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The Chilean Christians for Socialism Movement: Liberationist, Third Worldist, and Utopian

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Abstract

This article examines the emergence, consolidation, and influence of the Cristianos por el Socialismo (CpS, or Christians for Socialism) movement as part of the overlapping political and religious transformations of the 1960s. The election of self-declared Marxist Salvador Allende in 1970 inspired a sector of the clergy to creatively converge the tenets of Marxism and Christianity. The notion of transcendence and the construction of a "New Man" appealed to the utopian aspects of both religious and Marxist thinking. The Chilean CpS had a Latin American impact, as evidenced by the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism in Santiago in 1972, and a transnational impact, as seen in the formation of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians in 1976. The analysis of CpS and its influence within and outside of Chile reveals an often-overlooked component of the Chilean road to socialism: the work of Catholics in Marxist-Christian rapprochement.

Keywords: 1960s; Christianity; utopia; social movements; Marxism; leftist Christians

Resumen

Este artículo examina el surgimiento, consolidación e influencia del movimiento Cristianos por el Socialismo (CpS) dentro de una variedad de transformaciones políticas y religiosas interconectadas de los años sesenta. La elección de Salvador Allende en 1970 inspiró a un sector del clero chileno a vincular de manera creativa los principios del marxismo y el cristianismo. La noción de trascendencia y la construcción de un "Hombre Nuevo" apeló a los aspectos utópicos del pensamiento tanto religioso como marxista. El CpS chileno tuvo un impacto latinoamericano, como lo demuestra el Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo en Santiago en 1972, y un impacto transnacional, visto en la formación de la Asociación Ecuménica de Teólogos del Tercer Mundo en 1976. El análisis del CpS y su influencia dentro y fuera de Chile revela el trabajo de los católicos en el acercamiento marxista-cristiano. Esta es una dimensión a menudo ignorada por la historiografía.

Palabras clave: los años 60; cristianismo; utopía; movimientos sociales; marxismo; cristianos de izquierda

On April 16, 1971, a group of eighty priests in Chile's capital, Santiago, publicly declared, "As Christians, we do not see incompatibility between Christianity and socialism."[1]

[1] "Comunicado a la prensa de los sacerdotes participantes en las jornadas 'Participación de los Cristianos en la Construcción del Socialismo in Chile,'" April 16, 1971, Sergio Torres Personal Archive. Sergio Torres is a Chilean theologian and was a leading participant in Christians for Socialism. He shared his uncataloged personal archive

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The communiqué sparked uproar in the upper echelons of the Catholic Church and conservative Christian sectors. Not only did the priests recognize evangelical values in socialism; they also advocated a convergence of the tenets of Marxism and Christianity. Following the election of the self-declared Marxist Salvador Allende in September 1970, priests in working-class areas sought to comprehend the contemporary historical process and contemplate the role of Christians in a socialist society. In their declaration, the priests condemned Chile's underdevelopment as a direct result of capitalism, called out economic inequality, and expressed solidarity with the working class. They argued that the creation of a fraternal "new society" required "sacrifice" to bring about the "New Man, creator of an effectively solidary coexistence."[2] Cognizant of long-standing mutual animosity between Christians and Marxists, they called on Marxists to shed the notion of religion as opium of the masses and see it instead as a "liberating stimulus for the constant renovation of the world." They reminded Christians that "God is committed to the history of men and at this time, loving one's neighbor fundamentally means to strive so that this world may resemble as much as possible the future world that we hope for and that we are now building."[3] Che Guevara's conception of the "New Man" and Camilo Torres's "Integral Man," dependency theory, as well as liberation theology's emphasis on praxis, all inspired and influenced the priests' declaration.

Catapulted into the national scene with their polemical pronouncements, supporters and allies of the original eighty priests grew into a larger movement called Cristianos por el Socialismo (Christians for Socialism, CpS), which was active from 1971 to 1973. Estimates place the number of clerical participants in CpS at three hundred, nearly 12 percent of the total number of priests in Chile in the early 1970s (Smith 1982, 232). Though dominated primarily by priests rooted in rural and working-class areas, CpS also attracted religious sisters, laypersons, theology professors, and Protestant pastors (Smith 1982; Ramminger 2019). The CpS consisted of a heterogeneous group of both Chilean and foreign-born priests belonging to the Society of Jesus, Congregation of the Sacred Heart, and Congregation of Holy Cross. Much of the group's leadership—such as Jesuit Gonzalo Arroyo; Martín Gárate, CSC; and Guillermo Redington, CSC—were prominent intellectuals who penned articles in the Jesuit publication *Mensaje* or participated in research centers such as the Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Sociales (Latin American Institute of Social Studies, ILADES). Others, such as the diocesan worker-priest Mariano Puga and Movimiento Obrero de Acción Católica (Catholic Action Workers Movement, MOAC) adviser Alfonso Baeza, had long worked among urban dwellers and working-class sectors. What united them was a shared desire to rethink the role of clergy in society and to reconsider what the participation of Christians would entail in the "Chilean road to socialism." Most CpS members were of the same generation, and their theological and pastoral outlooks had been profoundly shaped by national, Latin American, and worldwide events, including Chile's experience with Christian Democracy, the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), and the conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) in Medellín, Colombia, in 1968.

