal of repression and torture in a historical context and placed them firmly in the tradition of the Chilean working class[17]: They too were innocent victims of brutality, risking their lives in the search for a just society. They, too, had faced the existential choice between living like a dead person or dying like a living human being[18]; resisting the torture and risking death, they too had aquired the dignity of valiant struggle. Their history and identity carry its obligations and the performance was also a call to honor their heritage and to continue the struggle for liberation:

> "Today, seventy years later, one can still hear the clamor of those who were struck down by the shrapnel and who insisted that we know that they lived and take conscience of this piece of history, so that we may see clearly our obligation to those who fell asking for justice, not only for them, but for all the workers of the world."[19]

Again, the past presented points to a certain future. The mediating force is the revolutionary sacrifice of the workers, who died but not in vain: "their attitude is projected into the future" and inspires and redeems other workers, "other wretched ones" in the course of class struggle. The political and existential themes, closely intertwined, point to transcendence and a new life, through revolution. The commemoration of the 11th of September has the same underlying paradigm of social transformation and transcendence, but in the religious idiom of the Catholic mass, resonating with the idea of divine transformation through sacrifice and salvation.[20] Both enactments has a theme of sacrifice as a mediating force. In much of the resistance culture, the image of sacrificial death appears in the form of the revolutionary martyr. In Patricio Manns' song *La dignidad se hace costumbre* (dignity becomes a custom) a disappeared young Resistance leader, through his exemplary behaviour, becomes "a fruitful seed." The idea of the seed (*semilla*) used by Allende also refers to his own sacrifice for the popular movement. The idea recurs in a poem published in the community:

> "For each second's torture/an unforgettable scar remains.
> But also/ One seed more/ For this new sowing of people"

However, whereas many texts of the *nueva canción* celebrate the revolutionary martyr as an active militant, a student activist, an individual acting on behalf of the collective, the community consistently celebrates the martyr role of the workers as a collective, representing their own experience as workers. Individual martyrs are always associated with and made to represent a particular political party or group.[21] The possible exception has been Pre-

sident Allende, who is commemorated above party affiliaton in a number of different contexts.

As attempts to deal collectively with defeat and discontinuity, these performances both express lived experience and help shape its social meaning. In the cultural model of struggle and transcendence, exiles' own ordeal and fate becomes meaningful—a compelling paradigm in which their sacrifice is part of a larger and inevitable historical process.

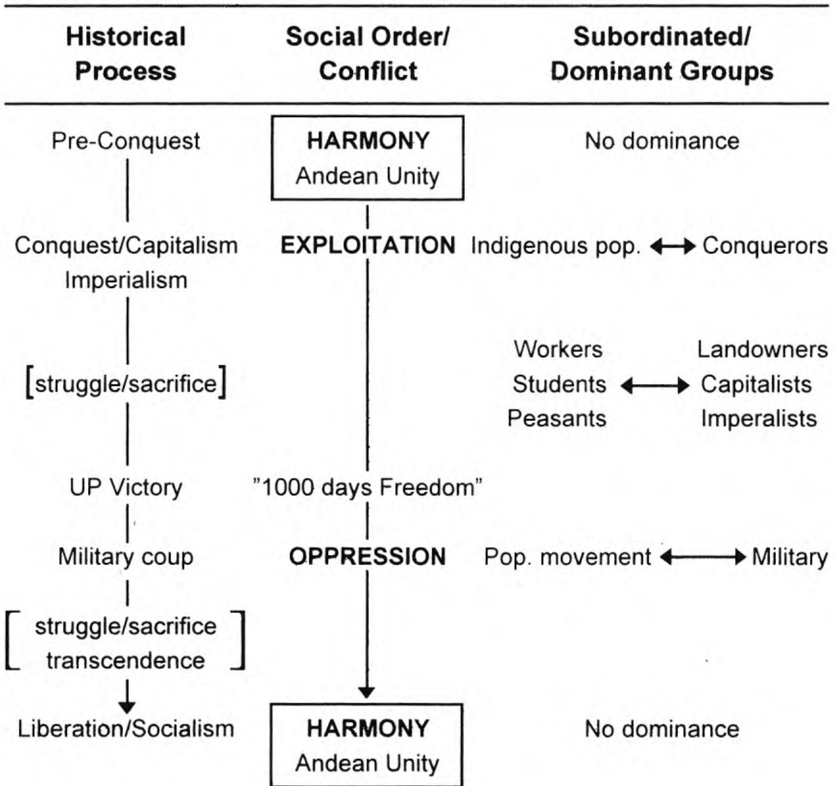


Fig. 2 A simplified scheme of the revolutionary historical process, its forces and main protagonists as manifested in performance structure. It is essentially a Marxist dialectical scheme in which history moves forward through the system contradictions and class struggle.

Notes to Chapter 5

[1] Ejdesgaard-Jeppesen writes "An important element which characterizes all the Chilean *nueva canción* is the search for a national identity. This (search) also expresses the desire to oppose cultural imperialism and create a culture of their own. This (new) identity is expressed with the rhythms and sounds of folklore instruments" (1982:24; my transl.).

[2] The annual celebration of Chilean Independence from Spain took on a new character after the victory of the *Unidad Popular* in 1970. According to one observer, it was celebrated as a "second Independence" in Santiago (Jara, 1983:149).

[3] See the poem by Viglietta above. A poem published in the exile community reiterate this theme: "Toqui awakens.../and the murmuring of foliage/has swelled beyond the whispering wind:/It carries rebirth/of the thousand days of freedom:/'Once more through the poplar grove/shall pass free men and women'/as Allende dreamed./ And we'll be with you Toqui/In a beautiful *Arauco*/never more to be subdued." Anon., *Casa Chile (1984:n.p.)*. (*Arauco* refers to the prehispanic culture in Chile. The "thousand days" refers to the duration of the UP government, 1970-73).

[4] The names blend Quecha/Aymara and Mapuche, different indigenous languages in Latin America

[5] The Chilean flag, always present in the political acts of the exile community, was stamped with a large black encircled R (resistance), marking the critical distinction between these two national projects for Chile. This mark was initially associated with MIR, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left, but later taken over by the entire community.

[6] The story was told in the exile community, said to epitomize the ignorance of the military, how books like Marx' *Capital* was saved ("the military thought that it had to be about money") while Thomas Mann's *The Magician* was destroyed, assumed to be subversive.

[7] A similar innovative period was in the 1950s when the left was banned, with both Neruda and Yupanqui in exile, the cultural patrons of the movement.

[8] These have become part of the oppositional discourse everywhere, also in Chile: They reflect and reinforce the broadening of the opposition to include sectors such as the Catholic church (see further chapter 9).

[9] At the time of my fieldwork, a rally organized by the more daring exile youth organization placed black coffins outside of the Chilean consulate to protest the violation of human rights in Chile. The internal logic and efficacy of symbolic acts of this kind is discussed in more detail in chapter 9.

[10] Music and drama groups from neighbouring exile communities took names such as *Raiz* (Roots) and *Siembra* (Sowing).

[11] This was a written self-presentation, introducing the recording of a concert.

[12] Preparing to play at a *latino* harvest festival in a nearby town with a large population of Mexican farmworkers, an argument broke out between the Kamanchaka and the organizers who felt their presentation was "too political." The group refused to compromise their "message" and ended up by not playing.

[13] See Fairley, 1985 for a discussion of this combination of these musical traditions in the *nueva canción* tradition.

[14] Written by Luis Advis. Performed, significantly, in the National Stadium in 1972, in support of the *Unidad Popular* government and the Chilean revolution.

[15] The translation was with the help of members of a local *Chicano* theater group.

[16] The original version says 360,000 deaths.

[17] The history of the Chilean working class struggle is that of orderly parliamentary representation but also brutal clashes (de Vylder, 1974).

[18] *Pedro y el capitán* (Benedetti, 1976) about the relation between torturer and victim.

[19] The original *cantata*, performed during the *Unidad Popular*, ends with a much more explicit call for vengeance: The assassins would be found and held responsible "*lo juramos, compañeros, ese día llegará* ("we swear, comrades, this day will come").

[20] See further chapter 9. *Cf.* also Victor Jara's *Plegaria a un Labrador* (Prayer to a Farmworker). This song, which is a well-known symbol of the *nueva canción* in Chile, has become the traditional conclusion of these ceremonial events in the community. The significance of this song lies in the way it intertwines the idea of political liberation with spiritual salvation.

[21] *cf. Karaxú!*, who represent a specific political group, the MIR.

6. THE POLITICS OF EXILE

Unity and solidarity were soon challenged by the emergence of dissension and division, a well-known theme in the political history of the Chilean left. The Refugee Committee became an arena for party-political interests which created a deep rift in the community. The conflicts and division reflected conditions among the opposition in Chile, but exile provided its own dynamics, as well. Political conflicts appear to be endemic in exile communities, often with bitter and drawn out feuding between political groups (see Lewis, 1965; Fagen, 1973; Patterson, 1977). An understanding of the factors that inhibited unity in the exile community must also consider the role of political organizations in the light of their historical importance in Chilean society.

Political parties in Chilean society

The political "landscape" in Chile was traditionally expressed along the left-right dimension. Chile had a long parliamentary tradition with a broad spectrum of political parties, from Conservative to Communist competing for the vote. The awareness of issues, party alternatives and ideological identification was especially high in the cities, and intensified during the far-reaching politicization and popular mobilization of the 1960s. The major Marxist parties on the left, the Socialist (PS) and Communist (PC) Parties have a long history and tradition in Chilean society, closely intertwined with labour, student and peasant movements. The PS emerged in opposition to the Soviet-oriented PC in 1933, and has historically organized a variety of ideological tendencies. In the 1960s, inspired by the Cuban revolution and Ché Guevaraism, more radical leftist groups emerged, attracting many young students of middle-class background. The largest of these was MIR, The Movement of the Revolutionary Left, which remained outside of the *Unidad Popular* government. The history of division and fragmentation within the Chilean left runs parallel to pragmatic politics of alliances. Despite great differences in strategy and organizational structure, the PS and PC, with the help of smaller parties on the center-left, have formed different

political alliances in the past, the last one in government being *Unidad Popular*.

Until the military coup, political parties dominated Chilean politics as the prime, if not sole, vehicles for political expression and action. Caviedes notes that: "No matter how strong the charismatic appeal of a leader may be, if he wants to relate to the masses, he has to do it via a political party" (1979:77). Thus, unlike many other Latin American societies, a *caudillo*, at any level, has his chances severely limited by the rigidly structured party system and the establishment of lines of brokerage, extending from the highest party office down to the level of local politics. Chile had few *caudillos* in modern time. "Allendísmo" and "Freísmo" were cases in which Presidents Allende and Frei each combined strong personalities with forceful ideological programmes for social change. By the end of the 1930s both the Socialist and Communist parties had become the principal political expressions of Chile's well-organized urban working class. The trade unions played a historical role in this process, incorporating the urban proletariat and later the peasantry into the political life of the country. The unions were for many the only channel for political demands and participation and came to have considerable political pull as their ranks swelled. However, unions were soon annexed by political parties, making them vulnerable to sectarian cleavages and creating an array of parallel union organizations and federations (Moulian, 1965). The parties' ideological and class-based programs for structural change, gaining strength in the politicization of the 1960s, coexisted with another pervasive feature of the Chilean politics: An extensive brokerage system within the parliamentary system which had historical roots in the dependency of local communities on the political center of the capital for resources. Through vertical networks, national and local party leaders acted as brokers between local communities and parliamentary power centers, in exchange for electoral support for the party. (Valenzuela, 1977). In a similar relation, unions were dependent on the party, through its influence and representation in the parliamentary system to achieve benefits for union members. The unions' electoral strength on the other hand gave them considerable leverage with their party. For the left, this interdependence was intensified when the *Unidad Popular* came into power and the parties of the left penetrated most of the many new organizations in the popular mobilization.[1]

Political parties under military rule

Effects on the parties of Military rule since 1973 have been profound. In the ideology of the neo-liberal system introduced by the military regime, political parties would have no role to play in Chilean society. The regime dissolved trade unions and declared the parties of the left illegal. It introduced a "Doctrine of National Security" and declared war on the "Marxist conspiracy." The PS, PC and MIR in particular suffered the brunt of military repression, which almost destroyed their organizations, with a severe loss of cadres, militants and leadership (Angell and Carstairs, 1987). Their most prominent leaders were dispelled along with many experienced middle-level leaders active in neighborhoods and unions. Considering the pervasive presence and influence of the political parties in Chilean society, their elimination after the coup was more than a simple defeat.

Removed from center stage and access to power, the political parties which lacked experience of underground existence were more vulnerable than many other parties in Latin America under similar conditions. Legitimation became a severe problem. Conditions of clandestine operation, as described by Valenzuela and Valenzuela (1986), tended to freeze existing structures, restricting the creation of new programmes and leadership needed to meet the novel situation. Problems of communication and control led to centralized decision-making and subsequent problems of authority. New leaders working underground inside the country were at a disadvantage compared to the more visible exile leaders. Lack of internal mechanisms and open fora for debating and resolving conflicts and legitimizing leadership (*e.g.* through party congresses, or the electoral process) exacerbated factional and ideological disputes.

The left was suffering a deep crisis after its defeat and reorganization was a very slow process. Some Chilean parties more than others, in particular the Socialist party, were affected by disruptions. With its broad ideological base, the PS lacked the internal cohesion and stability of the more centralized PC. Moreover, the PS was severely divided after the coup (Furci, 1984). The MIR, with experience of illegal activity had an underground apparatus armed and trained for urban guerilla action, but the movement suffered heavy losses from repression. The pressure on the political parties under military persecution reinforced ideological and organizational rigidity, as concerns of survival and reconstruction were paramount. The focus was primarily on problems of party continuity and self-affirmation.[2] The parties had little realization of the regime's staying power. Thus, *unity* as a

catchword among the opposition foundered on the problems of "old" divisions between parties. Their struggle for legitimacy created difficulties in responding to what was an entirely new scenario (Garretón, 1986).

The parties in exile

Communication and control were even more of a problem with dispersal and exile. Tensions within the party organizations were mounting, in particular between underground and exile leadership, in the post-coup years. The Socialist Party, vulnerable to disruption, and the largest party in most exile communities, issued strict rules for the functioning of the militancy in exile, defining its relationship to the underground party in Chile. Authority was centralized in an attempt to control dissension and conflict. This addendum to the Party Statutes[3] made clear that the exile militancy was a temporary function, brought about by "the transitory destruction of the popular movement and the fierce persecution which the party suffers as a result." The main objective of the party remained intact, "to overthrow the Capitalist regime of the country and construct Socialism" by organizing and directing the working class and the Chilean masses." However, this was only possible in "the natural social context in which this struggle is fought: in the *seno* (lit. breast, womb) of the Chilean people." The function of the party in exile was defined as collaboration and support of the struggle in the interior, while control remained with the underground party in Chile[4]. Invoking the organizing principle of democratic centralism, the centralist aspect was emphasized over the democratic one. Infiltration was a major concern for exile parties. Thus, severe restrictions were placed on communication, information, recruitment and generation of organization from below. Those who were members on the day of the coup in 1973, and who had reaffirmed their militancy in exile, had the status as members. As a rule, new militants were not accepted in exile. Local leaders were appointed or authorized from the top, and required a long and good record of militancy, without disciplinary sanctions. With increasing control by the interior organizations, the exterior ones were ascribed an essentially *supportive* function.

Most parties on the left before the coup were represented in the local community, in some cases only by a few individuals. Most numerous were the major parties of the *Unidad Popular* (PS and PC) and the MIR. As party militants formed local groups, with leadership appointed or affirmed from higher party authority, these groups were charged with the responsibility to defend and promote the interests of the party in the local

area. Centralized authority with limited communication between local groups and distant party leadership left little room for independent action on the local level. Yet, militants still owed their primary loyalty to their party. Positions were maintained and articulated, undermining the possibility of unity and cooperation across party boundaries. The Chilean Refugee Committee (CRC) soon became an arena for self-affirmation and profilation of party interests.

Conflict and division: The formation of factions

The crisis of defeat cast a dark shadow over the parties and the leadership, strategy and judgement of the *Unidad Popular*. The "peaceful road to Socialism" had failed. The burning issue of the moral responsibility for failure and the devastating consequences of the coup pervaded all Chilean exile communities at the time. Some did not believe the new regime would last, as it lacked popular support and constitutional legitimacy. Others advocated "active resistance" of subversive tactics and insurrection to oust the regime.[5] The question of how to allocate collective funds to the opposition in Chile was a crucial one and turned CRC meetings into heated debates long into the night. The ideological dispute soon infused almost every other task of the Committee and paralyzed its functioning.

Two camps formed along ideological lines existing during the *Unidad Popular*, based on diverging strategies towards Socialism. The same camps emerged in other exile communities as well, and were often referred to as "reformists" and "revolutionaries." The reformists contained militants and supporters of the UP parties. The other was a rather loose coalition with roots in the revolutionary left, including members of MIR, and a splinter group of the Socialist Party (PS/CNR), and some exiles without party affiliation, "*independientes*." This contender group held the UP coalition responsible for its strategy of peaceful transition to Socialism, while the "reformists" responded that a strategy of armed struggle would have been highly irresponsible. To have "armed the people to defend the government" against a well organized military power as suggested by more radical sectors would have led to civil war and created "a blood-bath." The division reflected tensions existing within the PS during the UP government between a cautious strategy and a more radical one. The split of PS after the coup, meant that different groups claimed to be the true representatives of the Socialist Party. Thus, the claims of the PS splinter group in the community

were rejected by the established PS members, who retained an orthodox ideological position and remained within the "reformist camp."

The claims to legitimacy were also fought over ideological issues of organizational structure and principles of recruitment. The revolutionary camp attacked the established UP parties for their formal and dogmatic stance with respect to exclusiveness and demands of discipline (political position should be identifiable with a party or political group to have validity). They advocated less rigid authority and an "*asembleista*" (direct democracy) functioning of the CRC, while these methods were seen by the other camp as "anarchistic methods of usurping power."

In the exile context, the conflict involved that of groups competing to be recognized as the "heirs to the Chilean revolution." As such they would be able to claim the authority to organize the exiles and to allocate the vital resources and support for reconstruction and resistance in Chile. Return to democracy and to Chile appeared not to be so distant. With little realization of the regime's staying power, the contending groups were seeking to assure themselves of political space in Chile in the near future. Access to material resources as well as information and guidance for individual exiles was channelled through the Committee. The CRC was thus an economic base of power and influence for the parties competing to control and direct resources. Through the CRC, access to the Support Committee constituted the crucial interface with the American resource structure. As the *Unidad Popular* faction could not command majority support in the CRC, they set up their own parallel Committee.[6] No other alternative was possible to defend their distinctiveness as the legitimate representation. Because of their involvement and dependence on CRC, all exiles were drawn into the debate and forced to take sides. The Support Committee of U.S. volunteer workers was also divided by corresponding political loyalties. The committee was the key to resources in the local system of labor organizations, employment training centers and social services. As such, its members were important to recruit by the factions. Thus, members of the American Communist Party supported the new committee while other political and non-political support members stayed with the original CRC.

Struggle for Legitimacy: The Solidarity Shipment

A typical factional dispute, manifested as a conflict over ideology and dogma, erupted over the appropriation of a shipment of aid (household goods and clothes) sent by a Solidarity Group in a nearby town. The shipment was claimed by both factions which resulted in a fierce struggle over what was a

rather insignificant economic contribution. In an exchange of mutual attacks, documents were sent by both sides to the original givers and to the Support Committee. In this competitive bidding for support from groups in the host society and from exiles, the issue of legitimacy and representation was central. Both groups claimed to represent a majority of the exiles as well as "the Chilean people " and "Chilean interests as a whole." Legitimacy can be seen as having both moral and legalistic components (Sundman, 1986). While the attacks on the *Unidad Popular* faction focussed on its lack of moral legitimacy, their own claims stressed their legal basis of representation. Theirs was the political mandate from the general election of Allende's government, and the long history as the backbone of the popular movement in Chile. Lacking this history, they claimed, "...the dissident group has taken for itself the representation of the Chilean people and the historical tragedy of Chile... thereby misrepresenting our history." They continued, "The *Unidad Popular* made possible the popular government in Chile and is the only force capable of ousting the fascist Junta..." "Today the *Unidad Popular* has more support and organizational strength in Chile than ever." Resistance could only be succsessful within an organized party structure whereas "...anarchistic forms of direct democracy" showed disrespect for democratic principles and "an irresponsible and immature ideological position."

The "revolutionaries" challenged these claims primarily on moral grounds. After all, the *Unidad Popular* did fail to avert the coup and was responsible for the upheaval that followed. Attacking its "rigid and undemocratic hierarchical organization," the revolutionaries referred to the original mandate of the CRC. This mandate was "to organize all exiles irrespective of party position in the spirit of unity" that emerged out of the convent situation. Following this spirit, they claimed to represent both democracy, unity and the collective interest.

Unity was (and is) a moral value said to reflect political maturity, and responsibility for the division became a key issue in the dispute. Both factions presented themselves as striving for unity, the others as divisionist and opportunist. Hence the mechanism of separation became a vital point. The reformist faction claimed that it was expelled. The revolutionaries maintained that the reformists had taken the initiative to divide, and referred to them as "self-removed," "self-nominated." The dispute and ideological accusations reveal a fierce competition for support and political space in a very constricted situation. In this battle, "unity" foundered on the need to maintain party distinctiveness. At the same time, political groups were having internal problems of authority and discipline.

Problems of Authority and Leadership

The legitimation of leadership in the local party group was complicated by the confrontation of different kinds of leadership in exile. The reconstruction of political organization in new contexts revealed internal inconsistences and tensions within the hierarchical structure of Chilean parties. These tensions were grounded in traditional dominance patterns which in Chile were taken for granted or otherwise difficult to challenge. In Chile, the party cell or local group was usually a tight-knit group in which members were integrated by other social ties beside party affiliation. Often they were workmates and neighbours who had known each other for many years. The position of the local group in the overall party hierarchy was clear. In exile, the situation was different. Few militants knew each other and each other's background. The random collection of exiles meant that members and local leaders from one and the same party but from different areas and social-political backgrounds in Chile found themselves working in the same local group. This unstructured situation invited an open competition for leadership. Long discourses to demonstrate leadership ability, characteristic of Chilean politics, filled meetings. To be effective leadership contenders should combine oratorical skills and emotional force, with a demonstration of knowledge and experience. Looking back on this period, one of the exiles sarcastically commented, "Everyone thought he was a leader at that time!"

The handful of middle-level leaders of local union organizations were unknown outside their small local area in Chile. There, to deserve confidence and support, such a leader had to have proven his capability in union work, often over a long time. In exile, their position and public record were largely unknown and their leadership claims were not readily acknowledged. Moreover, their basis and style of leadership were now challenged by another and more dominant one. A younger student leader commented on one of the workers, a local *dirigente sindical* (trade union leader) in his own local party group:

> "He used to embark on long discourses, typical of the traditional leadership, long speeches full of the wellknown rhetoric that said nothing new but referred to how it was in the old days. He didn't realize he was in a totally new situation in exile and that he had to adjust himself and his politics to that. He acted as if he was still in Chile. We had little use for that attitude now."

A more attractive candidate in the local party group was someone who had the competence necessary in the new environment. Predominantly the young

activists with the most likely skills to establish contacts with U.S. organizations filled the posts of the CRC. Another "old" leader, a farmworker-unionist, felt that his skills and practical experience of "how to do politics" were not taken into account and that the younger workers and students lacked organizational ability and discipline. For these workers and unionists from the rural south and the mining districts in the north, leadership held different requirements than for student leaders from the capital. The authority of the two categories was based on different kinds of competence and had been valid in different contexts.

