

and so on--for *all* the Regions.

But to make it make *real* sense, to seize the design and make it one's own instead of the past's, one must emphasize the "all." That is, not only regional governments in Aragón, Valencia, and Navarra, but in the Castiles as well, *Vieja* and *Nueva*--all subject to the national *cortes* in Madrid, located in the geographical center of the peninsula. Only in such a way will the regions really be equal, will the inane fiction that Castile is more than a region itself die, will Castilian mean language instead of inordinate power, and will the nonsense that this is really Spain and this really not cease.

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## **EXCURSUS II**

### CONSTANTINE C. MENGES on BRIDGES TO DEMOCRACY IN CHILE

*It was a crisp, clear morning as we mounted our horses and headed toward the high snow-capped mountains marking Chile's border with Argentina. Some men were going off to work in the fields, others were joining us to bring the cattle in. I noticed how much better the people lived and worked here where the land-reform project of the Catholic Church had provided former tenants with their own farmland. These families proved that peaceful reform could help individuals and the nation too because Chile desperately needed to produce more food than usually came from the often idle land of the big estates.*

That was in 1964. Church support for social reforms had helped Eduardo Frei and the Christian Democratic party win the national elections. Taking a middle course between the socialist-Communist coalition and the conservative forces, the Frei government was successful in forging a "revolution with liberty" during the six years it held office. Living

standards improved for the poor, the economy grew, Chile's chronic inflation was cut to tolerable levels, and significant new opportunities for education, social services, and land ownership were opened up. Despite a cynical alliance in the congress between the Marxist parties and the conservative groups, which prevented some important changes, the overall record of reform was very good.

Chileans have been justly proud of their long history of successful democracy. They would always tell foreign friends that their military and police were respected and would never abuse their power. Many also believed that the socialist-Communist front would abide by its repeated promises to respect democratic institutions and civil liberties. Unfortunately for Chile's ten million people, the 1970 elections opened an era of trauma and suffering that showed that both political extremes would use force and terror to keep power.

In 1970 Allende became president with a third of the popular vote. The Communist-socialist government's economic program drove inflation up to 619 per cent, stopped economic growth, led to acute shortages of food and most consumer goods, and ultimately made everyone worse off, except for the thousands of party workers who overflowed the government payrolls. More serious were the clear signs that the most extremist elements were gaining power within the "popular unity" movement. Much as in Nazi Germany, groups of radical thugs used intimidation to censor the communications media, take over non-Communist unions and voluntary associations, and unofficially expropriate companies and lands. Fidel Castro pranced around the country on a six-month "state visit" in 1972. Communist terrorists from all over Latin America flocked to Chile to join a parallel army that was being quietly built up as a palace guard for the Allende regime. By summer, 1973, many people believed that the only remaining group that could save them from a permanent Communist dictatorship was a military coup.

"Out of the fire and into the frying pan" is one Chilean friend's description of these last five years. Initially, a majority of Chileans may have welcomed the military regime, expecting it to be a

short transition back to democratic government. But to everyone's shock, the generals undertook fierce repression, which began with the Communist-socialist groups but then spread to include the moderate democratic parties and institutions. The military and secret police killed an estimated five thousand and imprisoned thousands more. Fortunately, there has been a marked improvement during the last year: The secret police has been officially dissolved, people have stopped disappearing, and many prisoners have been released. Unlike Communist regimes, the military in Latin America declare they intend to restore democracy.

THE U.S. AND OTHER DEMOCRATIC NATIONS can and should help build the institutional bridges back to representative government. Right now Chile has an active and responsible reformist movement that operates just below the surface of open politics. It consists of the Christian Democratic and other center parties, most religious leaders, the unofficial cooperatives, self-help groups, labor "associations" (unions are still barred), and many members of the communications media. In January, 1976, at a secret party congress the Christian Democrats elected a new president who proposed specific transition steps to representative government. These included increased individual protection against the police, press freedom, the right to form voluntary associations and cooperatives in the neighborhoods along with the right to elect their leadership, and the right to form labor unions empowered to strike. These actions would gradually be accompanied by the legalization of political parties and then a return to free elections.

This Christian Democratic program nearly parallels the successful process used by Spain to restore genuine democracy without extremist upheavals after forty years of dictatorship. The positive example of Spain since 1975 should show the military and democratic reform groups that gradualism can accomplish peacefully the most delicate of all political maneuvers--the loosening of control without the loss of stability.

Public and private American efforts can help. While avoiding interference in

Chile's politics, there is every reason for our citizens, embassy, and aid program to maintain normal relationships with pro-democratic church groups, voluntary associations, and individuals. Support could also be given to small research groups, such as the Chilean Institute of Humanitarian Studies, which monitor current economic and social trends and offer practical suggestions for future government policy to bring more benefits of the economic recovery to the poor and unemployed. Some public or private aid funds could be used for an "internal Fulbright program" in Chile that might provide financial help so that a few thousand poor children can stay in school and others might go on to universities. There is still need for land reform. It would be possible for a small group of private U.S. and European foundations to establish a fund, buy land, and distribute it to landless peasants, just as the Catholic Church did with its own farmlands in the early 1960's. These and similar actions could provide encouragement and moral support for the vast majority of the population who want both justice and democracy.

NICARAGUA AND THE POLITICAL VIOLENCE of 1979 illustrate the consequences of ignoring the democratic groups and the possibilities for gradual change while there is time. Right now Chile faces continued military dictatorship *or* a renewed Communist effort to seize power in a few years at the head of a broad coalition that would include many among those who are moderates today. There is every reason to believe that international support in Chile can help the democratic groups succeed in convincing the military to restore constitutional government. Though Chile's destiny rests with its own people, Americans should publicly help those who share our most basic values.

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