The emergence of CpS was not anomalous. Its history belongs in what Michael Löwy (1996, 31–33) termed "liberationist Christianity," a Latin American movement, including but not limited to the theology of liberation, that coalesced around the critique of the region's dependent capitalism, institutionalized violence, and mass poverty. Despite differences, liberation theologians agreed on using Marxism as a socioanalytical tool for

with me after several recorded interviews in Santiago, Chile. Shortly after, the communiqué became simply known as the "Declaration of the 80," because the eighty participating priests signed it. The CpS declaration is reproduced in, Cid (1971). All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

[2] "Declaración de 'los 80,'" in Richard (1976, 212 and 214).

[3] "Declaración de 'los 80,'" in Richard (1976, 213).

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comprehending structural inequality, on the importance of struggling for liberation in the present to bring about salvation in the Kingdom of God, and on connecting human history with the divine history of Christ. Those guiding principles permeated CpS in Chile and led to internal discussions and disagreements. Christians for Socialism likewise drew from Latin American progressive and left-leaning movements. In Argentina, the Movimiento de Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo (Third World Priest Movement, MSTM), the Golconda movement in Colombia, Sacerdotes para el Pueblo (Priests for the People, SpP) in Mexico, and the Oficina Nacional de Información Social (National Office of Social Information, ONIS) in Peru all inspired and strengthened the intellectual and ideological underpinnings of CpS (Bradbury 2021; Martín 2010; Echeverry Pérez and Bernal Argote 2018; Pensado 2023; Smith 1982). The rise of CpS went against the efforts of the Alliance for Progress, which funneled large sums of money to prevent the infiltration of anticapitalist models in Chile. In doing so, CpS was embroiled in the regional and hemispheric dynamics of revolution and counterrevolution that shaped the Latin American Cold War (Joseph and Grandin 2010; Harmer 2011).

It is in the context of multiple and overlapping political and religious transformations in the long 1960s that we must situate the emergence of CpS in Chile and its broader Latin American and world impact. The theological variants of liberation and the "preferential option for the poor" reverberated throughout the region. Yet until recently, scholarship on the global 1960s had largely overlooked the religious dimensions of the decade (McLeod 2007). Against the common notion of secular 1960s social movements in Europe, and especially of 1968, Gerd-Rainer Horn (2015, 261) argues that "both messianic Catholicism and utopian Marxism captured the imagination of an entire generation and mutually influenced each other." Catholic activism also fomented 1960s social movements in Latin America. For instance, liberation theology and Marxist-inspired social movements shared the notion of transcendence and the construction of a "New Man" (Peterson 2007). The historian Jaime Pensado (2023, 17) further explores how "Catholicism interacted with, responded to, and shaped the significance" of the Mexican counterculture during the 1960s. The emergence of the New Left in Latin America likewise facilitated convergence between Christians and Marxists (Gould 2009; Valenzuela 2014; Bradbury 2021). Coincidentally, political theology and liberation theology emerged at nearly the same time, though from drastically different parts of the world, Europe and Latin America, respectively. Representatives from each camp, such as Jürgen Moltmann (1967) and Gustavo Gutiérrez (1988), mutually informed one another, even as they disagreed on the theological questions of hope and eschatology and on the precise contours of social engagement. The 1960s and 1970s thus witnessed fecund, if contentious, cross-fertilizations among and between Christians and leftists.