Theory versus Practice

These cases reveal a confrontation between different traditions and social bases of leadership in the Chilean left. Union leaders were recruited mostly from the urban or rural proletariat, while party leadership was mostly recruited from the professional urban middle-class. Until the 1950s, the left had had a purely unionist character. In the 1960s and 70s it widened its base and recruited from the middle classes. The development provided different orientations or emphasis in Chilean leftist politics. Caviedes noted that " ...Marxism was no longer (only) a doctrine for the working class, but a fashionable ideology in intellectual and professional circles" (1979:147). While leadership competence in both cases required a position with a party, ideological awareness and rhetorical skills, the basis for a working-class unionist leader was more of a result-oriented *practice*, closely allied to production and work. Even though practice was always stressed during the movement, and students were involved in various activities during the *Unidad Popular*, national politics became ideologically polarized and theoretical sophistication and ideological training became, therefore, important, in particular for higher levels of leadership. The centralization of politics to the capital also placed the peasants and rural workers in the political hinterland of the country at a disadvantage. Beginning in the 1950s, the Socialists, Communists as well as the Christian Democracts had concentrated much of their organizational effort on having their young and most aggressive supporters elected to executive posts in the Student Federation (FECH), paving the way for a later nomination as candidates for congress (Caviedes, *op.cit.*). Leadership and cadres of ultra-left organizations, such as MIR, were predominantly recruited from young students and intellectuals with middle or upper class background. The program for social change of the left also rested on somewhat different bases. The aspiration for structural change of the worker and the underemployed was grounded

in his daily experiences of exploitation in a capitalist society, whereas for the educated leftist it was based on sophisticated intellectual analyses, with emphasis on civil liberties and political participation (*ibid.*; Langton and Rapoport, 1975).

A member of one local political group with members of very different backgrounds remembers how they elected their local leader: (They were two local labor leaders, two student activists, a few other blue-collar workers active in the trade union in Chile and two white-collar workers)

> "... but we were all of the same party and we saw it as our obligation to help reconstruct the party and promote its politics...A leadership emerged rather directly: there was a round in which each one presented his opinion and analysis of the new situation and what was to be done. The one who was found to be the person *más preparada* was elected to lead and organize the work. *Más preparada* was the person who was the most knowledgeable and who could prove this by giving the best speech. He was the right person to lead..."

One of the younger urban exiles, who had been a student leader in Chile, was elected and later affirmed by the party as the official representative of the local group. He was assumed to be better equipped for the kind of political practice required in the interaction with the new society. The experience and skills of the other politicized exiles, such as bargaining tactics of trade unionists, which can wield considerable power and prestige within the context of production and the workplace, were simply not as relevant. Some of those aspiring to leadership were also having great personal difficulty in adjusting to the new environment and obtaining work, which was the traditional basis of their practice-oriented politics and leadership. Thus, some men with considerable political clout in the local context in Chile, tended to be reduced to "helpers" in the internal division of labour—those who carry out practical tasks. They were de-qualified, compared to the roles they mastered so well at home, and politically marginalized.

However, all leaders were more vulnerable in the local context of a small community. Personal qualities as well as deeds could be observed by most everyone and "pure rhetoric" more easily exposed. Personal qualities were always more important on the local level leadership than at the top.[7] The transparency of life in the local community revealed any discrepancies between ideal versus actual leadership behaviour, and contradictions between ideology and practice. One local leader in the community appointed by highest party level in Chile was rejected outright by his group on "personality

grounds." The rejected leader withdrew from the community and later moved to another city. In another case, militants lost confidence in a local leader because, as one of them put it, "How can you believe in the ability and maturity of party leaders when you see that some cannot even raise their own children properly?" To get caught up by the American society and its consumerist lifestyle was not acceptable. The case of Rolando exposed too bluntly the gap between ideology and practice. An articulate young intellectual with leadership ambitions, Rolando spoke at length on International Women's Day on the equality of women and men under Socialism. Soon after this his wife appeared, sporting a black eye.

In some of the groups, male leadership was challenged by some young women who had had active political roles in urban student organizations in Chile. Usually, women were more silent and hardly ever spoke on ideological-political issues (*cf.* Kay, 1987). They were placed in supportive positions or in areas of health and family welfare while men were put in charge of finances, public presentations, and so on. Realizing that their perspectives carried little weight in their local party groups, the articulate women organized a women's group across party boundaries. This undertaking met with strong resistance from the men and was one of the few issues on which they agreed irrespective of party affiliation. The arguments were ideological. The women's group was "divisive" to the working class; gender inequality stemmed from class exploitation which should be the primary target of their struggle.[8] The struggle for gender equality proposed by the political parties was carefully contrasted to the "Western-style liberal feminism" of the U.S. However, the most effective attack on these women was on morality grounds. Without the protection of a male partner, these women (mostly single or divorced) were vulnerable and were ostracized by both men and the many married women in the community. The women left their political parties in protest. Eventually, those without family withdrew from active participation in the community affairs.

Thus, organization of the local party in the context of exile implied an exposure to internal differences and boundaries usually eclipsed by the more taken-for-granted political reality of Chile. Criticism and withdrawals by militants as a result of these tensions undermined the local leadership and weakened the authority of the party over its supporters. When one group called home its militants for underground activity in Chile, most of them rejected the demand and left the party. To deal with internal disputes and discipline problems, higher party leadership increased restrictions and

sanctions. Expulsions from the party top became frequent but not so effective attempts to improve discipline.

Political Parties, Power and Exile

According to Lewis (1965:191) exile politics revolve largely around the problems of leadership and control. The parties of the censored left in Chile suffered similar difficulties in severely contracted political space. Removed from the political system, the power and influence of leaders was severely curtailed. In the exile community these problems were more profound and lasting. As the opposition inside Chile began to overcome internal divisions and ideological paralysis after 1980,[9] political parties and leadership in exile were facing an increasing vacuum. Removed from the political arena in Chile, they were facing a shrinking political space in the host society.

Even if local leaders commanded the symbolic resources necessary for leadership in the exile context (such as ideological training, oratorical ability, prestige within a party hierarchy), they had only limited access to influence in the new system. More than this, the mediating role became superfluous. When the Support Committee was dismantled three years after arrival, the role of parties as mediators to the major collective resource base disappeared. By then, economic support, educational grants, and jobs had become available on an individual or household basis directly to the exiles from the State, and the exiles became more and more independent of parties as brokers to services and aid from the host society.[10] The problem was the shrinking space of Chilean politics, removed from the context of exiles' everyday life. The means to reward loyalty or to exercise sanctions were severely restricted. Disciplinary actions such as suspension or expulsion from the party were of course less effective in a situation where militants could simply walk away (*retirarse*) or had alternative bases for organization. In exile, therefore, sanctions simply reduced further the number of militants without the opportunity to recruit others to replace them. Most importantly, exile groups were increasingly marginalized from politics in Chile. As parties were rebuilt internally, the importance of exile groups was declining into a supportive role. Information and communication between them was difficult. Exile leaders found it difficult to follow and respond to day-to-day events at home. While groups were expected to react to structural developments and directives of parties in Chile, they had no real impact on it. For instance, when the PS splintergroup (PS/CNR) later split at the highest party level,

the local leadership in the community resigned. The local activity slowly lost momentum by disaffected members. The personal costs of defending this group in the community had been great.

Thus, the exile parties found themselves in a vacuum, with limited power to make or enforce collective decisions. In this light the "endless speeches and debates without results" reported as a characteristic of many exile communities become more understandable (*cf.* Lewis, *op. cit.*; Fagen, 1973; Lundberg, 1989). Delzell wrote, on the effects of ideological feuding between Italian anti-fascist exiles: "In a real sense, many of them had ceased to become politicians and had become merely political theorists." (Delzell, 1952 cited in Lewis, 1965:xiv). Politics as "all talk and no action" (Meyers quoted in Brison, 1989:97), Brison suggests, is an aspect of societies or communities where leaders have limited power.[11] In such systems, meetings to debate issues of community concern are often long and inconclusive. Decisions cannot easily be reached, or implemented, lacking effective means of enforcement. Where there is no legitimate hierarchical order, claims to superiority incur the risk of offense and social exclusion, and people are unwilling to assume leadership. A Chilean exile, the leader of a group in the community, reported on discouraging, week-long regional meetings of his party: They "never got beyond attempts to analyze the political situation in Chile," and "never reached any agreement on a program for solidarity work in exile." To have tasks carried out was also a major problem, in his experience. Politics had become "speaking rather than doing," ideology rather than practice. The local leader later renounced his position and it was difficult to find someone willing to replace him.

Exile Politics and the Community

The cleavage that occurred was profound and painful, as it involved the entire community and relations were extremely strained over factional boundaries. Conflicts generated at higher party levels may be particularly devastating in small and bounded local communities, where all personally meaningful relationships are concentrated inside. Political identity was important and political conflicts were easily personalized, and carried over into other areas of interaction in the community. Sometimes, withdrawal from the community was seen as the only solution, but one which was also a form of betrayal to the cause. Thus, with the limited personnel of a small community, combatting groups tended to cancel each other out. Individuals, more like figures in a chess game than militants, fell out without others to replace them.

Subsequent party developments diminished the importance of these factions. Beginning in 1980, the national political scene saw a more united opposition and new coalitions on the left rearranged the landscape somewhat. But parties in exile could no longer take authority and participation for granted, and some militants felt less constrained by the need to defend the party position at all times. Thus, social interaction and ties in the community network could more easily be maintained. Although families in the network were becoming increasingly independent economically, the community remained the most important source of social obligation and emotional support, and the vital link to Chile. The changes facilitated new forms of cooperation and the reintegration of community. *La Comunidad Chilena* was formed five years after arrival, as a broad-based organization representing members from different political groups. These took turns in organizing solidarity events and benefits to support their respective projects in Chile. However, acting much more like a voluntary association, relying on members' interest and sense of obligation, and without power to enforce decisions, finding leaders willing to assume the task remained a constant problem.

The diminished role of parties did not mean that exiles renounced their political identities or political commitments, although some became disaffected and withdrew from the activity. The changing context and meaning of political practice must be seen within the larger processes of social change in the encounter with U.S. society.

Notes to Chapter 6

[1] Alberto Rivera (see chapter 2), the head of the peasant cooperative and land inspector in the south, acted in this role when forwarding demands of the local population (such as land claims) to his Party in return for support of the PS and the government. The patronage of the parties of the *Unidad Popular* extended when they came into power (Caviedes, 1979). The UP administration was said by informants to have become an informal "employment agency," in which party membership and support facilitated access to jobs in the public sector.

[2] Garretón (1986) notes the lack of major developments among the left until 1980, in terms of substantive new programs to confront the military regime. Concentrating on preserving themselves, parties did not respond to new social realities but theory and political language were frozen in their old formulas and categories. See also Furci (1984).

[3] *Reglamento* for exile (1977 edition). Addendum to *Estatutos del Partido*, approved at the General Congress at Chillán, 1967.

[4] This position was preceded by a complex struggle between internal and exile leadership, see Furci (1984).

[5] This is probably a common dividing issue in much exile politics. See *e.g.* Fagen (1973) and the very similar debate which divided the Spanish Republicans exiled from Franco's Spain.

[6] "*Chile Democratico*." The same division occurred in many other exile communities, indicating the general problem involved.

[7] See also Caviedes' comments on the difference in leadership preference between national and local levels in Chilean politics. Higher leaders with more distance to supporters were elected by party program and ideology. At the local level, "greater significance was given to the personal respectability of the local politicians than to their ideology. The moral attributes of being a venerable teacher, a devoted leader of the community, a social-minded physician or an honest business man, were the assets that might well decide a person's election ... rather than his rhetorical skills or his position with the hiearchy of (his) political party." (Caviedes, 1979:39-40)

[8] The ideal was rather for men and women to work side by side in the revolutionary struggle. Kay's study *(op. cit)* points to the contradiction of this ideal with the conservative stance towards the traditional family roles that develeped in defence of deculturation in exile.

[9] In 1980, the opposition mobilized around the Plebiscite for a new Constitution which aimed to institutionalize the military regime.

[10] The access to resources also depends on the host country. In the U.S., the Chilean community and its political parties had no access to resources on a group basis as in *e.g.* Swedish society. See chapter 4, note 18.

[11] Such as acephalous egalitarian societies or communities in which headmen have no power. While such societies are often "aggressively egalitarian" and lack concepts of legitimate political power, Chilean political organizations are normally based on legitimate hierarchy.

7. EVERYDAY EXILE: LIFE AND WORK IN SILICON VALLEY

In the first few years, life and activities in exile had an intensely Chilean focus and a typically tentative quality. There seemed little point at the time in starting anything new or long-term. Inhabited by the Chilean family, friends and political associates, the social world of the exiles in California was infused with the commanding presence of Chile and sustained by the conviction of a swift return. After more than a decade in exile, and continuing military rule at home, the issue was no longer so clear-cut. No one any longer claimed to be living with their "*maletas listas*," their suitcases packed and ready to return. This situation reflected a recognition of the political reality of a firmly entrenched military rule; but it also indicated a changing social reality in exile.

The prolonged exile required accommodations, however reluctantly, with the new society. The American reality had inevitably impinged upon exile existence in the construction of another compelling reality: that of immediate experience and everyday life. Life in exile required not only grand political schemes, but also adjustment to the problems of everyday living, the need to create some stability and structure out of rupture and chaos. Although in itself this may be problematic in a condition defined as temporary, at a certain point life must become routinized to be livable. In this accommodation process, the new and strange reality was transformed into the familiar and foreseeable, but not necessarily the acceptable, lived-in reality. When exiles entered roles as workers, students, patients, clients or at other points of intersection with American society, this system received a shape by being collectively named, discussed, qualified with other Chileans and became the well-known and routine reality of the present. The special characteristics of everyday life, its immediacy, predictability and status as "given," lend it the compelling quality as "paramount reality" (Berger & Luckman, 1967). Nevertheless, for the exiles, the new reality was not an unreflected everyday experience.

There were some areas of everyday life which had greater impact than others in the accommodation to U.S. society. Economy and work in Silicon

Valley was the principal point of interface with North Americans and the host society and structured many other domains of social experience. In particular, the domains of work, politics, family and community were areas of social change with implications for the exile project.

The mystique of the Valley

Santa Clara Valley opens out at the base of San Francisco Bay in Northern California, stretches from Palo Alto (Stanford) in the north down to San José, the county seat, and further to more rural areas and bedroom communities of Morgan Hill and Gilroy in the south. Since the 1960s, the valley's traditional agricultural economic base has given way to the expanding industry of electronics technology and manufacture. Once the "prune patch" of California, it is now the heartland of "high-tech" industry of the country which has bestowed it its nickname of "Silicon Valley." The peaceful valley of orchards and canneries has been converted into industrial parks, highways and shopping centers in a fast-moving urban sprawl, while the population has doubled in twenty years. In the mid 1980s, the Santa Clara Valley is the location of the densest concentration of high technology industries in the world, dominated by large, multi-national corporations. The mild and pleasant climate that once drew a rich fruit and vegetable industry to the area remains an important factor in the valley's development, in attracting business and its burgeoning population. In a national industry plagued by growth problems, Silicon Valley is creating new technology and new jobs. It is portrayed in the local media as "The Fruit Bowl of America" to nourish the nation's future, a thriving industrial venture and "California's great breeding ground for industry" (Bylinsky, 1974:128). The metaphors of organic growth proliferate, echoing the Valley's agricultural past, and the hopes pinned to high technology as the panacea for tomorrow, spawning scientific progress and economic growth. As with the agricultural revolution that preceded it, the high technology explosion allies optimism and technology, it combines the national image of California, its radiance and fertility, as the place of the Good Life, with values of industriousness and hard work. Held up as "the shining example of American innovation and entrepreneurial success" (Rogers and Larsen, 1984:154), the local economy spawns infinitely new ventures, financed by "seed money" or millions "plowed" into new companies by venture capitalists.

The image is an exotic world of research and venture capital, with its lures of big money, prestige and power that draw flamboyant entreprenuers,

computer freaks, high technology specialists, "head-hunters" and "hackers"—but also ordinary engineers and technicians, arriving in California with short hair-cuts and straight lifestyles (*ibid.*: 155-160). All come prepared to enter "fast-track" careers, be part of the exciting and almost mystical world of invisible microscopic communication at the forefronts of scientific progress. Around these products and professionals the dreams and myths of Silicon Valley are spun, creating an ambience of "Silicon Valley Fever."[1] As the epitome of entrepreneur capitalism, the industry of the Valley provides the new frontier of the centuries-old American dream, resuscitated, at least temporarily, by the electronics boom of the 1970s. The environment conveys an exhilaration that sometimes takes on religious overtones: The grand experience of "part-taking in the making of a high-tech Mecca" or as an executive of Hewlett-Packard exclaimed in the local news : "It's the most exciting time in the history of the world, and the center is here in Silicon Valley" (Carey and Gathright, 1985:8A). The Valley represents the greatest concentration of new wealth in the United States (Rogers and Larsen, 1984:29). It has raised new hopes to capitalist entrepreneurs and Mexican immigrant laborers alike.

Workstyles—lifestyles

Today, 1.3 million people live and work in the Valley. One out of every three in the workforce is employed in manufacturing in high technology and its related subcontractor industries (Siegel and Borock, 1982). This industrial complex and its rapid growth which structure life and work in Silicon Valley have given it a distinct ambience and lifestyle.

"Work" is the key word and the axis around which life in Silicon Valley revolves, accompanied by a powerful ethic of personal success, expressed in the local motto "no pain, no gain." Intense work patterns are a reality for most people and the idea of rapid progress is reinforced by a physical environment in which everything appears to be on the move. Fast traffic in multi-lane highways, drive-in service institutions of all kinds, mobile homes, plant constructions in progress and, not least, continuous production and assembly lines. Three work shifts keep processing plants running twenty-four hours a day, with an infrastructure hardly keeping pace with the demands of rapid industrial developments and production. Round-the-clock supermarkets, restaurants and work-out studios cater to the fast-track professionals, as well as production workers getting off the "swing shift" at midnight or the "grave-yard shift" in the early morning hours. Other occupational categories have different but equally intense work patterns. The many

entrepreneurs setting up business or high-powered staff of high-tech companies push the edge of technology in an ever faster race with their many competitors. Local jargon reflects dominant features of life in the Valley and metaphors of electronics and traffic portray the nature of work (*e.g.* "fast-track careers" are contrasted to "dead-end" jobs) and social relations. Interfacing and networking indicate the fleeting nature of social activities and the importance of job-related contacts. In the two-career household, there is simply little time, and among the young and upcoming, little value invested in family life. Friendship networks tend to be fleeting and work-related. Intimate relations suffer by the demands of work and commitments to success. Divorces far outnumber marriages in the Valley, and are the highest in the State. Household arrangements and intimate relations among the middle-class appear to be much more informal (and acceptable by the companies) compared to other parts of the country (Rogers & Larsen, *op.cit.*). Despite crippling stress, marital problems and a growing drug abuse to "keep the pace," the "work paradox" is reported to hold firm: the longer the work-week, the higher the job satisfaction (Carey and Gathright, *op.cit.*:8A).

The high-tech industry, with computers as its product, also fashions activities and consumption patterns outside work. Many leisure time activities are computer-related. There is a multitude of communication networks connecting computers and people in the area which caters to different tastes and latest fads: "Micro Smut" provides X-rated messages; networks for "gays," dating, or illegal ones for "hackers" provide other services. Other free-time activities combine outdoor life and physical fitness, most popular among the professionally active, which has created its own lucrative market. The dense pattern of gigantic shopping malls throughout the Valley reflect both buying power and a consumption-oriented lifestyle.

There is notably little interest in voluntary social or civic commitments, or other organizational activities. Political party or church membership is extremely low and seem to attract little interest as topics of conversation at work. The Volunteer Bureau of the county complains of a shortage of volunteers, and that "people don't have time anymore. They are all working" (Rogers and Larsen, 1984:181). For many, career is a high priority and work an obsession in the Valley's highly individualistic, success-oriented work culture. Personal success is measured in terms of income, prestige and power. The hard work ethic and the thrill of living and working "at the vanguard of the high-tech revolution" is part of a pervasive mystique that is reproduced in a wide variety of ways and intimately bound up with the organization of

the local economy. For although intense work patterns, long working hours and a maddening pace is a common experience for most in the workforce, the mystique conceals very different realities for different people in the Valley.

The other side of the chip

"Silicon Valley" as a center for a lucrative high-tech industry, is not accidental. At the intersection of Stanford University and the rural stretches of land worked by Mexican farmhands, the Valley offered a combination of land, capital, scientific personnel and a reservoir of unorganized labor (e.g. Bernstein *et al.*, 1977).

In 1985, the county was one of the most affluent in the U.S., with a strong economic base in the electronics industry and median family incomes well above the rest of the nation.[2] But the prosperity and growth rests on a rigid system of social inequality, in which the fruits of the Valley are unevenly distributed. A sharp social boundary cuts accross the Valley, visible in its spatial organization. The North is zoned for the industrial plants and the upper-income strata of scientists and managers, residents who can afford the scarce and expensive housing of the area. Unlike other urban centers in the U.S., the commuters are not the well-paid professionals. The crowded metropoles of the South, primarily San José, house the production workers who face expensive and long commutes on congested highways to get to and from work. The industry in the North provides the area and its residents with a substantial base of company tax revenue, while the residents to the South, who help generate that revenue, face urban decay, housing shortage and insufficient public services. San José has continuing financial problems, as it must serve most of the area's poorer residents but does not enjoy the tax base of the North. As an example, in 1983, it was the first school district in the nation since 1943 to declare bankruptcy (Siegel, 1985).

The work force is divided along social class, ethnic, and gender lines, forming a rigid hierarchy in which white, well-educated males hold the positions of high income and power and minority women in low-skill work are at the bottom. The minority population has increased with the arrival of high-tech industry. Their presence in the workforce roughly corresponds to their share of the Valley population. The Hispanic minority is the largest (17.5 %), mostly of Mexican origin, followed by Asians, mainly Vietnamese (7.7%) and a small black population (3.4%). The area has the highest den-

sity of South-East Asian refugees in California[3]. Together with immigrants from the Philippines, they represent the highest increase in the Asian category. There are also large numbers of undocumented aliens from Mexico and Central America. Ethnic stratification is part of the agrarian history of the area, with a work force consisting of different ethnic groups with differential status and different legal and quasi-legal rights (Burawoy, 1978). The pattern is reproduced as many new immigrants are slotted into the low-wage, tedious jobs in the low-skilled sector of the industry, or in low paying service and agricultural jobs, with low mobility. Within the high-tech employment and services sector, the occupational structure can be summarized as follows (Siegel and Borock, 1982):

Top management and professional categories, such as engineers and physical scientists are in high demand and offered high salaries, fringe benefits and stock options. Minorities in these professional categories are notably Asian, mostly Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans. Production workers make up the bulk of the workforce. Skilled workers (machine operators, technicians and clerks) are often minority men and white women, while Mexican males are more often found in low-skilled sectors. These skilled workers rarely advance into the professional categories.