Scholarly interest in the Chilean Christians for Socialism and its Latin American counterparts is experiencing a recent boom (Puertas 2020; Bradbury 2021; Pensado 2023). The election of Pope Francis, the first pope from the Americas, has perhaps revived interest in earlier moments of church renewal emanating from the so-called periphery. Michael Ramminger (2019, 219), a German theologian and former participant in Christians for Socialism in Münster, Germany, argues that the CpS was an "important actor in the political disputes over ideological and political hegemony in the Chile of the Popular Unity coalition." Building on Ramminger's work, the Chilean historian Esteban Miranda (2020) situates the movement's history not just within a longer history of Chilean Catholic engagement with the "social question" but also within broader Latin American transformations. This long-term perspective informed Luz María Díaz de Valdés's (2018) work on CpS as a "final stage" in a long history of leftist Christianity. Studies of the Chilean Catholic Church, however, consider CpS as a short, largely ineffective blip in a longer history of accommodation and moderation within the church (Smith 1982; Fleet and Smith 1997). Even scholars who recognized the importance of CpS in dispelling the long-held

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illusion that the church could remain neutral in politics labeled CpS as an elitist group that failed to establish grassroots connections (Dodson 1979). David Fernández Fernández (1999), however, suggests that by shifting focus away from the CpS leadership, at the grassroots level, the critical awareness along left-leaning lines developed by CpS was the driving force behind the Chilean Catholic Church's human rights work during the dictatorship. The Chilean historian Marcos Fernández Labbé (2016a, 2016b) has most deeply engaged the CpS, the reception of liberation theology in Chile, and the theological and intellectual debates in the Chilean Catholic Church.

This article joins the growing and nuanced body of scholarship on leftist Christianity in the long 1960s. Like these works, I see the CpS movement as internally differentiated along various conceptions of liberation, political praxis, and the use of sociological methods of analysis. CpS drew simultaneously from members' own grassroots experiences as well as from the multiple strands of political and theological thought that dominated the 1960s and early 1970s. However, members were not passive recipients of ideas generated elsewhere. On the contrary, as this article shows, the most active and prolific members of CpS produced their own conception of liberation and of Marxist-Christian rapprochement. Some in CpS advocated for concrete partisan affiliation as an expression of working-class solidarity to build socialism while others pushed for distance from partisan politics to safeguard religion's critical role in fomenting the same. These divergent lines in CpS are united by a shared utopian impulse, characteristic of the progressive and humanist vein of both theology and politics.

This article makes use of personal archives, published primary sources, oral interviews, and Chilean Episcopal Conference (CECH) documents to comprehend the group's intellectual and theological production and the controversy surrounding it. The article first situates CpS's emergence in a longer history of Christian participation and engagement with Marxism. Through an examination of the group's declarations and theological writings, I show how CpS drew creatively from the concepts of utopia and liberation to produce competing models of Catholic engagement with socialism. The final section demonstrates CpS's regional impact, as evidenced by the organization of the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism in 1972 in Santiago, and its transnational impact in the formation of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians in 1976 (EATWOT).

Catholic engagement with politics and Marxism

Decades of Catholic sociopolitical initiatives before the 1970s laid the bedrock for contestatory Catholic movements. The creation of the Acción Católica Chilena (Chilean Catholic Action) in 1931 reflected the dire consequences of the global economic crisis on labor. Inspired by *Rerum novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo anno* (1931), Chilean bishops began to train the laity in social teachings in tune with papal encyclicals. A new generation of Chilean priests adapted French and Belgian methods of social activism and formed youth organizations, study circles, labor unions, and welfare organizations (Andes 2014, 128). Most prominent among them was the Chilean Jesuit Fernando Vives Solar, who not only spread the church's encyclicals to Chile but also served as a "spiritual guide" to Jesuit priest Alberto Hurtado, canonized in 2005 (Sagredo Baeza 1993, 10). Vives Solar was a staunch critic of Soviet-style communism. He berated Catholics who "mistakenly" looked for Christian values in socialist and communist revolutions. He wrote in 1928: "When we hear of Catholic socialism, we feel the same chill that assails the musician when he is horrifyingly off-key. Socialism and Catholicism are two incompatible terms" (qtd. in Sagredo Baeza 1993, 97). Vives Solar believed in a solely Catholic solution to the social, economic, and political challenges of the early twentieth century.

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In the 1940s and 1950s, social doctrine continued to guide Catholic action. Alberto Hurtado founded the charity Hogar de Cristo in 1944 and the Chilean Trade Union Association in 1947 to train working-class union leaders in the church's social teachings (Smith 1982). The bishop of Talca, Manuel Larraín, much like Hurtado, embraced social doctrine and played a leading role in the foundation of Catholic action movements, such as Juventud Obrera Católica (Catholic Youth Worker, JOC) and MOAC, as well as in the formation of CELAM. Larraín, however, was cautious not to ally the church with any one party or ideology. In 1952, he wrote that the "church is and must remain free and transcendent." He warned Catholics, "Every time we want to link it to an economic structure, to a historical form, to a class or to a party, we belittle and disfigure [the Catholic Church's] true physiognomy."[4] In the same document, he clarified his statements: "Some want to unite the Church to the party of their preference, others want to consider politics as totally separate from morality, and the temporal independent from the spiritual. Both positions are wrong and both result from forgetting the transcendence of the Church and its universal redemptive mission" (quoted in de la Noi 1976, 34). Bishop Larraín thus laid bare a central contradiction of social Christianity, one with which the future CpS movement would wrestle and attempt to resolve: simultaneously being in the world but not of it.

The electoral defeat of Salvador Allende and the Frente de Acción Popular (Front for Popular Action) coalition in 1958 and the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 catapulted Chile into the regional and global dynamics of the Cold War, politicizing and internationalizing daily life (Harmer 2021). Radicalizing Chilean youth, rapid rural-to-urban migration, and increased worker mobilizations pushed the Chilean Episcopal Conference to confront the issue of scarcity of priests in urban and rural working-class areas, so as not to cede space to political parties, especially of Marxist inspiration. In his 1962 "Notas para una pastoral de emergencia" (Notes for an Emergency Pastoral), Manuel Larraín explicitly referenced the Cuban Revolution and the inroads that "atheist communism" was making into Chilean universities and labor unions. He warned, "We cannot fall into the naiveté of assuming that once in power communism will respect the Church" (quoted in de la Noi 1976, 54). Larraín advocated for the integration of priests, sisters, and the laity into a single apostolic body, which he called the "pastoral del conjunto," as a first measure to counter the growing influence of Marxist politics in Chile.

Leading up to the contentious 1964 electoral campaign in Chile, Eduardo Frei Montalva's Christian Democratic Party (PDC) engaged in a ferocious Catholic anticommunist campaign (Casals 2020). The CECH, Jesuit intellectuals, and Catholic priests, all engaged in lively debates regarding communism. In their 1962 pastoral letter, "El deber social y político en la hora presente" (The Political and Social Duty at the Present Moment), the CECH reinforced its commitment to social justice as dictated by social doctrine and reiterated its long-standing views that sociopolitical problems required Catholic action, beyond charity.[5] They warned that the growing international influence of Marxist communism was not the answer. The CECH presented a long list of communist "evils," such as communism's presumed affront to individual liberties, the right to private property, and the nuclear family. The letter ultimately concluded: "Collaboration with communism is not possible. What collaboration, what possibilities of union exist, then, with a system or political party whose basic purpose is the destruction of all ideas and institutions that oppose it?"[6]

[4] Manuel Larraín, "Trascedencia de la Iglesia," *Ecclesia* 6 (1952): 1–3, reproduced in de la Noi (1976, 33). Digitized by the Centro de Estudios San Alberto Hurtado, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, https://centromanuellarrain.uc.cl/images/pdf/EscritosManuelLarrain/Libro1/ML1.01.LaIglesiaMision.pdf.

[5] Bishops of the Chilean Episcopal Conference, "El deber social y político en la hora presente," Secretariado General del Episcopado de Chile, September 18, 1962, http://www.iglesia.cl/detalle_documento.php?id=970.

[6] Bishops of the Chilean Episcopal Conference.

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The anticommunist hysteria and the call for "true reforms of the country's structures" such that they are "more in accordance with Christian principles," swayed Catholics to vote for the Christian Democrats in the 1964 elections.[7] A small minority, such as Jesuit José Aldunate and Catholic priest Jorge Hourton, were open to the possibility of collaboration with Marxist movements on concrete matters (Fernández Labbé 2016a, 37, 50). However, Fernández Labbé (2016a) argues that the polarization of the 1960s and the approaching 1964 election largely dissolved such nuanced views. Anticommunism played a "cohesive role within Catholic thought," at least for the time being (Fernández Labbé 2016a, 62).

To make up for the scarcity of priests and sisters in working-class communities, the Catholic Church of Santiago created the General Mission in 1963. The General Mission was geographically structured to carry out catechesis (religious instruction), form Christian base communities, and allow the laity to take an active role in Bible circles in rural, coastal, and urban zones (Serrano and Díaz de Valdés 2017). The Archdiocese of Santiago created the Vicariate of the Southern Zone in 1964, to evangelize the working classes of Santiago's southern sector, a territory that expanded drastically in the aftermath of large-scale land occupations and state housing plans to house the urban poor. Priests and sisters moved to working-class areas and became involved in the world of the poor through the practice of work (Serrano and Díaz de Valdés 2017, 167). This physical proximity and the ensuing affective ties between pastoral agents and everyday people would lead to mutual transformation and would move a sector of the clergy to the left.