The image of Silicon Valley is one of a white-collar paradise but the largest category of the workforce is the semi-skilled production workers. Nearly 2/3 of the Valley's assemblers are women, half of them minorities—black, Hispanic but also Filipinos and Indochinese. Many of these are new immigrants, working for extremely low wages and little vertical mobility, and female-headed households. Few make it into technician or supervisory positions. For these workers, the creed that seems to drive the valley, "make it better and faster, better and cheaper" (Carey and Gathright, *op.cit*:9A), implies high work pace, low wages or lay-offs. Lay-offs are a much-feared "caprice" of the production system that may hit without warning, as a frequent measure to regulate the booms and busts of the business cycle. Moving assembly work to Third World countries is another popular measure to keep down production costs[4]. Assembly work is also carried out in the home or "sweatshops" through illegal subcontractors, (*e.g.* by undocumented aliens, or by female household heads who cannot afford daycare, Rogers and Larsen, *op.cit.*). Despite poor working conditions, few companies have unions, and labor-management conflicts on a larger scale are absent. Unions are kept at bay by corporations by offering other incentives or implicit threats of lay-offs. Many minority workers are unfamiliar with unions, and those from a farm labor background may consider factory jobs to be a

step up. The fluctuations in assembly-line work also make unionizing difficult, as workers are routinely hired and laid off. The system is also maintained by other discriminatory practices that affect the opportunities of production workers. In addition to lower wages and more hazardous working conditions, they face higher living costs. The explosive growth rate and zoning policies that provide many more plants than places to live, have created dramatic housing shortages, long commuting distances and exorbitant price levels. Housing prices increased 100% in the first five years of the Chileans' residence in the area. Rented housing is also expensive and scarce, especially for minorities and families with children due to discriminatory renting practices, and so is childcare. The restrictive policies of banks and other credit institutions make loans and credit difficult for many. These pressures also affect family life. Although ethnic minority networks may help offset these atomizing effects of the work system,[5] migration also exerts considerable strain on families. Divorce rates and single-parent households are as high or higher among minorities as whites (Rogers and Larsen, *op.cit.*).

In sum, the chances of realizing the dream of "success" are unevenly distributed. The vast differences in terms of income, education and other social services, working conditions, occupational health hazards, environment—in short, opportunities—structure inequality. The exciting life of Silicon Valley as portrayed in the media is a closed world to the vast numbers of production workers, "the proletariat of information society" (Rogers & Larsen, 1984:189) who keep the wheels spinning. Even if they too were attracted by the "Silicon Valley Fever," these workers are soon made aware of the harsh realities behind its mystique. The challenge and rewards of the system for professionals are not parallelled in the insecure life of the low-paid assembly worker, juggling two jobs or working overtime to stay above the poverty line. Silicon Valley is not only producing technological advance and profits, but also environmental decay, poverty, social problems, and frustrated dreams.

Revolutionaries in the heartland of capitalism

It was into this darker side of social reality that Chileans entered as they settled into the run-down Hispanic minority neighbourhood of Sacred Heart, themselves penniless and vulnerable. The Church and its activist program for social equality provided a particular perspective on the politics

of the Valley that concurred with their own ideological framework. The workings of the capitalist system in the local economy, the obstruction of unions, the social conditions of poverty, crime and drug abuse in the minority population of the area, and the plight of Mexican immigrant farm-workers in the California fields, did not not escape Chilean observation. To the revolutionary newcomers these conditions represented a glaring example of the American system. Frequent participation in Mexican-*Chicano* causes, such as the United Farm Workers Union protest marches and other local *Chicano* events was a way for the exiles to articulate their ideological rejection of the American system at the time. "The capitalist system" as a focus of their critique also formed the backdrop of their own identity, against which their own ideology and project was defined and legitimized. In this system they would have to find a place for themselves, and resolve the paradox of being refugees in enemy territory. The exile ideology emphasized controlled contact, but survival eventually required the exiles to confront "the Beast" at the very heart of its system: by entering its labor market and its educational system.

The Chileans arrived with no material resources of their own and received no federal financial support. As with many other refugees, they were vulnerable in the occupational system. This was especially the case, without knowing English and having few skills immediatley convertible on the new labor market. Initially, there was an overall strong resistance to take employment. A strong ideological objection to work in the American system was coupled to their idea of a short-term stay. The American employment officers, accustomed to the eagerness of economic immigrants or the anxious gratitude of other refugee groups, had little appreciation of the exiles' ideological perspective and self-ascribed distinctiveness. While the officials saw this as elitist disdain or a stubborn refusal of the opportunity for economic advancement, the exiles saw entering the U.S. labor market as the first unacceptable step towards absorption in the American system. The intense conflict that arose between the representatives of the American funding agency and the Chileans over this issue reveals the collision of ideologies and worldviews. In brief, the Chileans rejected the idea of individual interest as a basis for action, directed to the goal of individual economic self-sufficiency, and ideas implying that all new immigrants must start at the bottom. They refused to work at minimum wage, to be "exploited by the capitalist system." There was also a sense of humiliation, evoking the shame of political defeat in Chile, now having to work for the enemy so entirely on his terms. More than anything, they were unwilling to confront

the fact that exile would be longer than expected, requiring accommodation and change.

At the same time, in their traumatized lives as refugees and parolees, there was a strong concern for economic security—to provide for the family, the need for stability as well as the obligation to work, "to earn an honest living." To be on welfare was disgraceful, and would condemn them to poverty. Reports from home on growing unemployment and hardship in the wake of the regime's new economic system added insecurity and obligations to those left behind. Increasingly, aging parents and unemployed relatives depended on their economic support, as did their party organizations in Chile. The ambivalence was related to the insecurity of their total position as refugees. For some of the younger men, there was probably also a measure of curiosity and excitement in entering the world of high technology, representing scientific progress and development.

Two circumstances helped ease this transition. First, there was an acute demand for labor in the Valley's electronic industry combined with the tail end of federal programs for vocational training of minorities. Second, the *Padre*, their sponsor, was on the board of the local minority employment training center and provided "safe conduct" into the American system. The organization also provided the comforts of a Spanish-speaking environment, and the company of the other Chileans. These programs, which included English classes, were mostly directed toward work in the electronics industry. The training lasted between three to eight months and paid a small monthly stipend, and with food stamps and rent subsidies families survived. Most were slotted into courses as production workers (craft workers or technicians), while a majority of women, newcomers on the labor market, were placed in training in semi-skilled assembly work or unskilled work in the few remaining fruit canning companies. The men who trained to become electronics technicians all had some technical background skills. Some older men, less attractive on the job market and with language difficulty, were instructed in office maintenance or janitorial work.

In few cases did the new occupations correspond to earlier job experience, as car mechanics, miners, farm-workers, students, waiters and clerks. On the other hand, the job training helped fashion an acceptable occupational role as skilled workers. The position was not too hard to be threatening, or discouraging enough to make them feel inferior ("underdeveloped"); nor was it menial or degrading, as in the case of the exploited Mexican immigrants. The community thus influenced the way its members made sense of the new occupational environment, defining acceptable strategies and work roles.

They perceived themselves as workers with skills as well as with political consciousness of the capitalist system they would work for. Furthermore, whatever they could extract from the system, in terms of material compensation and skills, could be used for projects of solidarity and return to Chile. Moreover, as noted, there was a general feeling that "the U.S. owed it" to them.

Confronting the Beast

Even so, from the exiles' point of view, the training was a mixed blessing, as it channelled them, reluctantly, into the occupational structure of the United States. As the Chileans entered the production lines of the American workplace and the world of multinational corporations, they did so indignantly and with strong apprehension. To them, these corporations represented the epitome of imperialism and capitalist production. The employers did not allow union organizing but preferred to "maintain flexibility" in wage-setting, hiring and firing practices to accommodate to the unpredictable business cycles of booms and slumps of their industry. The system was far removed from the industrial democracy and *poder popular* which these Chilean workers had been constructing under their popular government in Chile.

In Chile, workers not only tend to stay in their *barrio* but also with their job. The same stability, once employed, was also the case for these exiles, but reinforced by a preoccupation with security. Also, one took pride in being "a good worker," which meant not only skill for the job, but industriousness and responsibility as well. In Chile, this work ethic had been reinforced by the *Unidad Popular* government, but given dignity and new meaning in a system of popular control over production. Many Chileans actually distinguished themselves as responsible and reliable workers in the U.S. companies, and were usually well liked by employers. This ethic served them well in the new context and meant a slow but rather steady upward advancement. The situation also provided the possibility to help recruit other Chilean *compañeros* to the same company.[6]

While upward mobility on the dual labor market of the Valley is usually low and lay-offs frequent, many of the Chilean exiles not only retained work in the same company but some also moved to higher and better paid positions. Such promotions occurred mostly in companies that offer internal training programs, in an effort to keep a constant workforce. A handful of Chilean men advanced from "electronics technician" to "corporate engineer"[7]. Others, more commonly, moved from "assembler" to

"technician" a category for highly skilled workers, which included both men and women. Other women retrained from unskilled work in canneries and assembly lines to jobs as clerks, receptionists and nurse's aids. Six exiles started their own businesses, small, one-man enterprises. Making use of their experience as skilled workers in Chile, they did mechanical repairs, gardening, and dressmaking to order, some with considerable success. All lacking previous business experience, the Chileans relied on their own network as an important resource for the exchange of information, signing for bank loans and credit, and other kinds of services.

Their annual incomes, with the exception of a few welfare cases, were well within the average range of the area. For some of the more ambitious, it was considerably above. Juan, for example, a student of engineering in Chile, was employed as a technician. He spent a good deal of his spare time working overtime and was earning twice the average income. He had invested money in a small business as well as in a house, and was also supporting his widowed mother at home. His hard work and savings were directed to one goal: to make it possible to go back and resume his life in Chile. Contrary to exiles' expectations at first, these companies provided a certain measure of security and benefits that other jobs did not offer and so became more preferential employers. One such employer, the M.O.R.E Corporation, a model of modern production was keen to promote the image of the company as "one happy family." This image was in line with the egalitarian management philosphy of the Valley's big companies, as "flexible, informal, entrepreneurial and non-traditional" (Rogers and Larsen, *op.cit*:145).

A Visit to The M.O.R.E Corporation

Located on the frontier of a vast and expanding stretch of flat industrial land in the Valley, this corporation was the new offshoot of the latest multinational merger that filled the local news for some time. Since this was a popular company with the Chileans, and employed a fairly large number at the time, I made a visit at the workplace. Discrete, low-level buildings shaded by lush eucalyptus trees and surrounded by neat lines of California pines made it look very different from a traditional production plant. The cool and pleasant interior reinforced that impression. After signing in as "personal visitor," with no further questions asked, I was free to move around and talk to the Chileans, most of whom worked in the assembly/repair shop for circuit boards. The light and open space, decorated in soft pastels, resembled more an office landscape than an assembly workshop. Long desks made twin rows of four or five (mostly) women, facing each other, doing solde-

ring work and other repairs of faulty circuit cards. But they moved around with ease, stopping for a chat with their workmates, and had their own, flexible work schedules. This was a modern plant, where work was organized on a personal-responsibility basis, and an effort was made to reduce or conceal the monotony in the work itself, within the limits set by punch-clocks and supervisors. The relation between workers and supervisors was informal and on the first-name basis typical of American companies. At another end of the room, two Chilean men were bent over a terminal screen, vividly discussing a work problem. As trouble-shooters, their job was to identify the faults on the boards and give instructions for repair. After an hour of talking to workers and supervisors, we had lunch in the pleasant open-air restaurant, furnished in natural wood and decorated with palmtrees. The Chileans sat at the same table or with other Hispanics. They did not appear comfortable among their American colleagues or with the English language, and did not have any close relationship with them outside of work. We had a view over the company recreational sports facility, with tennis courts, workout rooms and swimming pools, open at any time for employees and their guests. The mandatory golf course, however, was located over by the research and development buildings. With restrictions on unions, the company offered employees a set of other benefits such as personal insurance schemes and "sabbaticals" after seven years of employment. To promote loyalty and a sense of family, the company arranged communal outings of different kinds, such as hiring the local amusement park for a day exclusively for the "MORE FAMILY." While the Chileans never took part in these "American activities," maintaining a sharp distance to the social life of the workplace, they did utilize some of the personal benefit schemes. Three-months sabbaticals with full pay sent Chilean female employees and their children to a much-longed for visit to Chile.

For many, however, work was the domain that required the greatest personal readjustment. The overall economic mobility, with a standard of living far beyond that in Chile, had its price and entailed more profound changes in their lives than they had initially imagined. Although it carried a sense of achievement, "the good life" in material terms did not seem to compensate for losses experienced on other levels. Arturo, a local trade union leader in Chile, was now living materially well with house, car, and children in college but felt that the vitality and much of the purpose had been lost in his working life. He felt he had "turned into a machine," missing the political action and clout of the workers in his factory in Chile, "things that made it all worthwhile." For old Alberto, the farmer, the theme of his life was hard

work. "I've worked hard all my life, since I was twelve, and this is what I want to do here." Achieving that, however, was a constant struggle. Old and with insufficient English, he was not attractive on the market. Although he lived fairly well with seasonal unemployment benefits supplemented by his wife's income, he was not happy when he could not work and feel useful, and "see things grow." He managed to get a small loan through the credit union to buy tools and a pick-up truck for a small gardening business. However, assignments were not many enough to make it flourish as he dreamed. He was carrying out odd jobs for the other Chileans and in between kept himself busy with improvements on his own house. For Enrique, the senior clerk with five years to retirement when he left Chile, the loss of status and professional identity was even more difficult than the heavy physical machine work he was now doing between long periods of unemployment. While his wife was fairly settled in her own full-time job, he became introverted and withdrew from social life, suffering from what he saw as his failure to be the provider and family authority.

A few families, who were doing very poorly in Chile already, remained in marginality or fared worse in exile than at home. Carmen, alone with three children, worked in Chile as a domestic and her children were raised by a relative. Her tragedy was that, in exile, she finally had the means to fulfill her role as mother and provider to her children, but she lost them to "drugs and other vices." She was also fighting an uneven battle with her employer, a big electronics company, who rejected her request for medical compensation. Seven years of monotonous assembly work, she claimed, had produced physical damages, large medical bills and made her unable to do further work. The company doctor referred her problem to "previously incurred physical damages" during her two years in a Chilean concentration camp. Withdrawn from the exile community, and without American friends, she had few strings to pull and risked losing her hard-earned economic security.

For most others, the income levels in Silicon Valley made economic life more than mere "surivival." The new and more affluent life style entailed a certain moral discomfort for the exiles. Ten years after arrival, most of them in the area around Sacred Heart, over half the exile families lived in their own house in more attractive residential areas, with better schools for their children. Other children had soon been taken out of the minority schools of the poverty-stricken downtown area and placed in private, Catholic schools. Children's education was an important issue. The concern was to minimize contact with "decadent American youth cultures" and curtail the

influence of what they deemed the low quality and ideologically unacceptable American school system.

Leisure time and other activities outside of working life had an unmistakably Chilean flavor. Chileans meet at a *peña* or *fiesta* of some sort, or at someone's home with Chilean food and music. Families would go to the beach or go camping together, which had been inexpensive and common ways to *veranear*, to spend summer vacation, in Chile. The travelling, mobile, dinner-dating and fitness-oriented pursuits of the young urban professionals or "yuppies" of the area had little resonance in the Chilean community, including the Chilean youth. Few cared for tourist travel, and lacked the curiosity to see other parts of the United States. Travel was rather a necessity, in order to spend time with relatives or party associates in other parts of the U.S., or reserved for the occasional visit to Chile. However, the house with a patio and front garden in a quiet and well-kept residential area and two cars in the driveway indicated a very different lifestyle to that which most Chileans had known at home. A closer look at the contexts of family, politics and social life of the community reveals that more profound changes were taking place with the experience of life and work in Silicon Valley.

Work and Family Life

In Chile, the structure and social world of these exile families were strikingly different from the modern, mainstream family in Silicon Valley: the mobile and socially independent working couple with rather temporary and loose-knit social networks. For the working-class Chileans, the experience was a different one. In Chile, as an informant put it, commenting on the difference,"... you buy yourself a little house and that's where you stay!" Young couples strive to rent or buy a house of their own, no matter how simple and remain in the barrio, embedded in a stable close-knit social network of kin and neighbours (as quasi-family). The men may be workmates in a nearby industry and political associates in a union or party. In these working-class families, gender roles are complementary. The man is the principal breadwinner and *jefe de hogar* (household head). A woman, (especially in the working class) is usually brought up with her primary orientation to her role as wife and mother.

The stability and connectedness of a such a family's external contacts in Chile provided support and companionship from the outside. This network constituted the wellknown, secure, everyday reality of a majority of the exile women. Being cut off from this environment in exile produced a deeply

felt loss and isolation. To some extent, the exile community came to replace this support network. However, in Chile, such networks are usually also a source of strong normative pressure (*cf.* Bott, 1957) which help keep marriages intact and buffer conflicts. In exile, being far removed from the social control by mothers, in-laws and gossiping neighbours was a welcome change for many women, particularly the younger ones, and allowed for more unconventional living patterns. However, while some women came to agree with the idea of a young couple "living together" in exile ("which would have been scandalous behavior in Chile"), men were not always so flexible. The young Chilean couples in California continued to marry formally although, away from the social pressure of their kin, many did not baptize their children. Similarly, divorce would not have been easily sanctioned in Chile. Without the control and the buffer of the kin network, divorce was more frequent.[8] The breakdown of marriages was also related to the strain of uprooting and accommodating to exile and most separations typically occurred in the first few years when marital ties were most vulnerable. The family often became the center stage on which personal frustrations and problems of adjustment were acted out. Some of the problems had begun in Chile. Marital roles were modified during men's imprisonment, a challenge that made women more confident and self-sufficient and reluctant to resume a traditional and more dependent wifely roles later on. Exile also exposed male privilege and earlier marital strife in more naked light. At the same time, the small and close-knit exile community exerted some pressure on family stability and perhaps accounted for the relatively low divorce rate. Where families were connected through many-stranded relations in a variety of interactional contexts, a marital breakdown might generate wider conflicts and so would be discouraged by others. Also, as indicated earlier, the family was held up as a vital institution in exile to preserve Chilean cultural identity and the commitment to Chile.

New work patterns in Silicon Valley demanded different everyday routines affecting family organization. These arrangements also eased conventional gender boundaries. As women went out to work along with their husbands, a shift in the division of work as well as in role expectations was required. Although women still seemed to carry the major responsibility for the household, men were forced to enter the domestic world of shopping, diapers and daycare, as their wives were on alternating work shifts or refused to shoulder the double workload. The surrounding society provided alternative models of gender relations and women began to question male privileges, so much more transparent in the new context. Holding down a

job of her own, earning a living and learning to drive a car subsequently boosted a woman's confidence and somewhat undermined the authority of the male in his role as "the one who brings home the money" and the head of the household. For both, however, and especially for the woman, work and life in Silicon Valley also meant an overall heavier work load and greater social isolation compared to their lives in Chile.

With more similar and interchangeable work roles men and women became more economically independent of each other, each with their own income. But in the absence of the networks of kin, workmates and political associates in Chile, they became more dependent on each other for emotional support and companionship. To some extent, the community of exiles replaced this loss, but the demands of working life and urban living made social contact more of an effort now. As Silvia put it,

> "at home, you just had to step out on the street in your *barrio* to have a conversation, or follow the action from your kitchen window..."

In the U.S., social interaction with friends and political comrades had become separated from the everyday routine and turned into a week-end leisure time activity. Thus, couples' external relationships were affected as both were involved in a busy working life. Each couple acted more as a unit, with considerably more resources and financial commitments, requiring the joint project of two incomes. In the absence of grandparents and close neighbours, the children became more dependent on their parents. Exposed to the dangers, real or imagined, of the American environment, parents felt that children needed more parental guidance and attention, which often entailed careful selection of schools and daily transportation. The absence of the larger kin network also meant more relaxed discipline in children-adult relations. A visiting Chilean made remarks about the freer rein of children at the community social events compared to what would be permissible in Chile.

A day in the life of the Nuñez family

The Nuñez were in their mid-forties with two young married daughters and three school-age children. They had bought a spacious, old house in the Sacred Heart parish which they had remodeled and decorated themselves. One part was arranged as a dressmaking studio and Maria was building up a small clientele in the area. In Chile she used to make some extra money sewing for neighbours and friends in the *barrio*, now she was taking eve-

ning classes in dressmaking and design at a local Community College. For the past eight years both she and her husband Rodolfo worked at the M.O.R.E. Corporation. One of her married daughters, Celia, was recently employed there as well.

On an ordinary day, Maria gets up long before the others. If she is on the early shift, she has to be at work at 6 a.m, after a long commute before the worst rush-hour traffic. Once there, she does technical assembly and repair work on circuit boards with five other Chileans in her department. Rodolfo, with a flexible work schedule, sends the children off to school before it is his turn to begin his technician's job at the same company. Maria returns at 3 p.m., picks up the younger children from school and prepares the *once* (afternoon tea). Her married daughter calls to ask if she could drop off her three-year old on her way to the late shift, as her baby-sitter has called in sick. Maria agrees and then begins her dressmaking assignments, while the children do their homework or watch the afternoon TV cartoons. They are bilingual and doing well at school. Maria and Rodolfo have been careful in selecting a school district to avoid the most run-down minority schools. As with their close friends, mostly the children of other Chilean exiles, their way of speaking and dressing as well as their networks at school mark their distance to the Mexican community. Maria keeps sewing, continuously interrupted by visiting customers, telephone calls, and children's homework questions. A little later, Doris, another Chilean who lives in the neighbourhood, drops in with the material for the new skirts for the children's dance group that Maria has promised to sew. Her youngest daughter is also in the Group and they are having an appearance at a benefit held by Amnesty International in a few weeks' time. When Rodolfo comes home at eight, the family has an evening meal together, which Maria prepares with the help of her 15-year old daughter. Her son-in-law, the son of another exile family, comes to pick up the grandson on his way home and stays for the meal. In the middle of it, Juan, a fellow exile and single who lives in the vicinity, stops by and a plate is immediately set for him also. Juan has come to pick up a video from Chile that Rodolfo has copied for him, to be shown in the *peña* in the community on the following Friday night. The two men were in prison together in Chile, and used to be active in the same party group in exile. Since it dissolved, neither is very active in politics anymore. Nevertheless, they are always discussing plans to start up new activities, and express their desire "to do something for Chile."

The Nuñez always kept an open house and remained one of the main nodes in the Chilean social network. Maria remembered the suffering and

the poverty of her Chilean background, and as an energetic and creative person, she seemed determined to make something better of her new life. However, worrying about her family left in the Santiago shantytown, she hoped to bring her old mother over to California.

Maria's situation contrasted sharply with that of her friend Silvia, who represented a different family experience in exile. For Silvia, exile had brought material welfare and more independence but also social isolation and loneliness. Silvia worked as an assembler at an electronics company, as the only Chilean. Her husband was a technician at a different company. She was content with her material security, their house, a car of her own and a certain freedom of movement which she had not enjoyed in Chile, where social control had been stricter. But she was also very lonely and her daily routine was a mixture of stress and dreary sameness. After work her family of four sons expected her attention and service as a home-maker, but, she complained, "they never stay around to keep me company." Work was an economic necessity for the family to meet mortgage payments and other commitments. Besides, staying at home alone would mean more isolation. In Chile, one could always have lots to do in the busy life of the *barrio*. Here, in the quiet suburban residential area, the neighbours had little contact. Her husband worked different hours and commuted to a nearby city to work. She did not meet American friends at work after hours, as she found they had so little in common. The Chilean women were all busy during the week, but they tried to get together with other families in the community on week-ends, especially now that her youngest son had entered the children's Dance Group. Silvia missed Chile and her social network there, but things had changed since she left. Her mother had died and most of her other family members were scattered, as exiles, in different parts of the world. "And besides," she added with a shrug of resignation, "they say the country has gone down the drain with the military regime..."

Life in exile changed differently for men and women. Women's traditionally narrow domestic sphere expanded with employment and a more active part in the solidarity work. For men, it was rather the opposite. Although they spent much time at work as well, the loss of politics meant that their traditional social world shrank and they spent more time with their families.[9] The family in exile became a more self-sufficient social and economic unit, like other families in Silicon Valley, with more distinct boundaries between spheres of work, politics, family and friends. The exchange of personal services remained an important part of interaction in the community, like repairing a car or moving house. But the many social

services embedded in the obligations of the network in Chile were available in the new society as part of an institutionalized structure, such as insurance and social welfare services.[10] Similarly, the sharing of housing, telephones or means of transportation was no longer a necessity when every family could afford their own. However, self-sufficiency also had its social costs, perhaps felt more acutely by the exiles than by the American family next door. There were larger distances, more isolation, less time for everyday intimacy and emotional support. Therefore, the Saturday afternoon spent visiting, sharing the kitchen gossip, the Sunday outing or soccer game and the weekly *peña* were valuable moments that animated the dull and demanding work-week: *estar con la gente* ("to be with one's people") revived the spirit and nurtured the tie to Chile.