Concurrent with the political upheavals of the early 1960s, the Catholic Church experienced its own awakening. The Second Vatican Council, an unprecedented event in twentieth-century Catholic history, had the most immediate effect on Chile and Brazil, according to Edward Cleary (1985). *Gaudium et spes*, a major council document, referred to the signs of the times "as measures and tools with which to comprehend the reality of a constantly changing world" (Horn 2015, 14). In article 67, *Gaudium et spes* posited that in the unequal relationship between capital and labor, Catholics must side with the weak. Of special importance to Latin America and the broader "Third World" at that time, article 71 of *Gaudium et spes* condemned feudal land relations in the "underdeveloped" world and even supported land redistribution. Following President Jorge Alessandri's 1962 land reform law, Bishop Manuel Larraín redistributed the Catholic Church lands of his diocese to peasants, for which he was dubbed a "traitor" by wealthy landowners and conservative Christian sectors (Aldunate et al. 2000, 28).

Emblematic of the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary dynamics of the Cold War, as Eduardo Frei assumed the presidency in 1964 and began his "Revolution in Liberty," a military coup overthrew the reformist president João Goulart in Brazil. Paulo Freire, the prominent Brazilian educator, found refuge in Chile and joined the PDC's programs to combat illiteracy in the countryside using critical pedagogy and consciousness-raising methods (Kirkendall 2010). While Freire argued that "one cannot impose changes *for* or *on* people, but only *with* them, as subjects," and suggested that larger structural changes should accompany his methods, alternative notions of how to deal with marginalized social sectors gained prominence (Kirkendall 2010, 71). A key figure in the intellectual backing of the PDC's policies for social reform was the Belgian Jesuit intellectual Roger Vekemans. He led the international Centro para el Desarrollo Económico y Social de América Latina (Center for Latin American Economic and Social Development, DESAL) in Santiago, which was central in propagating "marginality theory" in the region and in backing the Alliance for Progress (Vekemans 1967; see also Vekemans and Giusti 1970). Within the conceptual framework of "development," which Vekemans advocated, the church's role would include reforming religious values to promote modernization and

[7] Bishops of the Chilean Episcopal Conference.

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increase national integration while avoiding charged political conflicts. Vekemans would later become a fierce opponent of liberation theology, characterizing it in his writings solely as a form of Marxist infiltration (Vekemans 1976).[8]

Both progressive and conservative strands of Catholicism built dense networks of exchange throughout the 1960s. Toward the end of the 1960s, however, the slow pace of Frei's reforms frustrated party militants and the countless priests, sisters, and lay activists living and working in marginalized areas. The bishops' statements in Medellín also accelerated radicalization. The bishops relied on sociological tools to analyze Latin American reality and to reorient Latin American theology in line with Vatican II. Eschewing the developmentalist paradigm of the Alliance for Progress, CELAM instead adopted the notion of liberation. Its declaration stated: "We are on the threshold of a new historical epoch of our continent, filled with yearning for total emancipation, for liberation from all servitude, for personal maturation and collective integration."[9] Liberation necessitated personal as well as social transformations, in other words, the creation of the "New Man." The word *liberation* appeared twelve times in the final Medellín document, but it was never detached from the Gospel. On the contrary, it was consistently linked to the history of salvation in the Bible. As critiques of dependent capitalism and the need for liberation from oppressive structures became commonplace in political and religious circles, radicalized young members of the PDC split from the party in 1969 and formed the Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria (Movement for Unitary Popular Action, MAPU) (Valenzuela 2014). Medellín thus had cemented the theological "shift from development to liberation" (Cleary 1985, 43) on the heels of Salvador Allende's election in 1970 and the subsequent emergence of Christians for Socialism.