Politics in everyday life

As the exiles entered the workplaces of Silicon Valley, an important dimension of their political lives was lost. Politics had played a central role in their lives in Chile, as political life and culture had a strong connection to work and the world of production. Men's networks consisted of workmates and *compañeros* of the local trade union, intimately connected to their party organization. In contrast, in the companies where the exiled Chileans worked, unions were practically non-existent, and political issues seemed of little interest to their workmates. A few exiles, employed in other than the union-resistant electronics industry, became activists in their local U.S. unions, particularly on Hispanic-minority issues. However, the issues and the ideologies of trade union politics were different. The exiles complained of organizations dominated more by "economistic than political concerns," *i.e.* wage negotiations rather than more fundamental questions of workers' rights and influence over production. In a few instances, exiles in the electronics corporations who had attempted to organize workers to improve working conditions were exposed to sanctions or company pressure, which dissuaded many others. Being placed on the industry's blacklist was hazardous in a system with constant hiring and firing, where workers must always be prepared to change their employer. Some exiles were even reluctant to reveal their Chilean identity, preferring to merge with the Hispanic category. "Being Chilean is immediately associated with Allende—and being Communist. That's all they know about Chile," said Rodolfo. Ramón claimed that he was restricted at work and later fired by his employer for

that reason. Their experience was also that their co-workers were "apolitical" and generally uninterested in unionization.

In their new occupational roles, the connection between political practice and work was severed. For Eduardo, Arturo, and many of the other union activists, work in Chile had meant not only that they fulfilled their role as family provider, but more importantly, in the world of men, work had meaning through the political context of union life and the collectivity of class. Thus, political activity and party affiliation were important aspects of a man's social identity and status. Arturo, in his early fifties, reminisced with a mixture of pride and bitterness about his job at the sugar production factory in Chile. There, he was the head of the union, with his own office and secretary. In the U.S. he worked on the night-shift assembly line, with much less integration and control over the work situation. Despite the material welfare, with two incomes, a small house and children in college, an important dimension had nevertheless disappeared from Arturo's life and self-image. He felt fortunate to have a family that still respected him, and had become much more of a family-oriented man than before. His children's educational achievements were a source of pride in the present and seemed to recompense some of the loss of his connection to a more meaningful life and identity.

In the U.S. corporations, exiles were no longer part of interlinking networks of party-production-trade union, having had to rely on collective cooperation for material survival and wellbeing. Political participation in exile was based more on a sense of moral obligation than on dependence on such networks as an integral part of daily life. This situation contributed to undermining the role of political parties in exile, as they were no longer connected to either production or the power structure in the new society (chapter 6). In their diminished function, local party groups maintained themselves in their separate spheres but had relatively little relation to the society in which their members lived and worked. The inability to mobilize members and demand discipline was brought out in Alberto's complaints about the difficulties of maintaining their newly reorganized local party group

> "...it is not very well organized. Some work daytime, the others evening shift. I suggested we meet on Saturdays but they did not want that. They had things to do with their families. Why can't the wife take the children to the park or take care of the household the way they used to do in Chile? There is no discipline now. "

In Chile, a militant owed his primary loyalty and obligation to his party, but this commitment could no longer be taken for granted in exile. In the beginning, the men would spend endless hours in meetings and travel long distances in political work if called out by their party. Now mobilization was slower and more inert. Work and family duties became opposed to politics in a way they never were in Chile.

Political practice focused on solidarity work but was directed toward a distant political arena, and confined to the domain of community and leisure time. And yet, the political commitment was a vital link to Chile and to the past, as well as to exiles' identity. The political void in the American present frustrated those with a desire to maintain their commitment and their self-image as militant and activist. Some exiles seemed to "come alive" only when they talked about this past, when they could fall back into the familiar roles and rhetoric of revolutionary politics. In Chile, politics defined who you were and *la lucha* (the struggle) was the essence of work and life. The more impatient and politically active young people sometimes complained that their parents were caught up in the old party politics of the days of *Unidad Popular*, while they were seeking new forms of political alliance and expression.

The Community: New Functions and Meanings

As lives became more private and family-oriented, the community became more of an interactional network of independent households and individuals. Economic need and party affiliation were less of an active organizing principle than before as the community turned into a resource network of a somewhat different kind. Representing continuity in a changing social reality, the community helped reaffirm their connection to Chile and their identities as political exiles.

Despite their integration into the work structures of the host society, Chilean exiles maintained a clear boundary to the wider society. As an example, two male exiles offered promotions to professional positions at work turned them down since such positions would have required closer personal relations with co-workers and greater identification with the company. While they meant an increase in status, the positions would have reduced the ability of making extra money through overtime compensation. Few had close relations with Americans, or any interaction with workmates outside of work. Although a number of males had married Mexican women,

there was little social interaction with the Mexican community. The ambiguity of ethnic classification as Hispanics by the majority was manoeuvered situationally as it suited their purposes. Chilean identity was played down when it could be a liability, for instance when negatively associated by an employer with Communism, or stressed when it might be an asset usually to avoid misclassification as a Mexican. This option was also reflected in the educational strategies for children. Classification in the Hispanic minority category provided special opportunities when applying to colleges and educational grants on minority quotas.

The idea seemed to persist that only the relations with Chilean exiles could be meaningful social relations. Relations with North Americans and most other non-Chileans remained formal and fleeting. The Chileans were the ones to turn to in sudden economic trouble, when in need of money quickly without security. The Chileans were also the ones with whom to celebrate the highlights of one's life, such as the graduation of a son or daughter, marriages and birthdays. *Compadres* (co-parents) for those who chose to baptize their children were almost invariably other Chileans. The other Chileans were also the first ones to share sorrows and distress, the death of a loved one in Chile, or personal breakdowns. When the news reached old Alberto that his son had been assassinated in Chile, the community gathered round him and held a mass in his son's memory. Elena noted, after coming back from a visit to Chile, that "this community is my family now." She felt estranged from her relatives at home. The Chileans remained the ones the exiles still preferred their children to marry. Nearly every other new marriage in the community was between Chileans. The cases of Mexican-Chilean unions were not as stable and considered rather unfortunate bonds. Friendship ties, political alliances, new marriages, *compadrazgo* networks and an "unbeatable" soccer team thus integrated the exiles into a social network that remained their most intimate social sphere.

The community events conflated a wide range of functions, meanings and emotions. Although no longer as frequent, *peñas, actos, fiestas* and commemorations were regularly held to elicit support for the Chilean struggle. Reading and listening to news was still oriented to Chilean society, and included regular gatherings to watch the latest video-documentary from Chile. Visitors were eagerly received and usually asked to speak about the current situation at home. But "solidarity work" for Chile, while defining their principal political function in exile, gradually became less of an external rallying symbol and more an internal symbol of community. Chile was no longer the focus of attention of the U.S. solidarity committees and support

groups. As a result, the political efficacy and financial yield became more limited but the events had a strong symbolic and social importance for the exiles, since they implied community. While more social and family-oriented, providing a chance to meet friends and *compañeros* and fulfill their obligations both to family and to Chile, the political character of their community was consistently emphasized. Invariably set in a political frame, even a *Ramada* or *fiesta* was never held in its own right, but given to support some political project in Chile. These occasions reaffirmed the identity as political exiles, often dramatized with Chilean music, poetry, and accounts from ongoing political events in Chile. A *peña* that suddenly became too boisterous, with spontaneous jokes and singing too far "off the mark," was interrupted by angry remarks that "this is a *peña*, not a cabaret!" The community gatherings were important events that mediated the increasing tension between the individual and the collectivity, between ideology and new patterns of social life.

Transformation of everyday life

After nearly a decade in exile, the temporary character of make-shift arrangements had given way for more long-term accommodation to life in American society. In contrast to the extra-ordinary experience of the first years, with its intense activity and dramatic issues of survival and resistance, existence had settled down to a stable and routinized flow in which the practical and immediate concerns of daily life took on a momentum of their own. In this process, the contexts and meanings of domains such as work, family, politics and community had been changing and the boundaries between them had shifted. Making and maintaining a living involved all adult members of the household and took up a good deal of the exiles' time. The more private, family-oriented and work-focused lives in exile contrasted sharply with the politicized public lives in Chile, embedded in networks of kin, neighbours, workmates and political associates. In exile, traditional dependencies and bases of authority had been undermined as more self-sufficient individuals and households emerged. In principle, these did not depend on either spouse's income, party affiliation or collective union action for material livelihood.

Occupational integration was no doubt an important entry into American society which structured much of daily life in exile. Accommodation also meant learning to manoeuvre through vast bureaucracies of education,

social services, insurances and finance. Efficiency and rational organization were features of social life in the new system that exiles learnt to appreciate and expect. In Chile, dealings with authorities often required a whole day of visits and waiting at different offices, "especially for us women; housewives were expected to have time." Such matters could now be taken care of with a telephone call. They also quite easily adjusted to the greater informality in dress and interaction at work and public institutions, a right to claim service and efficiency in public contacts, which contrasted with the class-determined patterns of interaction they had known in Chile.

In sum, the Chileans had learned to make use of the opportunities for acquiring new skills, leading to material welfare and education for their children, some of the very things they had been fighting for in Chile. In the process, they had created materially comfortable lives, for themselves, not apparently different from the middle-class life style of Silicon Valley. As such, everyday life harbored an increasing conflict between the Chilean past and the American present, and raised some deeply disturbing questions. Were they still a politicized, working-class movement, still a community of political exiles? The next chapter examines how changes were interpreted by the exiles themselves and how they dealt with the ideological and moral conflicts of change.

Notes to Chapter 7

[1] The expression alludes to the Californian Gold Rush, the other, powerful attraction to the area a hundred years earlier.

[2] In 1982-83 the county had the highest median household income (effective buying power) in the nation (San José Chamber of Commerce, 1983).

[3] 45 000 had arrived by 1982. The Southern Valley is one of the two main concentrations of Vietnamese in the U.S. In addition, several hundred new immigrants arrive in San José each month (Rogers & Larsen, *op.cit.*)

[4] Every sizeable semi-conductor firm has one or more assembly plants in East-Asian countries. Labor costs in the Philippines are 1/10 of U.S. labor cost (Siegel and Borock, 1982).

[5] There is presumably variation between the ethnic communities in the area in terms of work-patterns and social organization, such as Mexicans and Vietnamese communities. The paucity of data on ethnic organization in the Valley makes it difficult to draw any general conclusions.

[6] Ethnic concentrations at the different companies in the area are very common as a result of such informal recruiting patterns (Rogers & Larsen, 1984).

[7] To distinguish the title from the academic engineering degree.

[8] About 20% of the married couples had divorced in exile. The figure is below the U.S. divorce rate and well below that of Chilean exile communities in Sweden, estimated to be above 40%.

[9] According to Kay (1987), this is also the experience of exile women of middle-class background.

[10] As Björklund (1981) showed in the case of Assyrian immigrants in Sweden, this shifts the social relation between members to one between individual and State. As part of an individualization process, households and individuals become more independent and private.

8. THE DILEMMA OF EXILE: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

California, golden hills
like the skin of someone
you could love

Y en Santiago
tus compañeros caen
en las calles
envueltos en sangre, humo y
vergüenza[1]

Chilean exile in California

The separation between realities so acutely experienced in the first years was no longer so clear a decade later. The encounter with new contexts and meanings of social life in the U.S. challenged certainties formerly taken for granted. While part of the dialectics of all socio-cultural change, the contradiction entailed a particular dilemma for exiles.

Continuity was a vital dimension of the exile project; to preserve traditions and commitments as Chileans and supporters of the popular movement, in their temporary absence from Chile. Forcibly expelled, the exiles had refused to be uprooted. To maintain and cherish fundamental values and goals was an important form of political resistance. As a result, the community was preoccupied with change. Some changes were acceptable or at least difficult to contest from an ideological perspective, such as greater female independence. Others were profoundly problematic and non-negotiable: The commitment to the historical project for Chile, a Socialist world view, and return to Chile. The Chileans were acutely aware of the changes in their lives and the conflict they raised with their commitments and ideology. The concern with continuity was both political and personal. At stake was the historical movement for Socialism in Chile and, intimately intertwined with it, the personal identity of the exile.

The Conflict of Success: Affluent Workers

"Success," in the sense of personal achievement with economic rewards and professional prestige was a key concept in the work ethic of the surrounding society. In the exile ideology, economic advancement was primarily part of the collective political project. For the exiles, economic security was, from the very beginning, a question of survival in the new country. Secondly, it was part of the political obligations. Militants were expected to acquire new skills and financial resources for the party and for their own return to Chile. Any surplus was not to enrich oneself but was intended for the Chilean cause. As one informant put it, "What they have in the U.S. is what this country has stolen from Latin America, through their exploitation. What we earn here is therefore not to be used to impress others but should go back into our countries."

Status aspects of individual success (*e.g.* upward mobility striving or *arribísmo*) ran counter to their egalitarian ideology as members of the Chilean working class. The new access to material comfort in exile clashed with Chileans perceptions of themselves as workers and as Socialists. The proper life for them, as simple people, was "*una vida sencilla*" (a simple life) in accordance with their social background and class identity. Although they led solid and prudent economic lives, by local standards, without the attributes of conspicuous consumption, these contrasted painfully with the conditions most of their families and friends suffered in Chile. The material framing of their new lives resembled more the lifestyle of the well-to-do in Chile than that of its working class.

Nevertheless, the rise from marginality, *desnudos*, to economic security and welfare undoubtedly carried a sense of achievement and pride. Achievements were often talked about in terms of opportunities to learn new skills or to obtain children's education, important for a future in Chile. But these advances also invoked subtle status comparisons and revealed an ambivalence to their new standard of living. At the same time, Chileans maintained a distance towards the workplace by not participating in company networks or activities. They did not generally invest in the pursuit of "careers" as defined by the local work culture and its definition of success. Exiles still defined themselves as workers, and those who were of lower-middle class background identified with the interests of the working class. Career problems at work rarely seemed to come up as topics of conversation, apart from concerns about lay-offs and recruitment. At the same time, the better part of daily life was taken up by work and by maintaining one's

economic commitments with mortgages, school fees, car repairs, etc. The economic "surplus" was not as great as political parties or relatives at home in Chile might expect, and the ideal of "returning resources" to Chile suffered. The situation also meant less time and resources to fulfill obligations to Chile and to community involvement.

Work, some claimed, had become "an obsession." The changes created a tension in the community as the personal economic projects impinged on the collective political project. As a result, economic success was never stressed of flaunted by members of the community, so that any competition between them was subtle and denied open expression. Consumption patterns were sensitive issues and any extravagance, such as expensive jewelry or other personal items, interpreted as markers of status, were apt to invite snide remarks or rebuffs. Nevertheless, economic and material issues were often the topic of conversation between exiles, as they exchanged information or advice on housing, or better jobs, loans and credit, as the community became a vital resource in economic advancement. As in all lower-class communities with an egalitarian ideology (Jayawardena, 1968), there was a strong consciousness and monitoring of status, in which claims to superiority were not tolerated. Those showing materialist aspirations and conspicuous consumption patterns were easily rejected as "absorbed by the system" (a betrayal to commitment) or *arribistas* (mobility-oriented). As a rule, such individuals withdrew from the community. Yet, one could be economically successful and remain in the community, if one retained and demonstrated one's commitment to the Chilean cause and did not let the materialist aspirations take over one's moral priorities. As Victor and his family moved into a large, expensive house on the eastern foothills, complete with a pool and all modern amenities, the Chileans jokingly called it a "*casa de momio*" (the house of a reactionary). Victor was an old community activist, and although not everyone agreed with him politically, his commitment to Chile was clearly beyond any doubt. Although nothing was said in public, there seemed to be, nevertheless, undercurrents of tension and discomfort. The act seemed to cross the limit to what could be defined as working-class and spelled out clearly the beginning of economic differences among the exiles.

The ambivalence with respect to class position and consumption was perhaps natural in view of the exiles' social background. In societies such as Chile with a history of rigid class structure and an increasingly politicized working class, shame and pride in one's social origin co-exist. While modesty and austerity, rather than luxury consumption, was the mark of their ideology and class, as workers, long deprived in Chile and with expectations raised

by the *Unidad Popular*, they now had unprecedented access to material affluence. To some workers, like Alberto, the project for social change in Chile had focussed more than anything on their material deprivation grounded in daily experiences of poverty and exploitation. As Valenzuela (1976) points out, in Chile the traditional piecemeal economic demands had continued to dominate many trade unions during the *Unidad Popular*. To Alberto, the fruits of Socialism, were "to be able to eat, have a roof over your head, dress a little decently and put your children in school." They also meant the end to daily degradations from *patrones* and bosses for being poor and powerless. In a sense, they now enjoyed the good life promised by the socialist project under the popular government, but realized in a different context. Nevertheless, although Alberto had exchanged his oxcart in Chile for a shiny new pick-up truck in the U.S., he maintained a distinction between the two systems and remained a keen critic of many aspects of his new environment.

"Hemos cambiado" ("We have changed")

"Still," Juan complained,

> "the Chileans have changed. We have begun to look more closely at money and are forgetting the value of *amistad* (friendship) and solidarity. In Chile, we could use our last bus money to get to a meeting. Today some people stay home with the excuse that they have no money to put gas in the car. In Chile, one would fight about picking up the check in the bar, now we avoid it, each one sees to himself."

Personal projects taking over sociability and collective concerns meant more isolation. "Some people don't invite others because they are trying to save money on heating costs" was another informant's complaint. Changes were observed and commented upon in a mounting conflict between ideology and lifestyle in the U.S., and between collective and private interests. Political events in Chile also threw their own depoliticized lives into focus and revealed a glaring discrepancy between ideals and actual conditions. An intense and sustained debate that involved the majority of the exiles arose in response to two important developments in Chile: the growth of organized political mobilization and the indications that the return of exiles might be allowed by the junta. Like gossip, "at once text and native commentary on text" (Keesing, 1974:93), this debate provides insights into the discourse on change in the community and the strategies adopted to deal with the issues at the very heart of the exile project.

Internal Debate: What are we doing to ourselves?

A series of articles in a community newsletter raised the issue of change. The newsletter itself was started in response to the signs of a unified opposition in Chile by a group of young exiles, former members of different political parties. The aim was to "remobilize Chileans, over and beyond political conflicts and social isolation." A contribution entitled "What are we doing to ourselves?" represents well the concerns and tone at the time:

> "We must remember who we are and the historical circumstances that brought us here; it is a history which none of us had desired. We all fought in one form or another in Chile with the hope of securing a situation which had emerged as the result of a long struggle of an entire people—Perhaps we were not mature or prepared enough to confront the demands but that is of little significance now. But what we can say with authority is that for those who believed in it, it represented an honest chance to construct a better society—a society which would be *equal* for all its members, that is, a classless society, a society in which man ceases to be the enemy of man. All these hopes and desires were brought to an abrupt halt, followed by what we all know—repression, death, jail, much heroism, and eventually, for us, *exile*.
>
> Exile started out with great activity, with a commitment that poured forth through the pores of every one of us. Our minds were filled with the one constant preoccupation: our struggle. In this spirit we formed committees and support groups and every week there was at least one activity that reflected the conviction of our struggle. We understood that Chile suffered great needs and we responded according to our ability, to this small trench of a country—although distant, a very intimate part of our daily lives. We believed that our lives here were simply a parenthesis and in a very near future we would all meet again in our homeland. But time kept passing and something was changing. Clearly, new problems began to emerge which needed to be addressed. In the family, for instance, our wives began to understand many things and new perspectives opened up. To be honest, we didn't like it much. As with our women, so with our youngsters; we were sometimes at a loss to respond correctly.
>
> The economic opportunities of this system meant that suddenly, each of us had a "ticket," and created in each of us a longing to consume, like others who live in this country. It would be ridiculous to criticize today the purchase of a car or a color television—but these things inevitably condition us more and more—man is an

animal of custom. But should we not be concerned that our small children—not to speak of those born here, the famous "Chilicanos[2]," will know only this /reality/? We know that there is a solid ideological apparatus here, in which each aspect of the system aims to make man an individual being. Imagine what this means for our children—to know only the economic welfare and not the welfare that comes from human relations /community/. When you speak to people from here about these things they cannot understand: This country only knows how to buy and sell, it cannot break out of its mercantile mentality. We are trying to convey all of this to our children -but time passes and we, too, are changing, and we find ourselves less and less able to provide the valuable things. We are creating ties and dependencies here, it is impossible to predict how entrenched they are in us already. We will not know until the day we return to Chile definitely—*if* we return, something which used to be beyond any doubt! We also have to admit that political conflicts arose among ourselves and we did not know how to confront these problems in such a way that, instead of halting, we could resume solidarity action with our people.

Why are things changing with us? Do we have the right to forget definitely the reasons why we are here? We have suggested causes of change. The beast is huge but we have something called *consciousness* and we must resist to our last breath that the beast does not consume us. By changing our attitude towards the needs that prevail in Chile, and even permitting ourselves to no longer greet some of our fellow exiles, we have been depriving ourselves of the chance to entrench ourselves in Chile and to reinforce ourselves, giving the monster still better tools. We also deprive our children of a chance to grow up with our heritage. In the community today we notice a new desire emerging, to recover some of what has been lost. There is a deep dissatisfaction which invades all of us—despite all we have gained in economic welfare, something is *missing* in our lives—and we are discovering that that something is *Chile*. Chile will come close again, if we offer our solidary assistance to our country and our people. But this is a question of action and not wishful thinking, a question of concrete solidarity, stemming from our sacrifice. Let us not give up, let's not be defeated in our principles. That would be saying that /the ememy/ won and we would be turning ourselves into one of them."

Reaffirming the project

The article above reflects the theme of absorption that pervaded the community debate. The idea of change as betrayal was expressed in everyday talk as "*olvidarse a Chile*" (forgetting Chile). The American present had inevitably impinged on the exile project and challenged its construction. Realities formerly taken for granted were called into question and doubt. In such situations, as Aronoff (1980) points out, ideological statements become increasingly more important as they reassert, alter or replace definitions to achieve more congruence with changed conditions. The conflicts with ideology focused specifically on the relation of individual to collective interest, reflecting more private and individualized lives and reflected the conflict with changing class position and lifestyle. Ultimately, the conflict was between return and "absorption." Opinions voiced at meetings complained about the new individualism, the loss of commitment and of collective spirit. The political divisions had made unity of all exiles impossible and some had been marginalized or withdrawn. New materialist priorities of people in new roles and comfortable lives, who were forgetting their political commitments and history. "People in Chile are dying on the streets and we do nothing but talk; we have lost our concern for Chile and care only for our own comfortable lives here." The conflict was portrayed as a moral issue with political implications. More private and individualized lives threatened community and cultural identity, and hence their commitment to Chile. In the face of new economic opportunities, individuals were lured by the powerful capitalist system ("the Beast") threatening to absorb them. The political struggle, on the other hand, provided meaning, identity, and community. The cover of the newsletter quoted above, and every subsequent issue, carried the last words of President Allende, speaking "to the workers of my country" (chapter 2). The moral force of Allende's example, having faith that "my sacrifice will not be in vain, but serve, at least, as a moral lesson against felony, cowardice and treason..." was a compelling reminder of their obligations and their past. The mature politician, true to the last moment, had shown with "simple clarity and rigor where democratic Chileans should resume the struggle" (Skármeta, 1981:232)—had his sacrifice been in vain? Were they betraying his faith in them?

The Moment of Truth: the Return Issue

Return to Chile was a key element in the exile project. The issue defined exile as a temporary absence, as well as an exile's worth and moral commitment. A crucial moment arose when the first lists were issued by the Military

junta in Chile in 1982, giving the names of the 1,740 exiles who remained banned from Chile. Only a few names in the exile community appeared on the lists, so the majority were thus, in principle, authorized to return to Chile. This new scenario put their situation in sharp focus. At a crowded community meeting, the return issue evoked the painful dilemma for the exiles. While the legal barrier to the much-longed for reintegration in Chilean society was removed, there were other obstacles to return under the military regime. With the changes in Chilean society since their departure, the exiles were now increasingly marginalized, economically as well as politically. The major barrier had not be removed: the regime. A visiting Chilean gave an account of deplorable conditions of human rights violations, unemployment, wage and price levels at home that made life a struggle for survival. While the obligation and desire to return were reconfirmed by all speakers, the restraints were the main topic:

> "It is impossible not to love and miss our homeland—but this homeland is not providing for its people at this time. The truth is, for a working person there is no future. Pinochet claims to hold the future for the new generation in Chile and we know what that means. Here we have a job, we can provide for our children, they can go to school."

Exiles were painfully aware that the traditional bases of the working and middle classes were being eliminated in Chile. The economic policies of the new regime had dismantled a good deal of domestic industry and privatized large areas of the public sector. They were also increasingly marginalized from Chilean politics. Having been away for so long many felt they had little organic relation to the ongoing struggle:

> "To return today, under these circumstances, I would have to be a man of great political importance, someone who could make a real contribution to our struggle for Chile."

The question was not only one of when to return but also in what condition: "... to have something to offer our country, something to account for our absence."

Other sceptical voices challenged these economic and political concerns as "justifications" and referred to the influence of the U.S. system:

> "Many of us have forgotten about the fleas in the beds in Chile, have forgotten many things about Chile..." "The truth is, comrades, that we do not WANT to go back to Chile, to suffer the hunger and the misery that our people there are suffering today..."

But things were no longer so easy. The married children of exiles, while critical of U.S. society, were more firmly entrenched in the new country, through education and employment and more ambivalent about return. For the exile women in particular, these children and their families were creating ties in the host society. Nora complained,

> "My grandchildren are here, how could I leave them behind?"

Women seemed to prefer to stay if it meant keeping the family together. Family ties complicated the issue of return and spelled out the double loyalties of both men and women, with kin in both places. Moreover, few who were cleared for entry were prepared to simply leave. They had entered into financial and educational commitments which had to be completed. In recognition of the dilemma, the meeting agreed that return was a personal decision: "...nobody has more morality than anyone else to decide in this matter." Although still a "vital, national concern," return was no longer to be subject to the authority of political parties or open to reproach by fellow exiles. Nevertheless, even if return was postponed, the need to preserve the Chilean identity and pass on the political heritage to their children was stressed. Extended exile demanded continued solidarity with Chile.

> "There is no future in Chile at the moment, that's true, but we believe in a future, not only for Chile but for all of Latin America, and for the world. The main question for us as exiles now becomes 'How do we support our comrades fighting this struggle in Chile?'"

The consensus of the debate reasserted the political project and the goal of return, but redefined return as a long-term strategy, and might not come true for everyone. *Solidaridad con Chile,* and *no olvidarse a Chile*, were sufficiently broad to encompass the new conditions.

Accommodating change

Exiles attempted to restore a sense of continuity with ideological goals and obligations, to redefine the project without challenging its basic values. As Tapp (1988) has showed, changes in exile can be incorporated and explained in terms of the very ideological strategy itself. Buying a house in California is an example of change accommodated in such a way that the political goals were retained. Such a purchase had been unthinkable at first, and was later strongly criticized by the community as a desire to settle permanently. When the first exile arranged to buy his own house, the undertaking met with disapproval and suspicion. The financial commitment and hard work required

by the family, exiles feared, would involve them too deeply in the American system. The family in question, followed by a few others, argued that it made economical sense in an area with exploitative rental practices. More importantly, it was a sound economic investment in a long-term perspective, for a future life in Chile. Return home to the impoverished and heavily indebted country, with soaring unemployment figures, would clearly require considerable savings. As a result, the majority of families, except for the singles who lacked the financial strength of two incomes, eventually bought their own house. Mortgage payments exerted pressure on couples to bring in a steady monthly income. However, exiles claimed, when "the time comes," they would be able to follow the example set by the first family to buy a house, who had actually sold their house and were preparing to return to Chile.

The dilemma of continuing to remain faithful to political ideals while accommodating to the new realities led to a more pragmatic ideological stance with respect to lifestyle and social mobility. As with a house purchase, the idea of utilizing the opportunities available for economic investments and children's education were explained as part of a the long-strategy for return, aiming "to lead the best possible lives for the time that we are here." The hard-line, more dogmatic position initially taken, such as subordinating family and community interests to the collective political struggle was no longer tenable. The discrepancy was brought out, unwittingly, by a visiting political leader who claimed that:

> "A truly proletarian family, with a proletarian consciousness, will stay together—personal crises will be subordinated to the social struggle."

But in the exiles' experience, such ideas were difficult to uphold when all were equally exposed to the strains of family changes in exile. It was difficult to question someone's "correct ideology" and political authority because his children preferred speaking English or were experimenting with drugs. "Nobody had more morality than anyone else" to pass judgement. Exile was not only a political condition, but also increasingly recognized as "*humanidad herida*" (injured humanity), with a greater tolerance to the ideological shortcomings of their fellow exiles. Antonio expressed a critical evaluation of the first years, and that political ideals were no realistic guides to action in a very different context:

> "We were rigid, too dogmatic. We believed the revolutionary ideology to be the panacea of all problems in exile... we believed in our leader...but this is a different reality."

Nevertheless, the long-term strategy of return merely suspended the basic conflict and shifted the responsibility from the collective to the individual. While the ideological goals of continuity as an exile collectivity in temporary absence from *la patria* was reiterated in a variety of ways, individuals experienced that their lives were being irretrievably transformed. The very basis for collectively defining reality and action was eroding. The ambiguity of exile existence deepened. "*Que hacer con la vida?*" (what to do with life?) was an ongoing battle in most individuals' lives.

The Ambiguity of Exile

> "Exile necessarily involves the struggle against insanity, an effort not to alienate oneself from the fundamental values; and above all, a permanent decision to return to the lost land... (to be) reinserted as the missing piece in a historical jigsaw puzzle."
>
> Poli Délano[3]

The outwardly well-adjusted and materially secure everyday lives masked other, more problematic dimensions of exile, sometimes referred to as "existing, not living." Accounts of personal experience illustrate how the contradictions between the Chilean past and the American present were perceived and manifested in individuals' lives. Once firmly bracketed by the idea of return, exile was no longer a given endpoint, but extended into an undefined future. The idea of exile as a temporary absence after which "normal life" would be resumed in Chile was no longer tenable. With the new Constitution of 1980, the authoritarian system was further entrenched. In 1982, the community newsletter wrote, "It is very clear that the dictatorship will not fall tomorrow or the day after, and the road will be very long." At the same time, their own lives in exile were changing; children and grandchildren were challenging ideals of no-integration and return. The dilemma was not only a moral issue of community concern; it also entailed a personal struggle with agonizing questions about identity, about the meaning of the past and present lives.

Chile, the unfinished story
Antonio's case shows the long and sustained crisis that followed when the meaning and structure of exile was called into question and doubt. As legal restrictions to return to Chile were lifted for this family, they found that there were other and more disturbing barriers to resume their lives at home.

Antonio was a student from lower middle-class background. He had been arrested after the coup and spent one year in prison. After his release his parents feared for his life and arranged for him and his young family to leave for exile. The first five years were hard but uncomplicated. Antonio and his wife were confident about the future. The new environment even held a certain fascination for the young student of technology and he was excited about training in electronics. But the idea of settling down and adapting to the new life was alien to them,

> "It was so clear to us, beyond any doubt, that we were going to go back to Chile. Chile was like an unfinished business, we had to go back...The first five years we lived like that, with our eyes closed...waiting."

The turning point was their first visit to Chile. Up to then, exile had been perceived as highly temporary "...almost like a dream, something easily erased from our lives when we came back." Antonio was shocked to find that the country had changed, his friends had changed and so had he. The realization was painful, that life as once lived, could not be recuperated, and that return would be a long-term project. The realization coincided with a crisis within the political organization to which Antonio and his wife belonged. Conflict at highest leadership level forced militants of local groups to take sides. However Antonio and many others resigned, disaffected with the development.

The following two years were marked by disorientation and doubt. Trying to readjust their strategy to the new circumstances, the couple made a long-term plan to obtain an education, to prepare for the harsh economic realities at home. But Antonio could not put his heart into it, torn by questions about the meaning of Chile, about himself and the future.

> "It was like an obsession, I could not escape What to do with my life? What was Chile? Did I really want to go back? All these problems of one life exploded in me and I felt very alone...My life was something else, or somewhere else, but I could not define what kind of life I was looking for. What could I use as hope, what could support me in this struggle? My wife was losing meaning for me...

> her situation was changing as well. In Chile she had stayed home, taking care of the baby; now she started going to school and becoming more independent. It was terrible agony; I felt paralyzed by all the contradictions, without any hope or guidance, like being *muerte en vida*" (lit. "dead in life").

Antonio became ill and could not get out of bed for a long time, although no somatic disorder was found. They had two children at the time and the whole family was affected. Eventually his wife was taken ill as well. In retrospect, the crisis at least meant living "closer to reality" than before. Commenting on the self-deception of a life "in waiting," Antonio claimed,

> "it is a kind of insanity we (exiles) suffer, trying to cope with life in this society... we have lost touch with our roots, we are not living here. We try to escape this fact in many different ways, by working hard, collecting material things—but what if you have a cultural barrier to choosing these as your problem-solver? Some start drinking... In Chile we suffered other kinds of deprivations. Here we are deprived of life, we have cut our roots, forgetting what we have learned and who we are."

They were "terrible but extra-ordinary years... Everything I know about life, I learned in those two years." Antonio and his family were facing the fact that life in Chile, as it once was, was irretrievably lost. But having no meaningful attachment to the new society they were unable and unwilling to make a new life there. To them, authentic life could be lived only in Chile and they decided eventually to take the risk of returning, to reinsert themselves as "the missing pieces." Another two years of intense preparation, hard work and saving money, followed. However, whatever choice they made, it would entail great risks (*costar*). The motto of the fiesta at their departure summed up their dilemma "*Porque lloro si me quedo y me muero si me voy*" ("Because I cry if I stay and I die if I leave").

The Permanently Provisional

> Expatriation is "...an act of orphanage, leaving the victim with the yearning, the memory, the impotence, the affection for what is left behind... While prisoners are kept in a jail with walls, the exiles' cell is the space beyond their country's

> borders...the most painful of all is time: many years, few years, or... the rest of one's life?"
>
> (Aresti, 1988:71)

Moving away from certainty to areas of ambivalence and doubt, individuals found themselves very much alone. The disconnection from traditional structures of collectivity and authority that began with expulsion from Chile was reinforced by more socially independent lives in exile. Return was now "a personal decision" and not subsumed to party authority or community sanctions. While disassociation from the collective meant greater personal autonomy, sometimes welcomed, in particular by the women, it also entailed an absence of guidance and support. There were also other losses and separations in exile, such as divorce or separation from a political party, or even from the exile community. Those with few bonds of support in the present were particularly vulnerable.

Marcela was very young on arrival. She had been imprisoned as an active member of her party's youth organization after the military coup. As an outspoken woman in a male-dominated political context, she was soon alienated and withdrew to the margins of community life. Instead, Marcela oriented herself to "independent" life. She learned English and as an extrovert she acquired a broad range of contacts outside of the community and appeared to fit smoothly into Californian life. Pragmatic and self-reliant she learnt to manage a house, make economic investments, and drive a truck. Yet, to her, this was only superficial adjustment. "I live here to survive, *nada más*." She was careful not to sink any roots or make permanent ties in the new society. This was not only a deliberate strategy but a painful reality. She found it difficult to have close American friends or partners. Her experience was that "...only a Chilean man can understand my past and my pain." An intelligent and sensitive person, strikingly beautiful, she was also deeply troubled by her predicament. The forced separation from family ties at an early age had created a sense of abandonment, like "growing up as an orphan," with little to take its place.

Entering her house was like entering her past. Through colors, shapes and sounds, an overwhelming presence of Chilean political culture filled the rooms. Old photographs on all the walls, of family and female kin in Chile, her mother and her aunts, told their story. Struggling to define her own female role, she rejected the traditional role of a dependent Chilean woman but found few role models in support around her. Disaffected with male-dominated politics, she still defined herself as a political subject and

suffered a problem common to political women in reconciling new roles with traditional expectations (see Vásquez, 1982). As in most other Chilean homes, there was a large photo of the *Padre*. When he died they "felt deserted." The need of belonging, of a strong bond, conflicted with the struggle to maintain her independence, and not create ties in the American present. Like other exiles, who had left so many and lost so much, she avoided the pain of further separations.

Life in exile "has no *sabór* (flavor), it is like a flower, beautiful to look at, but with no fragrance." Marcela felt deprived of a vital part of her life; it was stolen time, in which her sacrifice for a political cause had been in vain, "all this suffering for what?" A young woman, with a passionate urge to live, she wanted to reclaim the life she had been deprived of. But she could not be certain that life was in Chile and not a thing of the past.

For Antonio, Marcela and many others, Chile remained an "unfinished story." Extended exile seemed to postpone life. But given the uncertainty surrounding return, many found themselves investing in alternative futures. The parallel strategies reflected a profound ambivalence. Like other families, Marcela bought a house in Chile and remitted monthly installments, as an investment for return. But she was also careful to promote a career, which was her basis of security in exile. When the ban on her re-entry to Chile was eventually lifted, she planned to go home for a three-months vacation. But this conflicted in time with a chance for promotion at work, and she decided to delay her visit, not wanting to risk forfeiting that security.

After a visit to Chile, Julio affirmed that his roots were there, but on a later occasion expressed his doubts:

> "I have nothing in Chile anymore. On my visit to Chile I felt somewhat of an outsider. But I know I cannot live here in California. I am not happy with my life here."

The ambivalence was also manifested in personal relationships. Some of the single or divorced exiles were looking for a permanent partner but personal life in exile became a long series of temporary and provisional relationships. For Julio, a serious prospective partner would have to share his plans to live in Chile sometime in the future.

The difficulty of the Chilean exiles in reconciling themselves to life in the U.S. must also be understood through the meaning of commitment and the paradox involved in accepting change and transcending the past.

"Aqui no se vive": The force of commitment

Identities are tied to time and place. Expulsion was an act of "orphanage" from the native place. Personal losses naturally focussed on that which most strongly had defined an exile's life in Chile. Political experience was an important component in the personal identity of many exiles, in particular militants and former militants.

A few exiles renounced the political past and the experiment of the *Unidad Popular* as naive and "utopian," while others glorified it and swore to remain "faithful until death." The majority, however, were struggling to find new positions, in the light of subsequent, and painful, experience. For all, the political events were an inescapable part of their personal history, and demanded some kind of response. The political commitment was not only an ideological and intellectual position, easily relinquished or redefined with changing personal circumstances. Commitment was about deep convictions incorporated, almost literally for the victims of violence, through lived experience. The years of the popular movement and the *Unidad Popular* was an extra-ordinary experience, and for many of its active members, involving the passion and fervour of participating in a historical event, building a new society. The movement and its cause defined what was real and what was contingent (Alberoni, 1984), it involved the total human being and, at the point of its defeat, great personal ordeals of suffering. As Santibañez, (1985:44-45) a Chilean poet and political exile describes this experience,

> "The Allende years opened the eyes of many of us and taught us to value ourselves as individuals and as a people. We were to be the New Men...(This) made it impossible to go backwards: having been involved in a revolutionary process, along with thousands upon thousands of other Chileans. And afterwards, you can never view things with the same eyes."

But it was difficult to live that commitment in everyday life. Political practice, the expression of commitment, was restricted to a miniature world of solidarity work and reflected their marginalization from the changing world of Chilean politics. Political practice had been the source of structure and meaning for these Chileans. Life in exile was a secure but dull and uneventful existence, contrasting sharply with the emergency of their politicized lives in Chile.

In this perspective, concerns with material security were a means to compensate for other, profound losses. As one of the men put it, "getting

the dollars together, nothing else—that's what my life is all about here." Marcela was "going for the money now; it also keeps me busy and holds depression at bay." But such projects were also long-range saving strategies for return. Juan rejected the chance of a promotion at work which would have meant higher status but less money because there was no compensation for overtime. The exiles were painfully aware that there were clearly no political or economic positions for these skilled workers to return to in Chile. As noted, the economic policies of the new regime had dismantled not only union and party structures of the left, but also a good deal of domestic industry and the public sector. Return demanded substantial capital, but that involved a more intense commitment to the present.

The sacrifice of women with little or no personal role in party politics had been a different one, and suggests why they were more easily reconciled with life in exile. Margarita's sacrifice in leaving her world of family and friends, was for the purpose of saving the lives of her husband and children from a repressive regime. Her loss and fears had centered on her family in Chile and her children in exile. Contrary to her misgivings, her children had done well in the U.S. and the parents were proud and pleased. Three children were now married to other Chileans, the fourth was engaged to a refugee from El Salvador. Now that the grandchildren were coming, she was content to be where her family was. This did not mean she would not rather that they could all be in Chile, where most of her kin remained. But the sacrifice she made for her children when leaving Chile had not been in vain. The integration of the children in the U.S., however, made the dilemma about the future more complex. Margarita and her husband, nearing retirement and a pension from their U.S. employer, hoped to divide their time in the future between Chile and the U.S., should their children and their families decide to stay.

Her husband, Eduardo, had a more difficult time coming to terms with his situation. His children's achievements were some recompense for his own losses, but he still found it difficult to adjust to his secure but rather tedious existence. Political activity had pervaded his life, especially the years before the coup. For Eduardo and his *compañeros*, politics had made work roles meaningful and dignified, a source of status and identity. Through political positions in local union politics, Eduardo, Ramon, Alberto and others were known and respected. Here, as assembly worker or night cleaner, they were just another face in the vast immigrant work force. In exile, life had lost a vital purpose. "*Aqui no se vive*...(One is not alive here). If there is nothing to die for, there is not much to live for either." Severing the

connection to the movement and the political struggle, life had been deprived of a meaningful aim. For this struggle he had lived and risked his life, suffered terrible tortures and concentration camps. In view of the overwhelming experience of being part of a social movement, renouncing commitment holds particular anguish,

> "Once the ideal has been lost, one is nothing anymore. The peace one finds is not peace but... death... the total loss...the abandonment of what was more important than anything else and thus gave value to all actions and all things." (Alberoni, 1984:142).

Redefining those values in the light of political defeat, questioning convictions for which they had suffered and nearly died, was unsettling and painful. If their project had been utopian, a dream, then the heroes were not heroes but fools; and everyone's personal sacrifice and suffering had been in vain, had come to nothing. At the same time, giving up their commitment and renouncing their role in the struggle would also be a victory for the regime.

Survivors' dilemma: Atoning for life

For these survivors of political violence, the past was inescapably present. Personal ordeals of repression and violence remained a live reality, existing in a complex relation to political identity and commitments. After many years, the past still intruded, although not as frequently, through thoughts, dreams or flash-backs or, more indirectly, as a diffuse feeling of loss of vitality. The experience illustrates well the enduring and paradoxical relation between a superior power and the victims of concentrated attacks of violence.

The primary concerns on arrival had been with basic necessities, securing an existence for themselves in an alien environment. Traumatic experiences were not much attended to, but often coped with through intense involvement in the practicalities of settlement. Since the day she arrived in the U.S., Elenea had worked incessantly and hard, to create a secure world for herself and her daughter. She defiantly defined herself as a "survivor, not a victim" of the military intervention. Her strong will to survive had saved her once before, in the torture center, and she was determined to make it again. She immediately began learning English and started working. She also did volunteer work in the church office at Sacred Heart. For four years she took evening classes at an adult education center, sometimes with her daughter asleep on her lap. Security was an important aspect of survival, both physical and mental, in order to ward off depression and grief. After

many years of hard work, Elena had reached a good position in the local administration that she was proud of. She had managed to buy her own condominium and her daughter was preparing to enter college. Outwardly she was successful and well adjusted in the U.S. As a consistent and involved participant in Chilean solidarity and community events, she was highly respected by all in the community, known as a strong independent and committed woman. All her close personal relations were in the community. And yet, she defined her life as "not really living," deprived of a "sense of life, the ability to be happy." She had resisted the brutal and unpredictable attacks on her person suffered in prison (chapter 2). They could not break her and she did not talk. But something vital had been taken away with that experience,

> "...like an energy for life. I used to be able to enjoy little things in life, such as putting up new curtains in my house; I seem to have lost the ability to be happy."

She sometimes woke up at night, although not as frequently any more, reliving the dark and deadly silence of that night in the Stadium (chapter 2). There was a lingering silence in her life that she could not seem to fill again.

Torture is a profound assault on the body and mind, a violation of the person, physically and socially. As Turner (1989) points out, those who survive such a concentrated attack are inevitably changed[4]. The experience may affect a person's willingness to form close human bonds, and create concerns with security and control in subsequent years. This dissonance between outer secure lives and a troubled internal reality, remains an ambiguous realm of existence in many victims' lives. The experience may remain for many years, if repressed, perhaps a lifetime, along with outwardly well-adjusted lives.[5] As studies of Polish Holocaust victims in England showed, the experience can surface again much later in life, often in response to new losses, such as the death of a family member, divorce, adult children leaving home or retirement (Jagucki, 1983) or in response to events in the home country some forty years later (Hitch and Rack, 1980). The effects have been described as "a form of bondage through which the torturer ensures that his interventions will last over time" (Schlapobersky and Bamber, 1988:210).

Personal experiences of this kind were mostly suppressed in public discourse or concealed by the rhetoric of political heroicism. Yet, their continuing presence was suggested by young men whose hair had grown totally grey, persistent bodily aches and pains with no detectable somatic

disorders, and erupting pent-up anger that sometimes made responsible and loving husbands and fathers do "crazy things." While women could have breakdowns (and did), these reactions were less acceptable for men. The political discourse, with images of resistance fighters and invincible survivors, tended to deny such effects, as a way of disowning defeat. To acknowledge the persistance of trauma would be to acknowledge the continuing bondage of repression and the victory of their perpetrators. The result was a conspiracy of silence. Although sometimes amusing stories were told amongst the men about the absurdities of prison life, they never touched on the more painful personal experiences. However, to be alive and happy; to leave behind the painful ordeal, was a form of betrayal to the many others who died or disappeared, and a responsibility for those who were left behind and did not escape. Survival guilt is a wellknown affliction for those who lived through disasters while others died[6]. Juan confessed, "I felt terribly guilty to be alive; there were so many dead." Elena felt that she had to atone for being alive and secure in exile, and struggled to accept her "right to be happy here." But this was difficult, as exile compounded the sense of rupture from vital sources of life. Pointing to her Christmas tree, she explained, "that is how I live here, like a tree, without my roots. They remain in Chile." In the clear separation between the Chilean past and the new present, "...the dead act as fiscal prosecutors denouncing the dangers of integration." (ALAM, n.d.:10)

The Exile's Paradox: The torment of remembering, the fear of forgetting

The conflict of continuity and change, ideology and social experience in exile suggests a problematic paradox in which, either way, the exiles seemed to lose. Living uprooted, in a past that no longer existed, would imply alienation. Leaving the past behind would be a betrayal of social commitment. Both held the threat of disconnection from social community, symbolically represented as a form of social death. The political discourse enhanced this dilemma. While militants were dissuaded from acknowledging such traumas, they were also reminded about their responsibility to remember their dead and not betray their commitments.

There is obvious torment in remembering past ordeals. A common and recurring theme of dreams was that of persecution, often the act of being detained. One exile expressed a fear that a visit to Chile would trigger such personal reactions. Another found that his dreams of detention disappeared

after his ban on re-entry was lifted and he could finally go back for a visit. Not to transcend their painful past prevented them from coming back to a full life *(una vida plena)* or in Marcela's words "To feel alive again, and in control of my life," to create new personal bonds. It might entail alienation, remaining "disappeared" on a symbolic level, continued separation from normal life. At the same time, to forget the ordeals of the past, to seek personal happiness and opt out of the struggle, was to betray the movement and their project of annihilation. Transcending the past was to betray one's commitment. Portraying exile as an "unjust castigation," Roa Bastos warned, "if the exile acquiesces in this arbitrary condemnation, even if only psychologically, he plays into the hands of the oppressor and concedes victory to him." (Roa Bastos 1987:215).

Exile as extended absence: Social death

The paradox was compounded by the dilemma of existence in exile. *Olvidarse a Chile* (forgetting Chile), to integrate in the U.S., meant betraying the commitment to return. Juan's obligation was no longer to a political party but went beyond that, "It would be difficult to look in the mirror and say 'you were not able to return.'" The exile's poem above expresses the same conflict. It depicts the lure of life in California ("like the skin of someone you could love") held against the death of his comrades in Santiago's streets. Exile appeared to harbor an irreconcilable duality, in which the preserving and the relinquishing of one's political past was equally problematic.

The concern of exiles was not only that of forgetting, but also being forgotten. Estrangement from Chile as the years passed was another common theme in exiles' dreams. Discontinuity as a social person entailed a personal crisis. Associated with sadness and loss, it was often represented by images of death. Julio often dreamt of returning to his hometown. He described how, in the dream, he felt great joy at seeing again the familiar places, the streets of his *barrio* and the faces of his loved ones. As he rushed to greet them, he found that nobody recognized him; nobody knew who he was. He found himself a stranger in his own country and the dream left him with a feeling that he never existed. Gaston had a similar dream. Returning home, he found that everything had changed: The colors, the names of the streets—the wellknown had become alien. Laura, like Margarita, was a woman fairly reconciled with the idea of staying in the new country, because it meant she could be close to her children and grandchildren. But for her, too, estrangement from Chile was associated with sadness and loss, a feeling that she was changing into a different person. She kept having an

unsettling dream in which she was observing, from a distance, her own deathbed. All her family and kin were gathered around her, they were all crying. She was dying, but she had no physical pain, she was simply feeling extremely sad. Feelings of loss and alienation as described in Délano's novel could sometimes intensify "...until you would ask yourself if this journey without visible return was not, in fact, a death" (1977:86).

Defining new and meaningful lives is a particular dilemma in situations of forced estrangement. With the conflict between the "here" (el acá) and "there" (el allá) unresolved, life threatened to become permanently provisional. The dilemma was an unwillingness or inability to live fully in the American present for fear of forfeiting a possible life in Chile. The danger, as perceived by Antonio, Marcela and others, was that of becoming doubly estranged, permanent *desterrados* or *náufragos*.[7] Having severed close social bonds in Chile without creating new ones in the U.S., they might discover that life, a "full life" had been forfeited in both worlds[8]. Extended exile held the threat of permanent loss and estrangement. The experience as described in Délano's novel on exile could sometimes intensify "...until you would ask yourself if this journey without visible return was not, in fact, a death" (1977:86). As with Elena's christmas-tree which could not survive forever, uprooted, the old man in Solana's film affirmed,

> "Exile is absence; extended absence is death..." "*Hay que volver o morir!*" (You have to return or die!)

Notes to Chapter 8

[1] "...and in Santiago, your comrades die in the streets, wrapped in blood, fumes and shame." Vera (1977:24).

[2] Conflating *Chicanos* and *Chilenos*.

[3] Exiled Chilean writer. In Epple (1981:212-3; my transl.)

[4] Patterns of response have been described in the psychological literature. The best known is probably PTSD, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, (DSM-IIIR; American Psychiatric Association, 1987). For a review of this literature see also Baker (1983).

[5] Studies of survivors (Holocaust victims, refugees, prisoners) indicate that traumas may coexist with sucessful occupational and social life (sometimes as forms of overcompensation). However, superficial adjustment makes these individuals more vulnerable to breakdown in middle and old age (Baker, 1983).

[6] Keller (1975) observed continuing survival guilt in refugees twenty years after the event.

[7] This danger is expressed in the image used in the title of Vásquez' study "*Exils latino-americains: La malediction d'Ulysse*" (1988).

[8] This may be similar to a growing sense of alienation that another exile, elsewhere, expressed as "feeling more foreign now (years later) than when I arrived" in Avellaneda (1981:83).

9. THE BATTLE OF LIFE AND DEATH

The 11th of September 1973, the day of the military coup in Chile, is commemorated annually by the exile community in the form of a Catholic mass. This date is a summarizing symbol for the Chilean opposition against the regime. The commemoration takes different forms responding to variations in local context of different exile communities, but draws essentially on a common symbolic universe expressed through a set of key symbols. This symbolic universe will be explored through an analysis of the themes and forms of expression in the context of the political process in Chilean society. The two masses in the local community presented subsequently are set within this wider symbolic framework. However, the ritual takes on partly new and expanded meanings and functions in exile as it addresses and attempts to resolve the multiple contradictions of exile existence.

Rituals are seen as collective events that bracket some aspect of social life, often in dramatic form, for special symbolic commentary, (*e.g.* Aronoff, 1980). As such, these dramas provide an opportunity to examine how the actors portray the problematic reality in ritual focus and how they see what their role is (or should) be in it. Rituals also have a task to accomplish, they are transformative, aiming to resolve contradictions and inconsistencies in meaning and action. In Turner's well-known definition, rituals have "reference to beliefs in mystical beings or powers" (1967:19). A wider definition of ritual used here, suggested by Moore and Myerhoff (1977), include secular as well as religious enactments. Any ritual can be seen as a symbolic system with its own internal logic, and political rituals may be based on unquestionable tenets as sacred as that of any religion. Rituals, then, can be seen as more or less sacred, their unquestionability a matter of degree rather than kind. In the present case, the act utilizes both a religious and a political doctrinal framework. The "sacred tenets" on which ritual efficacy rests are thus drawn from two, in this case, potentially conflicting models for meaning and action. The analysis examines how these models can interact and to what effect.

The analysis of the symbolism of Chilean opposition also draws attention to a more general problem, *i.e.* the relation between ritual and social process. The dynamic interaction between symbolic performance and political process here has two dimensions. First, as a relation of mutual change, in which "rite is both transforming and transformed" (Kapferer, 1979:14). The politicized mass aims to transform the social and political order in which it emerges, while the liturgical form and content are modified in response to social changes. Second, with a focus on the exile context, the analysis examines the shift in meaning and function as symbolic action is "transposed" in a different context.

The Symbolic Universe of Chilean Politics

The commemoration of the 11th September reflects a tradition of religious symbolism in Chilean political discourse since the 1960s, but with new and acute functions in a society of political repression. The mass is one of many other symbolic strategies to make political statements that may be hazardous outside of the religious context. The development of the forms and themes of political discourse in contemporary Chilean politics also reflects changing relations and new roles of the Catholic church, the military and the left as political actors on the Chilean arena.

The Catholic Church and Social Change

While its traditional position was a close connection to the interests of the Conservative party and the Chilean oligarchy, the church in Chile responded to changing social circumstances in the 1950s and 1960s, moving towards the political center (Christian Democratic Party) and Christian humanism. Overall, social change and politicization in Latin America saw a new social orientation of the Catholic church in these countries, with a commitment to the poor and to social justice (Smith, 1982). The changes embraced the internal process of renovation of the church, as well. The Chilean church responded to the reforms emanating from the II Vatican Council in 1965 and adopted the reformed liturgy to bring religion and the Church closer to the lived experience of its millions of faithful on the Latin American Continent (Verheul, 1969). The reform has meant a greater emphasis on popular participation and less elitist administration of mass, an increased commitment to bridge the gap between religion and the everyday life of the believers. "Solidarity" and "community" are emphasized in the modern theology as new models for action.

However, the Chilean church has never been a monolithic institution. In terms of theological and political orientation one can distinguish between the official church, or the ecclesiastical hierarchy representing the Vatican and the Chilean oligarchy, and the local-level clergy representing more radical political interests and popular religious forms. The political polarization of the 1960s also saw the growth of radical theological currents in Latin America, known as liberation theology, affirming liberation as the main principle of religiousity. Among the revolutionary left, the importance of the religious factor in revolutionary struggles was increasingly recognized. The so-called rebel clergy, the Catholic grassroots and ordinary religious people who make up the overwhelming majority of the Latin American population are not easily disregarded in processes of social change.[1] The potential conflict in liberation theology between Christian and Marxist doctrines has required adjustments and reinterpretations on both sides.[2] In their strategic alliances with Christians, Marxists have assigned religious beliefs as belonging to man's personal sphere. More often, the affinity between the original ideals of early Christianity and the most general norms of Marxism and the socialist way of life is emphasized. Both are seen as diametrically opposed to the values of capitalist society. "Logically, a religious position or theory that seeks out the best in the history of Christianity contradicts the interests of imperialism" (Fidel Castro in Betto, 1985:247). Nevertheless, liberation theology has been rejected by the official church and the Vatican as subversive, "considering (Marxism) incompatible with Christian faith" (Boff and Boff, 1986:68), suspect in terms of orthodoxy and ecclesiastics.

During the *Unidad Popular* period, the Chilean left made considerable gains among active Catholics (Smith, *op.cit.*) and the socialist program was supported by movements such as "Christians for Socialism." These groups advocated the adoption of Marxist concepts, such as class struggle, as a tool for theological analysis. The relation between the official church and the *Unidad Popular* government was one of mutual tolerance, until shortly before the coup. Citing infiltration of Marxism into religious doctrine, the Chilean bishops withdrew their support and thus contributed to the fall of the government (Mella, 1986).

The Church and the Military regime

Until 1973, neither the Catholic church nor the military had played any direct or sustained role in the political and economic affairs in Chile. As traditional allies in supporting the dominant classes and securing religious legitimation for the State, the two appeared in the 1980's as opponents on

the political arena and as contenders for moral authority. The military regime has aimed to impose a radically different economic and political order, with a profound impact on Chilean society. Lacking popular as well as constitutional support, the transformation has required means of violent coercion, significant for understanding the forms and themes of the opposition. The result is a militarized neo-liberalism, sometimes referred to as the Authoritarian State (*e.g.* Vidal, 1982). Initially supporting the military coup, the church has gradually distanced itself from its former ally. As repression reached the official church and its political ally, the Christian Democratic Party, the former moved to withdraw legitimacy from the regime, speaking out against the violation of human rights and growing poverty. With the pastoral letter of March 1977, the church demanded a return to a constitutional and democratic order. The ruling military junta, in turn, has consistently rejected the traditional authority of the church as moderator in social and political conflict, and its role as the moral reserve of the nation (Mella, *op. cit.*). The regime has assigned the church no influence other than tasks intended to legitimize the policies of the regime itself (Chacon and Lagos, 1986). The reformed and popularized version of the Catholic liturgy adopted by the church is rejected by the military. There are signs of a growing Protestant and anti-Catholic movement within the military (*Misión Evangelica Uniformada*) which appears to take over what Chacon and Lagos term "the principal function of religion for the military and the regime: to reproduce and legitimize the military model of thought and action, *el ser militar*" (*ibid.*:38, my transl.).

Thus, the Catholic church has emerged in a new role. With its institutional and symbolic resources, the church has become a vital component for the opposition and protection in a repressive situation.[3] The political opposition thus represents a broad and dynamic spectrum of political and religious interests from the center to the far left, including both revolutionary and more reformist ideologies.

Religious models in Chilean political discourse

Both militarism and religion have been pervasive influences on political culture in Chile and have served as frequent symbolic models in political discourse. Since the political polarization of the 1960s, there has been a growing tendency in national political discourse to rely on religious models of a specific kind. Chacon and Lagos (*op. cit.*) point to the millenarian,

apocalyptic symbolism used to depict the power struggle as a confrontation between cosmic forces, Good and Evil, as mutually exclusive and final orders to salvage the nation, the outcome of which is given in military terms of total triumph or defeat. The political discourse thus acquires a marked tone of belligerence of a clearly religious character. The struggle becomes a struggle for the Truth in which the strong leader is essential to reveal this truth and fulfill the promise of a final solution.[4] However, this discourse has served different political interests and ideologies since the 1960s. These interests have provided the context in which the symbols used have received their specific meaning and efficacy. The Frei (Christian Democratic) government's "Revolution in Freedom" in 1964 and Allende's "The Chilean Road to Socialism" in 1970 and the present military regime have all had very different political solutions to "salvage" Chilean society. In the sharp polarization between military and opposition in the 1980s, however, the apocalyptic feature is both more pervasive and obvious.

Drawing on essentially the same source or religious idiom in their political discourse, the regime and the opposition today nevertheless project markedly different "divine" orders: one authoritarian, "deformed apocalypse" (Chacon & Lagos *op. cit.*), the other utopian-liberationist and egalitarian. Considering that one holds power and the other opposes it, the distinction made by Leach (1983) between orthodox and subversive religious models as related to different socio-political contexts and aims, is useful. One serves to support the legitimacy of the existing hierarchical political authority, the other to expose its illegitimacy and justify rebellion against it by the underpriviliged. The latter "...is a creed for those who *feel* themselves to be deprived;" ...it is a "movement of protest against rulers who claim to exercise authority by divine right rather than as representatives of the General Will" (*ibid.*:71-72). Although as opponents, they attack with words rather than deeds, they are regarded as a threat to the legitimate forces of law and order, and persecution and martyrdoom are standard components of these movements. The liberationist model applies most clearly to the revolutionary clergy and grass roots movements embracing theology of liberation in alliance with the revolutionary left, while the official church and the parties of the center-left take a more ambiguous position. Liberation theology often refers to the ideals of early Christianity, and purport that the Gospel appealed to the oppressed and disinherited and was directed against injustice. Their cosmology also differs from that of the established religion. They depict essentially a non-hierarchical order, one that allows for popular participation, a more directly approachable God, and the

emphasis on the affinity of Christ to common man. The rulers are depicted as anti-Christ. In the cosmology of the rulers, in contrast, the secular power hierarchy acts as mediator to the source of divine power. In the discourse of the Chilean military regime the tendency has been to depict General Pinochet as a messianistic messenger and mediator to God.[5] Thus, the modes and functions of the present political discourse must be understood in relation to its specific political context. Such discourse can serve to defend an existing social order or be a strategy for overthrowing it.[6]

The Authoritarian State and the problem of legitimacy

The military's usurpation of power and the coercive imposition of a new social order made legitimacy a central problem. The new regime invoked the principle of national security which stressed the moral necessity of its intervention. In 1980, the regime also sought to secure its legalistic basis of government through the adoption of a new Constitution.

The *Doctrine of National Security* assigns power and moral force to the State, required in a situation the regime claims to be a state of total war between two irreconcilable powers. This war is fundamentally staged between Western civilization and international Communism. In this conflict, the military is depicted as the savior of the Chilean nation from Marxist-Communist evils and the defenders of Christian values and Western civilization, against atheism and materialism (Vidal, 1982). Thus, the regime appeals to national unity under the sole direction of the military. Like heroes in a national epic, they establish a new cosmic order, destroying the foes of true humanity. By reference to a higher, other-worldly power, the coup is characterized as an act of salvation, a "divine intervention" into a process which was threatening to destroy Christian civilization (Mella, 1986). For instance, General Pinochet, on the 13th anniversary celebration of his installation as Commander in Chief and Head of the military junta (one month after the coup in 1973) describes himself as "heaven-sent" by virtue of which any institution that does not recognize his protection (*égida*) commits treason against religious faith and the true way revealed through his person. The mission of the Armed Forces and Order, according to General Pinochet[7], is "a sublime mission through Divine Providence." The political project he is directing encompasses patriotic loyalty, commitment to a solid and protected modern democracy, liberty and a new role for the military institutions in this "compelling and uncontrollable mystery." (*ibid*:52, my transl.)

The Military hold their own annual commemoration mass for the 11th of September. However, this is a mass of thanksgiving (*Misa de accion de*

gracias). On this occasion, at the Military Academy in Santiago in 1985, the Military vicar general, José Matte, said:

> "Twelve years ago the rosary started turning incessantly and Mary made a miracle: Chile's second independence." (Chacon & Lagos, *op cit*:71, my transl.).

On the same occasion the following year, Matte described the military's overthrow of the *Unidad Popular*:

> "...the situation in Chile seemed to bring us to destruction and death. It was the Armed Forces and the *Carabineros*, fulfilling their pledge to their country, who took up the struggle for Chile. In this blessed country, the biblical struggle was repeated in which the young David conquered the giant and powerful Goliat" (*ibid*:72, my transl.)

The message of this messianistic discourse is that the Military alone can save the nation. Only they have the spiritual strength to recognize the crucial war confronting humanity and the only viable organizational model to fight it (Mella, *op.cit.*).

Symbolic strategies of opposition

In the discourse of the opposition, this conflict between two irreconcilable powers and mutually exclusive orders is that between Democracy and Dictatorship. This contrast is expressed through the symbolic opposition between Life and Death. Reporting on the violent persecution of land squatters in Santiago, an opposition magazine wrote "These poor were offering their only possession, their lives, as gifts of martyrs (*ofrendas martirial)*, for the advance of the forces of Good against the forces of Death." (Escobar, 1986:32). This discourse has developed in the context of censorship and extremely restricted space for political articulation. Chile under military rule has seen an entirely new social category emerge, "*detenido desaparecido*," referring to the large numbers of disappeared persons.

The open and large-scale violence of the first years has been followed by more indirect and selective attacks against members of the opposition or the population at large. Arbitary nightly attacks on *poblaciones* or shanty-towns are part of a strategy to create fear and self-censorship among the population. The regime thereby "disciplines" actual and potential opposition at a minimum of economic cost while maintaining an image of normalcy. For those affected, the occurences constitute a field of lived experience that is easily associated with notions of *death*.

For the opposition as a whole, the regime lacks a constitutional as well as a moral basis of power. Their messages aim to expose the illegitimacy and mobilize for change. With problems of visibility and with the risks involved in openly challenging the regime, the church and religious symbolism provide an idiom and sacred space for political communication. The church context and the compelling quality of religious forms and communication may also hold specific efficacy, especially with the reformed, more populist Catholic mass liturgy. Inhabitants of the shantytown *Población La Legua* in Santiago commented on their attendance at Mass and what they called "their use of the church space" (*el espacio de la iglesia*) for political protests:

> "It is the only space we have to express ourselves. And it is such a rich/fulfilling one, with a very emotional spirit. It makes a deep impression, the ambience and the commitment."[8]

Eucharist masses, pilgrimages and funeral acts are examples of religious rituals which serve such political functions in Chile in the 1980s. By reference to a higher divine order of power and justice, they can depict an alternative political order and lend it a degree of what Rappaport (1971) calls "certification."

Political postulates and moral imperatives can also be effectively dramatised by the symbolic connection with death (Eastmond, 1988a). The political efficacy of the association with existential concerns has been pointed out by Cohen (1979). As a universal and perennial problem, death is essentially ambiguous, not being given to immediate scrutiny. Moreover, efficacious political symbols are those which are overtly non-political. Existential and political themes can therefore be effectively fused and act as an impelling force that moves people "from the inside" in sharp contrast to rational and contractual political relations. In a ritual context, especially, collective formal behavior invokes a sense of unison, and dramatic techniques add to the persuasive quality. In societies where brutal force is used to suppress political opposition, existence also takes on a more direct political significance. Victims manifest existing power relations and often become important symbolic figures or martyrs in the struggle. The eucharist form of commemoration as a form used by the Chilean opposition further underlines the theme of suffering, victimization and death protested.

The ambiguity of existential themes is also a crucial component in political manifestations outside of a church context, such as those of the *Agrupación de Familiares Detenidos Desaparecidos* (Association of Relatives of The Disappeared) described by Vidal (1982). They rely largely on ritual

formalization and highly disciplined performance style. The efficacy characteristic of these types of events (and perhaps of all forms of civil disobedience) lies in the ambiguous relationship between overt and covert messages and in the challenge inherent in the performance itself. First, the explicit discourse is overtly neutral (such as the right to life, and to the reunion of lost family members). The implicit message, on the other hand, is the need to expose and change the existing order and implies a call for collective action. There is a fine balance to be struck between the levels of communication that reveals a basic problem in these kinds of ritual. It consists of retaining a high degree of multivocality in symbolic form to handle the dangerous and controversial and at the same time communicating clearly and rapidly oppositional messages and calls for action. Secondly, the very performance itself constitutes a conscious contradiction that provides specific efficacy. Performance entails exposure to the threat of intervention or reprisal. However, if such intervention occurs, it only serves to confirm the validity of the protest. If not, the act can communicate undisrupted its political message.

Acts carried out by the *Agrupación* involve chaining themselves to the House of Congress (closed by the military regime) or appearing regularly once a week outside the Ministry of Justice to demand information about their disappeared family members. The majority are women who carry photographs of their disappeared husbands, brothers and sons pinned to their chests. The actors are appealing to their moral right as citizens to know the truth about their loved ones and to the government's obligation to respond, by peacefully occupying a public space. Implicitly, however, the act symbolically condenses public space, persons, and performance into a single event that sums up the national condition under the authoritarian regime. The lack of response to repeated demands for truth and for the life of the disappeared, and the frequent police interventions invoke the need for a return to justice and human rights.

The grief of the bereaved members of the group and their sacrifice of personal security in challenging the regime, which makes them potential martyrs, are vital parts of the symbolic process. Described by the group themselves in such positive terms as "*Dar la Vida por la Vida*" (to give life for life, or to risk one's life to recuperate the life of the lost one), their acts aim to transform grief over death into a celebration of life. The *Agrupación,* like the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentine is composed largely of women, and the symbolic connection to women as mothers and life-givers further underscores their message. Moreover, as explained by a member of

the group, marking its close association with the Chilean Communist Party, their motto also refers to "the struggle against fascism,"*i.e.* to risk life for a return to democracy.

The same symbolic conversion, with its existential and political connotations, appears in other kinds of acts arranged by the opposition. The *Romería* (pilgrimage) to Lonquén in 1978 described by Vidal (*op.cit.*) was undertaken at the revelation of a secret mass grave at the remote site of abandoned kilns, found to contain the remains of disappeared members of the opposition. At the eucharist mass held at the site, the kilns, as an index of violent death, were integrated into the eucharist symbolism of the triumph of life. As the officant, the *Vicario* of Santiago, said in his homily, the kilns were transformed into sacred space, one that revealed the divine plan of resurrection. Thus, the commemoration of the victims of violent death was converted into a celebration of Life. The fusion of the eucharistic model with the revolutionary credo was brought out by the tacit presence of the Communist Party. Members of the PC presented a Neruda poem, a permanent inscription at the site (in Vidal, 1982:115, my transl.).

> "Nobody knows where the assassins buried these bodies
> but they will come back
> Out of the earth
> to reclaim the victimized blood
> in the resurrection of the people."[9]

The day of public protest in Santiago in 1985 entitled *Jornada por la Vida* ("A day for Life") was called by the Catholic leadership in Santiago and the Trade Union Movement to protest the assassination of three trade union leaders and members of the Communist Party. Again, the sanctity of Life, in all its political connotations, was the central theme, expressed in different ways. Memorials were held in cemetaries and at the gravesides of victims. At public gatherings the song associated with the political opposition, Violeta Parra's "*Gracias a la Vida*" (lit. "Thanks to Life," see Eastmond, 1988a), was sung and lighted candles lined the streets of many parts of the city. Repeated chants called out the names of victims, invoking their presence, "now and always," thereby defying their death and, by implication, the regime that caused them.

The regime is represented as a system associated with death and the violation of life, both on the level of ideology and of action. In a symbolic analysis of the ideology underlying the doctrine of National Security, Vidal (*op.cit.*) identifies a matrix of metaphors that associate with or promote

death. They concern primarily conceptions of human nature and society and are linked to the system of neoliberalism introduced in Chile. In the ideology of that system, the true expression of freedom is in the actions of the individual on the market, without State intervention. Social order is seen to arise spontaneously from such individual actions. Political liberty derives from such economic liberty only once the system is secured. Because of the continuing state of war, a "protected" democracy and market are still required. As noted above, the basic premise of the Doctrine is the idea of total war against World Communism. The supporters of this ideology are therefore traitors who have not only waived their rights as citizens but also as human beings. The military alone have the consciousness and the moral power to protect the nation and humanity, a discourse which projects an image of omnipotence, divine mission, and necessary subordination. Thus the military authority is the source of all Justice, and the interpreter of the National Spirit. In this authoritarian perspective, humans are objectified, reduced to their material representation, *i.e.* the *body*, and the population makes up a mass of bodies lacking in consciousness or, in the case of those aligned with the enemy, in loyalty. This reduction of human beings to their bodily representation lies at the basis of the physical violations, expressed for instance in the relation of torturer to victim. The doctrine also negates *community*, the free expression of human activity in its social dimension and the expression of vitality through pluralism, dissonance, and the mobilization of different interest groups. A "protected" democracy, on the other hand, requiring stability, control and subordination, is, as interpreted by the opposition, a form of violation of the *social body*, Life in its social dimension.

Against this symbolic domain of Death, the opposition affirms a domain of Life, in its varying expressions. They depict a world view and an ethic contrasting to that of the authoritarian doctrine. The oppositional discourse posits a dynamic and vital society based on respect for human rights against that of violation, truth against disinformation, popular participation and community against the "protected" democracy and individualism. Forming part of this opposition, the Catholic church rejects the Doctrine of National Security and its claim to divine legitimation by postulating the superiority of another moral and divine order: The sanctity of life in its spiritual, corporal and social dimensions. Theirs is a God of Life, through Christ, and the mission of the church is "a mission for Life" against the false gods of death. (Pastoral Orientations 82-89, Church of Santiago, 1986, my transl.) The military government has escalated the levels of violence, terror, misery,

humiliation and death. Any government that attacks life, attacks the God of Life and has no moral legitimacy (*ibid.*). At the same time, the Communist Party's call by fly leaflets for mass mobilization for national protest were phrased "To Defend Life" and the protests scrawled on city walls conveyed the same message, "*Por La Vida!.*"

Life and Death as Key Symbols

As summarizing symbols (Ortner, 1973) *Life* and *Death* compound a complex system of ideas. They express in an undifferentiated but emotionally powerful way the conflict between two systems or social orders. The message is that Life is to Death as Democracy is to Dictatorship, and implies a strategy for action. As overtly neutral and ambiguous, these metaphors are difficult to attack. Integrating different domains of meaning and orders of experience, spiritual and secular, they lend themselves to different interpretations. Thus, the images serve a broad opposition containing politically and religiously diverse groupings, ranging from center-left positions of the Christian Democrats to the revolutionary struggle of the far left, and from the moderate categories of the official church to the radical clergy informed by liberation theology.

As key symbols, they "conceal" potential contradictions between world views or doctrines, such as Marxism and Catholicism. Appealing to universal moral categories such as human rights, the sanctity of life and truth, they have a strong *moral* focus. As a metaphor for two contrasting *ethics*, they lend themselves to religious and political interpretation. This ethic constitutes "common ground" for both renovating religious and Marxist movements, by recognizing the liberationist and egalitarian ideals of both (Betto, 1985; *cf.* Leach, *op.cit.*). These metaphors also resonate with the lived experience of the population, connecting themes of existence with those of power relations. The condition of massive unemployment, poverty and political violence is, for many, in a very concrete sense an everyday battle of life and death.

The Commemoration Mass in Exile: *"Celebración Eucaristica: Misa por los caídos desde Septiembre 1973"*

Since the first year in exile, the 11th September mass has been held at Sacred Heart's church. The location is significant, as the symbolic home of the Chilean exile community. The mass is held in the evening and is usually

preceded by a manifestation (often a "picket-line") in the morning outside of the Chilean consulate in a nearby city. The mass is followed by a *convivencia*, a social gathering to which the participants bring food and drinks and, whenever possible, the latest video recording from the public demonstrations and resistance in Chile. The occasion commemorates the victims of the Chilean military rule.[10] The two masses presented here were on the 12th and the 14th anniversary of the military coup.

As a public event, the mass was open to all. However, the Mass was not part of the regular evening service and was not widely publicized outside of the parish and the Chilean community. The practical organization was handled by an active group of exiles who called themselves *Grupo Cristiano de Ayuda a Chile*.[11] A member of this group acted as lay officiant together with the *celebrante*, the priest performing the mass. On the first occasion, this was the regular parish priest, a Spanish-speaking North American who had succeeded the *Padre*. The second mass was celebrated by a visiting Latin American priest. Other lay performers were also members of the Christian group and the community at large. The occasions gathered about one third of the community, which was the major part of the active community members. Those who have withdrawn from the community do not usually participate in this event, whereas most of them are present at the annual commemoration mass for the *Padre* in December. The lay officiants were all seated in the left front rows, otherwise there was no fixed or special seating pattern.

Religion as such did not play an important role in the lives and conscious world-view of most of these exiles. Very few of the exiles attended mass regularly, mostly only for special occasions of family or the community. Nevertheless, Catholicism has always been highly present in Chilean society and is part of everyone's experience. The presence of the official Catholic church in the opposition in Chile today made for a more acceptable, if somewhat uneasy coexistence with anti-clerical Marxists. However, there was overall support for the radical clergy working with "the popular bases" or the *poblaciones* in Chile,[12] as well as the tradition of liberation theology of the *Padre* at Sacred Heart. Suggesting the change in attitude, one female exile noted, "At Sacred Heart, the Chileans have learnt to move up to the front rows."

Liturgical order and popular participation

After the liturgical renovation in the 1970s, the Catholic mass can more flexibly respond to the need for local variations in ritual performance and

for integrating social and other issues from "the temporal sphere." The mass in question was based on the conventions of liturgical order established at Sacred Heart. Apart from the obligatory sequences of clerical performance, this liturgy emphasizes popular participation and informal administration of religious service. Thus, parts of the mass were conceived and enacted by the community members themselves. As is common in this parish with a large Mexican population, it was held in Spanish. In the local tradition that developed, the mass was interspersed with instrumental pieces of Chilean and Andean music performed by the local group *Kamanchaka*, while psalms were accompanied by the church musician.

The Catholic eucharist mass is divided into two main parts, framed by an Introduction and a Conclusion: the Biblical Instruction (Hearing of the Word) and the Sacramental Celebration. They are intimately connected. Participation in the Word leads to the participation in the saving power of Christ through the sacrament (Verheul, 1969), and both are collective, not individual concerns. The sequence following the homily, is usually the space open for members of the congregation to express their concerns.[13] The two masses presented also suggest the variations in degree of explicitness from one occasion to the next, depending on the preference and degree of involvement of the priest. The liturgical order together with the special texts of the event were handed out at the mass. The texts below are presented within a larger context of the normal liturgical sequences.

Decorations beyond those normally part of this Catholic church were normally sparse on these occasions. On the *mesa* (altar table), covered by a white cloth, were two lit candles, a small Chilean flag on a stand and a single, red rose in a vase. Large candles were standing lit on either side of the table. The lectern was draped in an Chilean *manta* (poncho). The mass was opened by the Celebrant, dressed in white for the eucharist celebration.

INTRODUCTION

The lay officiant welcomed the congregation and introduced the theme of the mass: A eucharist celebration to remember all those who have fallen as victims of the military dictatorship in Chile since the coup in 1973. The rite of *penance* was followed by the hearing of the word.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The First Text

The first text was a passage from the *Documento de Puebla*[14] and was read by a young man, son of one of the families in the *Grupo Cristiano*.

> "What was presented by Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* clearly reflects the reality of our countries: It is well known in what terms they spoke, the numerous bishops from all the continents, at the recent synod, especially the bishops from the Third World, with a pastoral emphasis resonating with the voices of millions of children of the Church who live in these countries. Peoples who, as we already know, are involved with all their energy to survive and overcome all that which condemn them to remain at the margin of life: Hunger, chronic diseases, illiteracy, pauperization, injustice in international relations and, in particular, in the exchange of trade, economic and cultural neocolonialism, sometimes as cruel as the political. The Church, reiterated the bishops, has the obligation to announce the liberation of millions of human beings, and among those many of their own children; the obligation to help give birth to this Liberation, to give testimony to it, to help make it total. None of this is foreign to the Gospel."

The first text condemns the order of national and international inequality, the need for liberation from this condition and the obligation of the Catholic church in this process. Thus, this first section opens by giving an orientation to a problematic reality set within the framework of the Christian mission of the Latin American church.

The Second Text

This text was read by a woman from the *Grupo Cristiano* and comprised a quote from *Padre* Alsina, a so called *cura obrero* ("worker-priest" or popular priest) assassinated nine days after the coup.

1. "We wanted to pour new wine into old casks and now we find ourselves without casks and without wine... for the moment." (PAST)
2. "I depend on a keyword, a good will, an intention, a run-away confession. Sweat. Cold, Heat. A small room, alone and cold. Who is on the telephone? Who calls at the door at this hour? I do not know what I shall do, only what they will do and, most painfully: why? This is the insecurity and the consciousness of insecurity, fear." (PRESENT)
3. "If the grain does not die, it will never bear fruit. A burnt mountain is terrible. But one must wait until out of the moist ashes, black and sticky, life germinates anew." (FUTURE)

> "We hope for your solidarity. Now understand the meaning of the Body of Christ. If we fall (go under) it is something of your hope that falls. If with the ashes we conquer life anew, it is something which is born anew in us."

Gospel:

> "You are salt to the world. And if salt becomes tasteless, how is its saltness to be restored? It is now good for nothing but to be thrown away and trodden underfoot. You are light for all the world. A town that stands on a hill cannot be hidden. When a lamp is lit, it is not put under the meal-tub but on the lamp-stand where it gives light to everyone in the house. And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellows, so that, when they see the good you do, they may give praise to your Father in heaven."
>
> *Matthew 5:13-16*

Homily

The celebrant focussed on the lack of social justice in Chile, "today on the 12th year since the military overthrew the just government of *Unidad Popular*. It leads us, as Christians, to ponder upon how we can contribute to changing the injustice in Chile and in other parts of the Third World." He stressed that "the mass is a *political* act, for the newspapers and the media in this country do not write anything about Chile, do not explain to the people of this country the situation in Chile today." Turning to the congregation, he emphasized their "responsibility to speak the Truth and defend the Truth." The homily repeatedly underlined that *Truth* is *Power*. Like Christ, who defended Truth, they must all strive for the Truth. He pointed out the lack of democracy in Chile today, and its different manifestations. "The so called 'government' in Chile is not a real, not a *true* government. It is a military junta who have seized power: A Dictatorship. What is lacking in Chile today and what all of us must work for together are Human Rights, Social Justice and Goodwill."

At the conclusion of the homily, the priest invited members of the congregation to come forward and speak about Chile. On this occasion, nobody volunteered to do so.

"Petitions of the People"

After the profession of faith led by the celebrant, the lay officiant read a series of petitions interspered by the chorus of the congregation "*Nos escucha, te rogamos*" (hear us, we pray). The petitions were a series of political demands for social change in Chile.

"Consistent with Christian doctrine through all times we keep in mind the value of Life and human dignity. The Church cares for the fate of those subjected to torture, by whatever political regime, because in its view nothing can justify the violation which regrettably occurs frequently together with barbarian and repugnant humiliations.

Hear us, we pray!

It is absolutely indispensable and urgent to reform the very basis of the organisms of Security, especially the CNI so that acts are kept within the bounds of morality and just laws that should rule a country. Only thus can torture, intimidations, accusations and denigrating treatment be avoided.

Hear us, we pray!

The exiles shall have the right to return to their country, or at least to clear their legal situation before the Courts of Justice.

Hear us, we pray!

The economic crisis and the great poverty among so many increases the urgency of honesty in economic transactions annd austerity of living.

Hear us, we pray!

Economic policy and private enterprise should consider that over and above the eagerness for profit is the welfare and the rights of the poor.

Hear us, we pray!

The people has the right to objective information. The lies, half-truths and the disinformation profoundly offend human dignity.

Hear us, we pray!

The workers and the farmers who have no other strength than their unity and the voice of their leaders have the right to be respected and taken into account in their legitimate aspirations, and in the making of laws that affect them.

Hear us, we pray!

Unemployment is not only an economic and political problem. It is before all else a social drama that severely upsets psychological balance, affects the family and the normal development of the children.

Hear us, we pray!

The youth hope for a chance to live, to think, and to express themselves, to learn a trade and have a family.

***Hear us, we pray!*"**

SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATION

Presentation of Gifts

A short enactement was held in connection with the *ofrendas* (bringing the bread and wine). Five members of the congregation each placed a Chilean symbol at the foot of the *mesa* and read the following verse:

Straw hat: "The straw hat represents the worker, in the countryside or in the city, thanks to whose efforts and sweat we have everything that exists, what we use and what we eat." (man)

Iron chains: "The chains represent the oppression of the people(s) at the hands of those who hold power, the rich who are growing richer every day at the cost of the poor, getting poorer every day, and by the ideology of the Doctrine of National Security a doctrine sustained by the dictatorships and the regimes of neo-colonialism." (man)

Guitar: "The guitar represents the indomitable spirit of all those who struggle and continue the struggle for the liberation from all kinds of oppression, a spirit which makes itself heard by a Violeta and a Victor."[15] (young girl)

Flower: "A flower represents woman. As the flowers come in different kinds and colours, she too is the Compañera, the Mother, the Wife, the Friend and the Young girl." (woman)

Fly leaflet *(volante)*: "The fly leaflet represents the spirit of the Chileans who are confronting the dictatorship with the danger of their own lives, in Chile where the front line of attack is." (man)

Prayer over the Gifts was followed by the **Eucharistic Prayer** which led to the **Communion rite.** This rite follows closely the liturgy of the sacrament, including the Peace Rite in which the celebrant and congregation exchange wishes of "Peace" and shake hands or embrace.

Communion

is taken by about half of the congregation, a majority of those who do so are women.

CONCLUSION OF MASS

At the end of the mass, a woman of the community, representing a radical political position, reads part of a poem from Pablo Neruda.

> "I am not coming to weep here where they fell
> I come to you, the living
> Others have fallen before. Remember?
> Yes, you remember..."
> (Neruda names the places),
> "...from the seas to the desert,
> from the pampas to the archipelago
> others were assassinated...
> fishermen, blacksmiths like you.
> Flesh of Chile, faces, their wounds healed
> by the wind, martyrised by the pampa,
> signed by the suffering.
> I found, on the walls of my country,
> in the snow and its crystals,
> behind the flood of green foliage,
> under the nitrate and the tall wheat
> a drop of blood of my people
> and each drop burns like fire."[16]

After the celebrant concludes the mass with the final blessing, a member of the *Grupo Cristiano* thanks the celebrant for his participation and his commitment to social justice in Chile. As always, the mass ends with the unison singing of "*Plegaría a un Labrador*" (Prayer to a farm-worker). This Victor Jara song, wellknown to Chileans of the left, is a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, with a revolutionary political content. The prayer for liberation conflates the religious and secular meanings, in which the Kingdom of Justice and Equality is, above all, a this-worldly kingdom. The strategy is one of solidarity and unity as one redeeming revolutionary force. (*"juntos irémos, unidos en la sangre*," "together we'll go, united in blood").

Analysis

In selecting a fragment of social life held up for special symbolic commentary, the ritual also defines that reality. However, as Moore and Myerhoff point out, such an occasion is "...a complex type of symbolic behavior that usually has a stateable purpose but one that invariably alludes to more than it says and has many meanings at once."(1977:5). The explicit purpose of the Mass

described above is dual, as indicated by its title. It is a eucharist celebration but one which also has a clearly political aim and message. To commemorate the victims is to honour them and "set them apart," as symbolic indices by which to "reveal the truth" about the Chilean regime, the cause of repression, disinformation and death, and the need for liberation and a return to democracy. The homily underlines the obligation of the exiles in this work. The purpose of commemoration is also that of reiterating obligations, to obtain pledges of solidarity and collective political action for Chile.

Symbols and messages intertwine two major themes, power relations and existence. Numerous references are made to conditions of existence, suffering, exile, death as a result of an unjust social order in Chile. The symbolism of life and death and their conversion, as part of the discourse of the resistance in Chile, is also at the heart of the annual community mass.

The date of 11th of September marks the beginning of dictatorship, the regime of Death. The deaths commemorated are the victims of this dictatorship and play a vital role in the symbolic conversion to life and Democracy. The eucharist reinforces this message as it points to the redemptive power of suffering and sacrifice.

The Eucharist as structure and metaphor

As a eucharist celebration, the mass also addresses another concern distinct from the political-secular, namely the problem of human salvation and eternal life. As such, its ritual task consists in the transformation of the faithful through purification and communion with the Lord, and become part of the divine mystery of resurrection and eternal Life.[17] The occasion and the indicated aim of the commemoration gave this a subordinated function in the ritual even if it provided political ritual efficacy. First, the mass as ritual form of traditional influence endows the event with a certain authenticity and conviction, always a problem for new rituals. Such rituals must convey a sense of inevitability and invariance without relying on the force of tradition of repeated performances. Through its formal properties, a ritual is a good "traditionalizing instrument" for new material (Myerhoff, *op. cit*). However, the mass liturgy does not merely provide a convincing ritual frame for political-secular messages. The central theme and transformation in the eucharist is also an essential aspect of those messages, and the religious and political discourses must be considered as a totality. By interweaving the eucharistic theme with the political-secular one within the framework of the liturgical order, both come to serve wider symbolic functions.

The structure of the mass is based largely on the Catholic liturgy of the eucharist celebration, in its conventional stylization and ordered performance, but interspersed with "secular" sequences where liturgy allows. The strictly religious sequences are performed as proscribed by the celebrant (sacrament, homily), whereas the others, including the extra-liturgical elements are performed by laity which are all members of the community. The liturgy is made up of a series of syntagmatically related sequences or scenes that together form a plan, based on doctrine for the "task" to be performed by the ritual. The plan of the eucharist is the transformation of religious experience to achieve communion and participation in the divine mystery of salvation and eternal life. The first part, the hearing of the Word, is a preparation (revelation) for this communion in the second part or Sacramental celebration. The central organizing metaphor, as expressed by Fernandez (1974), for this transformation is "We are the living Body of Christ" and the component sequences then operate until the state implied by the metaphor is achieved. The process is a transformation from a state of Inadequate I, to a state of Adequate We. The performative progression is thus purification through *penance, eucharist,* and *communion*. In modern Catholic theology this involves the community as a whole.

However, within this structural framework and parallel to this task, the event has the special aim of defining a reality and a strategy for action of a different order of experience. This realm concerns social transformation rather than the spiritual. This secular theme is addressed by both the Word and Homily, as well as in separate, extra-liturgical scenes (in particular in the Neruda poem and the Jara song[18]). These make momentarily visible its "plan" based on political doctrine for a transformation to Socialism, but only by allusion. Thus, the mass juxtaposes two themes and processes of transformation referring to different orders of experience and explanation. One is transposed into the idiom of the other, or, with Leach (1976) the religious and the secular are paradigmatically related. One becomes the metaphoric expression of the other. An example of this symbolic condensation is the Second Text.

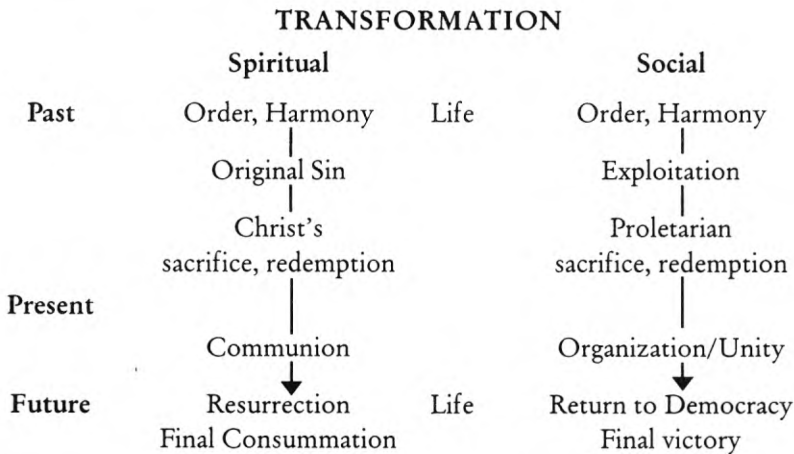
The passages of the worker-priest Alsina prefigure the sacrament in the liturgy and make visible its symbolic connection to social transformation. As a politically active priest later assassinated by the regime, his words are set in the socio-political context following the coup. Using biblical references and idiom he refers to this (secular) reality. The allegory of the first passage refers to the fall of the *Unidad Popular* and indicates the cause of the defeat. The passage also indicates his ideological position (non-reformist) within

the left to those familiar with the political scene. The mid passage reflects on the concrete political threat and resonates with the torment and fate of Christ as victim, anticipating his own assassination in isolation. The third passage indicates death as a temporary state that holds the promise of new life and resurrection. Alsina, like Christ, is here a vicarious victim, but his impending death is part of a secular, rather than divine order of events and points to the transformation necessary to convert the present loss to future victory and regeneration of life. However, solidarity as a prerequisite both for social liberation and religious salvation is indicated by his reference to the body of Christ. The collectivity, and not the individual, is afflicted by Death and must, as one body, in communion with God, recover life. Thus, the religious idiom serves to articulate a social process, and strategy for action ("Now understand the meaning of the Body of Christ")[19]. However, the secular order also serves to express the spiritual order. As with the mass graves at Lonquén, these events also reveal the divine mystery. The secular and divine orders depicted appear to have a similar basic structure.

Eschatological models of transformation

The eschatological scheme is central in Christian doctrine and manifest in the eucharist liturgy. Implicit is the combination of retrospective and prospective time dimensions—the past, a liminal present and a promised future: The projection of a historical past into the present (Christ's sacrifice in the past makes possible his saving power in the present). The present is a liminal state which, by revealing the divine mystery and offering participation in communion, foreshadows a future state of final consummation and eternal Life. The task of the sacramental celebration is the spiritual transformation from the inadequate, solitary sinful state to the adequate, purified state of communion (Fernandez, *op. cit.*). The eschatological model is also at the base of the utopian vision of social transformation alluded to in the mass. The triumph of Life over Death as human resurrection is also the victory of Democracy over Dictatorship, and the coming of a true and final order. The "revolutionary paradigm" presented in chapter 5 (Fig. 2) can be introduced here, and the two models (spiritual and social transformation) can be juxtaposed in one, simplified scheme (Fig. 3). Both are grounded in a similar conception of history. In a study of the theological implications of the philosophy of history, Löwith (1949) points out the eschatological basis of much 19th century philosophy. The eschaton, as historical consciousness in Western thought, provides a scheme of progressive order and meaning. This includes interpretations of history of a particular kind, on

which *i.a.* Marxist revolutionary ideology was based. Noting the religious spirit of the *Communist Manifesto*, Löwith points to the Judeo-Christian view of history as a providential advance towards a final meaningful end: "Historical materialism is essentially, though secretly, a history of fulfilment and salvation in terms of social economy"(1949:45). Indicating the Messianistic character of Marxist thought, Löwith suggests that Marx's notion of the "last" antagonism between the two hostile powers of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat corresponds to the Jewish-Christian apocalyptic belief, the final fight between Christ and Anti-Christ. In this struggle, the proletariat thus has the historical mission and a redemptive function, leading to final consummation of the historical process.[20]



Within this scheme, the stated task of ritual transformation, with the same dichotomy, may be described:

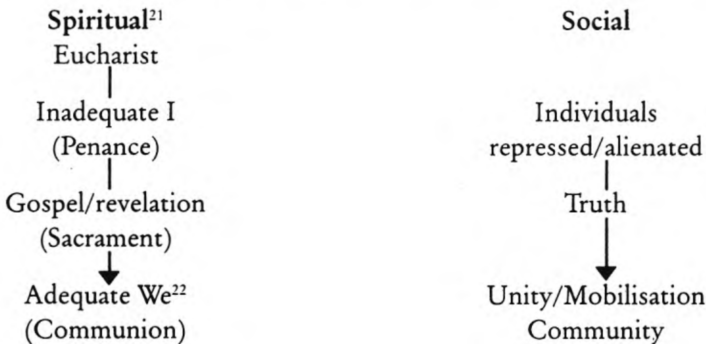


Fig. 3

These correspondences notwithstanding, there are basic conflicts between the two distinct logics and orders of experience, one divine and other-worldly, the other secular and this-worldly. These issues are at the heart of debate and dynamic interaction between Christians and Marxists in Latin America since the 1960s. In liberation theology, the dominant perspective of the September 11 mass, these are reconciled above all in practice, through active solidarity with the oppressed, in the historical context of Latin American societies. As a key word, *Liberación* condenses its political, exegetic and theological program.[23] Furthermore, in the discourse of the Chilean opposition, the multivocal metaphors of life and death are able to contain these differences and allow for interpretations in accordance with either logic. The "democracy" strived for and juxtaposed to the current "dictatorship" also bridges quite different political visions within the opposition, from the official church to revolutionary groups engaged in armed struggle. The differences in "strategic orientations" of different political groups are represented by the plurality of voices in the mass. There is a gradual shift of emphasis from a very moderate position such as the voice of the official church or Christian Democratic political position to that of the radical clergy (*Padre* Alsina) and the voice of the Communist Party (Neruda, Jara). The latter appeal to revolutionary struggle by allusion and with presentational (poems and songs), rather than discursive symbols (*cf.* Kapferer, 1977:118) which provide greater ambiguity for a more controversial message.

The mass two years later deals more explicitly with a basic point of contention between the religious and the revolutionary doctrines, reflecting a renewed explicit debate among the opposition about armed resistance. The opposition to the regime was escalating in Chile and armed political groups such as the *Frente Patriotico Manuel Rodriguez* (FPMR) was gaining supporters at home and in the exile communities. This time the celebrant was a young and radical priest, himself an exile from a Latin American country. An active debate followed the homily on violent political action as a justified method of resistance in the Chilean situation. There was general agreement with the radical message of this celebrant. This interpretation, more frequently citing the Old Testament, opposes the classical theological position of the "free acceptance of humiliation and redemptive suffering as the condition of triumph"(Löwith, 1949:49).[24] The main text of the Liturgy of the Word was as follows:

First Text (Book of Judit 7:19-32, 8:4-27). (On the loss of their country, deportation and servitude of the Israelites and the need for vengeance):

> "...So then my friends, let us set an example to our fellow-countrymen; for their lives depend on us, and the fate of the sanctuary, the temple, and the altar rests with us."

The celebrant emphasized the responsibility of Christians, exiles and political opposition to act.

> "We have a commitment to our homeland, living the *extrañamiento* and trauma of exile. Even if one lives well in exile, this existence continues to be *exile*...Hope is not hope for God to solve our problems. People must have the confidence and responsibility to resolve the large and serious problems of Latin America. It raises our responsibility as Christians, in the face of established violence of the State. Hear the recommendation of Christ:"

Gospel

> "If your brother commits a sin, go and take the matter up with him, strictly between yourselves, and if he listens to you, you have won your brother over. If he will not listen, take one or two others with you, so that all facts may be duly established on the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, report the matter to the congregation; and if he will not listen even to the congregation, you must then treat him as you would a pagan or a tax-gatherer."
>
> *Matthew 18:15-17*

Homily

> "These words are the commandment of God to love, an absolute commandment: To love your enemy as well as your friends. If someone strikes your left cheek, turn him your right one... This absolute commandment does not seem to allow an interpretation that will justify the defense against someone violating your dignity... On our (Latin American) Continent, where a majority accept the word of God, we are confronting the violence of the oppressor, of the dictator. It is not a struggle of words, but a struggle or arms. It is a fierce and bloody, daily violence... When those who oppress us have done away with peaceful means of dialogue and resolution, we have no other choice but to expel them from our Community, because they violate the rules. This expulsion is not an act of hatred but an act of love. My love for my brother who oppresses me is so great that I do not want him to lose himself in his actions, but that he be saved. To do this, to make him see the oppression he is performing, we must use arms, legitimately use arms—not because of

hatred but because of love... The parent who forcefully calls attention to the son or daughter does so out of love, not out of hate. Sometimes words are not sufficient. I think this is the road we have entered upon today.

Let us remember all those men and women who fell on the 11th of September and have continued falling in Chile since then. And those who struggle on, let us accompany them, as Christians although not all are Christians. We should be with them, all those in Chile today who are showing their love in this special way. They are jeopardizing their own security, their community. While we here in exile have community and security, they are risking what little they have. That is why we should be with them.

We will not give in. We will not give in. We will NEVER give in. We will never turn ourselves over, no matter how long it will take—but continue thinking about our RETURN. For it is not just any return, but a return to LIFE, to a life in fullness (*una vida en plenitud*)."

The subject of exile is underlined by the psalms with topic on the theme of banishment in Babylon taken from the Old Testament, the Ballad of the exile (*Balada del desterrado*, *Salmo* 137) and the Israelites' longing for repatriation (*Salmo* 85). Their theme, condensed, is that a God of Truth, Justice and Peace will bring return which is also salvation and new life. One of the psalms echoes the well-known cry, epitomizing the "exile condition," "How shall we sing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land?"

Life, Death and Exile

The symbolic themes and internal logic of the commemoration mass reflect the structure of similar commemorations in Chile. However, as noted, the mass is elaborated in the new social context and invested with partly new functions and dimensions of meaning. Thus, the ritual also addresses the contradictions and ambiguities of exile. The notions of Life and Death in their existential and political connotations also allude to exiles' own survival, physical and socio-cultural, as victims of political violence. Expelled from their country, life was sometimes felt to be simply "existing, not living."

The second mass opened with a poem "In memory of September"

When somebody—a woman or man,
was truly among us and leaves
he/she does not leave.

> This person is still present
> in a new mode
> removed from the here and now.
> This person remains active
> will never more be distant
> liberated from time and space
> in a communion between origin and destiny
>
> There are times, there are marks
> which are easily erased
> They had no roots
> But there are others
> from which Life springs forth!"

The commemoration of the victims of the military regime concerned the exiles in a very personal way. The themes of life and death reflected their own, lived experience. These were compatriots, political comrades, friends and family members of the exiles. Everyone had at least one relative or friend among the vast number of deaths or "disappeared" since 1973. Exiles were themselves victims of violations of their lives of a kind in which death was an ever-present real possibility. As noted in chapter 8, there was a silence surrounding the personal ordeals of torture.[25] Expressive (*i.e.* presentational as opposed to discursive) symbolic modes, such as music and poetry may more easily convey such themes (see *e.g.* Kapferer 1977:117) Thus, meaning in this domain is not only intellectual but even more emotional and covert (see *e.g.* Keesing, 1982). In the mass, the Neruda poem forcefully presents the victims and their context as a humble but courageous sacrifice for Chile. The Victor Jara song (himself a victim, brutally and publically executed in the National Stadium), which concludes every mass in the community, is a compelling call for vindication by men "united by blood." Collective symbolic expressions of death may then also be a way of speaking on a metaphoric level about the unspeakable, exiles' own traumatic confrontations with "the regime of death." Commemorating the victims of the 11th September, they were also commemorating their own ordeals.

For those banished from their country, exile is a form of *destierro* and *destiempo*. They are all "out of normal time and space," absent and yet present, their existence is ambiguous. The poem which opens the second mass connects the fate of the disappeared, the dead, and the exiles. Roa Bastos describes the process by which the repressive powers try to turn the citizen who fights repression into "a wandering shadow, a person without country: The choice is between physical elimination or civic death."(Bastos,

1987:215). He compares the position of exiles to that of the disappeared prisoners, whose life or death remain unconfirmed. Exiles are temporary victims, in suspended existence. But these thousands of "living dead" whose continuing absence cannot be obliterated still play a vital role in the task ahead. Thus, the "disappeared," given flesh in the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, or in the Chilean *Agrupación*, show that the "dead nevertheless can produce a living force," (Roa Bastos, 1987:216). The victims are potential redeemers. The homily underlines the human rather than the divine action for social change in Latin America, and identifies the special responsibility of exiles in this work. The poem affirms that the dead, disappeared or exiles "never really leave" but remain an active, political and redeeming force.[26] They are the marks, inerasable, "from which Life springs forth." The Gospel of the first mass underlines their vital function in the struggle, "to shed light among their fellows."

But exile is almost always potentially infinite, and return is not guaranteed. Suspended life threatens to a permanent state and to turn exiles into "wandering shadows," a marginal existence "without country." (*ibid.*) Alternatively the enforced estrangement from their own society is a threat to social and cultural identity, in its extension a social death through the absorption in another country. "Exile is absence" says the old Argentinian exile (chapter 8) "and extended absence is death. You return or you die." Absorption is social death, whereas return is, in the words of the homily, "not just any return. A return to life, a life in fullness."

The symbolic connection between exile and Life/Death can thus be seen along two dimensions.

(mediated by exile)
Life - - - - - - - - - - - Death

In the underlying ideological model depicted, exiles are a mediating force through active political struggle. However, new oppositions arise over time: between return and absorption (alienation, social death), between remaining a (tortured) victim and becoming a survivor.

Life - - - - - Exile	Death - - - - - Exile
Struggle	Surrender
Presence	Absence
Return	Absorption
Survivors	Victims

"La vida vence a la muerte": The triumph of the victim

The goal in this instance was not only a return to political democracy in Chile. The aim of the second mass was also "to activate exiles to continue the struggle to recover the right to live" *(animación a sequir en la lucha por recuperar el derecho a vivir)*. The resurrection motif of the eucharist is intertwined with secular notions of the triumph of life over social death in exile through return to their homeland, as indicated in the homily. The eucharist, in the words of the organizers of the community mass, represents communion, but receives its deeper meaning from the fact that it was instituted as a sacrament by Christ to commemorate the exile and delivery out of Egypt.[27] Thus, the symbolic theme as in the psalms above: democracy and return from exile is redemption and new life. Returned and reintegrated into society and selves, they will no longer be victims but affirmed as survivors.[28]

The import of the eucharist is the triumph of the victim. A cantata performed and attended by the exiles on the 13th anniversary of the coup was entitled "*La Vida Vence a la Muerte*" ("Life vanquishes Death"). In tribute to the sacrifice of a young woman, the cantata affirms her role in the transformation:

> "With her, life is recovered
> with her, life vanquishes death...
> Memories, refusing to be memories
> Memories which are present eternally
> Of a people forever decided
> Of a people who say no to oblivion..."[29]

In the secular theme as in the spiritual one, the conversion to Life involves the whole community. Revolution and redemption both require solidaridad and comunidad, terms which both have political and religious connotations. To remain a political force, the mass reiterates the responsibility of the exile collectivity. The eucharist underlines the notion of reinforced community, from the "Inadequate I" to the "Adequate We." While the theme of exile in contemporary literature of Latin America draws essentially on the Graeco-Roman tradition, "...the laments of an Ovid or a Dante" (Cortázar, 1981:14), the theme of the mass refers to a Judeo-Christian tradition and the Old Testament. The latter emphasizes the collectivity (a people banished in exile) in contrast to the individual fate of the former.

Commemorations and the exile community

The *convivencia* following the mass, an informal gathering to enjoy Chilean food and wine and possibly a recent video recording of public protests of the Chilean opposition, underlined the aspect of community. The unison created by multivocality of positions concealed the rather precarious unity among the Chilean opposition. Patterned on themes and forms of expression of similar occasions in Chile, the act reasserted their connection to the opposition at home. The voices of Neruda and Jara also aimed to reestablish this particular Chilean national identity. The enactment in connection with the Presentation of the Gifts would not have made sense outside of the exile context. While portraying the current reality of Chilean resistance, it was also a presentation of selves, a conscious staging of Chilean identity as defined by the exile community.

Suggesting a dynamic interaction between ritual and social process, these acts aim at transforming the context of political repression out of which they emerged ("the rite as both transforming and being transformed," Kapferer, 1979:14). However, responding to different social contexts, the mass has assumed a somewhat different significance in exile compared to Chile. While the dialectical relation of power and existence is the overriding theme in both contexts, the exile ritual expands this theme to include the particular experience and dilemmas of exile.

In Chile these symbolic acts of opposition are part of an ongoing political practice of active resistance and mobilization. As a commemoration ritual in the exile community, the annual occasion is part of an increasingly symbolic political practice, more of the past than the present, of a community increasingly marginalized from the ongoing politicial process in Chile. As an emerging local tradition, the 11th of September event has become a symbol of community. The implicit statements are primarily internal and concern the dilemmas of the exile collectivity. The community is threatened by disintegration, and norms about political commitment and life in exile cannot be effectively enforced. The social meaning of exile is increasingly challenged by new social experience. As Moore and Myerhoff point out, since ritual "is a good form for conveying a message as if it were unquestionable, (it) is often used to communicate those things which are most in doubt."(1977:24). In the face of a crisis of discontinuity, the act reaffirmed unity and continuity. It restored the ideology and world-view that made their predicament comprehensible and bestowed meaning upon the sufferings of torture and exile. In this perspective, the eucharist mass held annually is a dramatic

attempt to bring the process of change under orderly control, to construct a common, durable social reality in exile, using themes and symbols from the resistance in Chile. Thus, the mass symbolically resolved the contradictions of exile; between individual and the collectivity, ideology and experience, and ultimately, return and absorption. As such, the ritual reaffirmed the social meaning of exile as closely linked with temporary absence and return to Chile.

Epilogue

The ultimate dilemma of exile is the emerging doubts to one's own cultural constructions of reality. The threat of permanent homelessness and a continuously provisional existence points, in condensed and acute form, to the dilemma of modern man, "homeless" in a world of perceived social and cultural fragmentation (Berger, *et.al.*, 1973). The mobile and ever-changing individual in the plurality of structures of modern societies is one for whom there are at the same time many homes and none at all. "A world in which everything is in motion, is a world in which certainties of any kind are hard to come by" (*ibid.*:184). Political ideologies and religions which explained human fates, bestowed meaning upon suffering and provided hopes for something better have been severely shaken.

In the years of their exile in Silicon Valley, perhaps the epitome of modernity, Chilean society has changed drastically, in the same direction. The opposition, as it moves closer to ousting the military regime and regaining power and "democracy," is also plagued by uncertainties and doubt with respect to the content of that democracy and the future of their country. For the generation of revolutionaries who went into exile in the 1970s, their political projects no longer appear as clear-cut or as certain. They, too, have changed in their absence. For those who eventually return to Chile, reintegration—social, cultural, and psychological—will be another battle. Their state of exile may well continue at home.

The experienced traveller and exile, Pablo Neruda, the Chileans' steady companion in their own exile, captures the perils of return (Neruda 1958, in Reid 1969:28)

Regreso a una ciudad

A qué he venido? les pregunto
Quién soy en esta ciudad muerta?
No encuentro la calle ni el techo
de la loca que me quería
Los cuervos, no hay duda, en las ramas,
mi rostro recién resurrecto
el Monzón verde y furibundo,
el escupitajo escarlata
en las calles desmoronadas,
el aire espeso, pero dónde,
pero dónde estuve, quién fuí?
No entiendo sino las cenizas.
...
Ahora me doy cuenta que he sido
no sólo un hombre sino varios
y que cuantas veces he muerto,
sin saber cómo he revivido,
como si cambiara de traje
me puse a viviro otra vida
y aquí me tienen sin que sepa
por qué no reconozco a nadie,
por qué nadie me reconoce,
si todos fallecieron aquí
y yo soy entre tanto olvido
un pájaro sobrevivienteo al revés la ciudad me mira
y sabe que yo soy un muerto.
...
Regreso para no volver,
nunca más quiero equivocarme,
es peligroso caminar
hacia atrás porque de repente
es una cárcel el pasado.

Return to a City

What have I arrived in? I ask them
Who am I in this lifeless city?
I can find neither the street nor the roof
of the crazy girl who once loved me.
There's no doubting the crows in the branches
The monsoon green and boiling.
The scarlet spittle in the eroded streets
the air heavy—but where,
where was I, who was I?
I understand little, except the ashes.

...

...

Now it dawns on me that I have been
not just one man but several,
and that I have died so many times
with no notion of how I was reborn,
as if the act of changing clothes
were to force me to live another life,
and here I am without the least idea
of why I cannot recognize a soul,
of why no one is recognizing me,
as if everyone here were dead
and I alive in the midst of such forgetting,
a bird that still survives—
or, the reverse, the city watches me,
and realizes I am the one who is dead.

...

I return not to come back;
no more do I wish to mislead myself.
It is dangerous to wander
backward, for all of a sudden
it is a prison, the past.

Notes to Chapter 9

[1] The Cuban leader, Fidel Castro recognized the importance of a strategic alliance between progressive believers and the left and since the early 1970s has repeatedly called for closer cooperation between these sectors (Betto, 1985).

[2] Se *e.g.* Richard (1976), Bonino (1975). In the Nicaraguan popular church, for instance, according to *padre* Uriel Molina (personal communication), the alignment between doctrines has seen a shift in emphasis from the prospective divine order to "the Kingdom on earth" as the paramount reality.

[3] For a more detailed account of the new role of the Catholic church, see *e.g.* Smith, 1986.

[4] This battle is also fought within the opposition. The Christian Democratic leader published a book by the title "The truth has its moment" (*La verdad tiene su hora*), to which the leader of the Chilean Communist Party responded by one entitled "The truth every moment" (*A toda hora la verdad*) (Chacon & Lagos, *op.cit*:21, my transl.).

[5] In a speech honouring general Pinochet, General Sinclair said that in view of the "mother of God who sent us her son as a messenger of peace... and the sacred motivations of God and the Fatherland, (the Chilean military) recognize and honour the First Soldier of the Republic, Capitán General don Augusto Pinochet Ugarte." (Chacon and Lagos, 1986:70, my transl.)

[6] As Leach points out (1983:70), the two functions of religious belief are not necessarily mutually exclusive or contradictory: "At different times, in different places, the Emperor and the Anarchist alike may find it convenient to appeal to the Holy Writ."

[7] Discourse at the Military Academy on the 22nd of August 1986, reported in *El Mercurio* on the 23rd of August 1986.

[8] (*"Es el único espacio que uno tiene para expresarse. Es un espacio rico, con un ánimo emocionante. Es muy impresionante el ambiente y la entrega."*)

[9] From Neruda's "*La Arena Traicionada*" in *Canto General*, (1955) a poem written to commemorate the massacre of Chilean workers in Santiago in 1946.

[10] On some occasions, specific victims were selected, such as President Salvador Allende, or more recent ones, such as Rodrigo and Carmen Gloria, two young protesters who were set on fire by the military police in Santiago in 1986.

[11] "Christians for Assistance to Chile" was a group of four families with different party affiliations working closely with the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad* in Chile, the Catholic church humanitarian organization.

[12] On two occasions in the year of my fieldwork, Catholic priests from Chile (one of them expelled by the regime) gave talks with large attendance in the community on the current situation of Chilean resistance.

[13] In Chile, the popular use of this space for political articulation is primarily a feature of politized poor parishes and radical local clergy.

[14] From the 3rd Conference of Latin American Bishops in Puebla, Mexico, 1979.

[15] The names refer to Violeta Parra and Victor Jara, two main figures in the musical movement of the *nueva canción*

[16] Neruda (1955:188, my summary and transl. See footnote 9). As noted, another verse of the same poem was presented at the *Romeria a Lonquén:* "Nobody knows where the assassins buried these bodies/ But they will come back/ out of the earth/ to reclaim the victimized blood/in the resurrection of the people." (1955:189). Naming the workers by name, Neruda swears that in their names the struggle for liberation will continue, so that their blood shed,(acting like a seed), will once bloom (*para que floresca tu sangre derramada*"). ("Seed," as a biblical image, represents "the growing Kingdom of God," Verheul, 1969:163). The Neruda poem along with a photograph of the graves at Lonquén was a permanent cover feature of the exile community newsletter.

[17] My aim here is not to examine the symbolism of Catholic mass liturgy in its enormous complexity. This is beyond the scope of this work and has been explored by others (*e.g.* Fernandez, 1974, Verheul, 1969).

[18] As was wellknown to those present, Jara and Neruda were both the voices of the Communist Party.

[19] *Cf.* "We are the Living Body of Christ," footnote 22

[20] The last verse of the Neruda poem read at Lonquén brings out the fusion of resurrection and judgement day with the final day of revolutionary triumph in the credo of the PC: "*Un día de justicia/conquistada en la lucha y vosotros, hermanos caídos/en silencio estaréis con nosotros/en ese vasto día de la lucha final/en ese día inmenso*" (A day of justice conquered in the struggle/and you fallen comrades, in silence/will be with us on that great day/of final struggle/on that immense day. Vidal, 1982:116; my transl.)

[21] following Fernandez (1974)

[22] "We are the living Body of Christ" (Fernandez, 1974).

[23] Liberation theology thus takes issue with Western theology, proposing a different theological paradigm and an emphasis on practice. For a more detailed account of this paradigm, see the works of two of its most wellknown proponents, Gutiérrez (1973) and Bonino (1975).

[24] The two occasions are very similar in terms of structure and general themes and extracts from the second mass below serve essentially to illustrate points of contrast or emphasis.

[25] In the words of an informant, "Now we no longer talk so much about these things, about what we experienced or what we suffer today." Another exile remarked that "When the *compañera* from Chile visited last month and gave a talk about her years of torture in Chilean prisons people felt very uncomfortable. It's not that they are not affected. They just don't want to be reminded."

[26] *Cf.* Roa Bastos observation about the exiles' conception of themselves as a propitiatory victim (1987:214).

[27] According to theological books of instruction, the eucharist celebration is "...in its original structure a Jewish religious ritual meal by which Yahweh was praised

and thanks were given for food and for the delivery out of Egypt. Christ takes over this rite *in toto* but makes of it the thankful memorial meal of redemption"(Verheul, 1969:110).

[28] Roa Bastos expresses the same idea when he contrasts "banishment as practiced in our indigenous communities" to the tragedy of the Paraguayan exile, exiled for a lifetime. "The ancient rite" in keeping with the principles of good government, celebrated the return of an exile as a wise and a just man. "The exile brought new knowledge back with him. On the soles of his feet he brought the dust of unknown lands; in his eyes, visions of other skies... his double body...and triple soul bore wisdom acquired through the suffering of 'having wandered for an eternity through the limbo of the dead.' Banishment then was perceived as a a kind of death, and return as resurrection." (1981:18).

[29] Cantata by Fernando Feña and Leonardo Cereceda written and performed "as a tribute to the sacrifice made by Rodrigo and Carmen Gloria."

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