Liberation and utopia in Christians for Socialism

Years after his participation in CpS, Diego Irarrázaval of the Congregation of Holy Cross reflected on the affective dimensions of CpS in an interview: "What moved us … was a utopia, but without calling it that. In Christian, evangelical terms, it is the utopia of the Kingdom of God; in human, social terms, it is the utopia of overcoming the capitalist system, the organization of life around the market, and the consumption of things."[10] Present in Irarrázaval's statement is the attempt to link the Christian conception of the Kingdom of God and its implied hope for the future with the Marxist project of overthrowing capitalism to bring about a better world. Throughout the interview, Irarrázaval struggled to discursively capture the meaning of utopia, alluding to notions of realizing "the project of Jesus, here and now, [which] has consequences for what comes next."[11] Theologians and leftists had long wrestled with the multiple valences of utopia.

Largely ignored and discredited following the horrors of Stalinism and Maoism, what Jay Winter (2006) terms the "major utopias" (or dystopias) of the twentieth century, the concept of utopia has made a comeback (see also Gould 2020), yet not without contradictions. For Fredric Jameson (2004), the process of envisioning a utopic future creates a critical distance through which to contemplate the limitations of the present. For Jameson, utopian thinking can roam free and tap into desire and fantasy—the

[8] Following the election of Allende in 1970, Vekemans left Chile and moved to Colombia, where he founded the Research Center for the Development and Integration of Latin America, and "launched an ideological war" against Christians for Socialism (Pensado 2013, 76).

[9] Segunda Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano, "La Iglesia en la actual transformación de América Latina a la luz del Concilio," documentos finales de Medellín, 1968, https://www.celam.org/documentos/Documento_Conclusivo_Medellin.pdf.

[10] Diego Irarrázaval interview by author, August 21, 2017, Santiago, Chile.

[11] Irarrázaval interview.

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unconscious—when the political is pushed to the margins. He considers moments of political upheaval as dwindling the utopian imagination insofar as they focus on concrete political agendas that seem to render utopia useless. Jameson's (2004, 43) claim that "utopia emerges at the moment of the suspension of the political" suggests an evasion of politics. Contrary to Jameson, David Harvey (2008, 289) argues that the danger of this kind of utopia is that it becomes nothing but "a pure signifier of hope destined never to acquire a material referent." Unlike Jameson, Harvey has a political project in mind, and his utopianism must find realization in real possibilities for alternative futures. An important distinction thus emerges between the process of utopia (in Jameson's vein) and the content of utopia (in Harvey's vein). As will become apparent, CpS members diverged along similar lines as they engaged in the construction of Allende's socialism.

Utopian elements have been a central component in Latin American social and religious movements. The triumph of the Cuban Revolution made utopia seem reachable. In her analysis of Che Guevara's writings, Diana Sorensen (2007, 28) argues that by embracing self-sacrifice, discipline, and morality, Che "map[ped] the terms for the definition of the 'New Man' in language appropriated from religion." She further argues that utopia "privileges a language of movement and marching not merely toward a better place, but significantly, to a superior form of humanity" (Sorensen 2007, 28–29). Thus, the utopian drive implies a radical break with the present to bring about the desired future. The process of how to get from the present to the future, from here to there, is less clear. In conversation with political theologians, humanist Marxists, and liberation theologians, CpS members in Chile engaged in dynamic debates both about the process and the content of utopia. They shared the utopian impulse to realize the Kingdom of God "here and now," but they often disagreed on how to precisely make it possible.

As early as 1967, the Jesuit intellectual and agronomist Gonzalo Arroyo, the future secretary of CpS, engaged the concept of utopia in his article "Doctrina, utopía y subversión" (Arroyo 1967). Because Latin American societies were in a process of "transition" to birth new societies, Arroyo worried that "ideological and doctrinal ambiguity" (Arroyo 1967, 341) could take root and lead to anomie. To comprehend all that the process of historical transition entailed, he drew on the work of the Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda, who in turn relied on the Hungarian sociologist Karl Mannheim's concept of utopia. Building on Fals Borda, Arroyo argued that "by exposing the inconsistencies of the social order and of a given era," utopia "provokes collective action and popular exultation that can lead to the replacement of that social order" (Arroyo 1967, 342). Revolutionary Christians who sought to realize utopian projects, Arroyo discerned, faced an "interminable tension," engaging in concrete political actions while remaining open to all kinds of dialogue. Ultimately, Arroyo concluded that while Christians can positively contribute to revolutionary processes, they must avoid "blind and emotional adherence to timeless and rigid utopias." On the contrary, "the struggle in favor of deep structural changes" must not "ignore economic, mental and political determinisms" (Arroyo 1967, 347). In advocating for less rigid interpretations of only social doctrine, however, Arroyo placed the burden of collaboration with Marxists on Christians.

Gustavo Gutiérrez elaborated a far more nuanced perspective on utopia. In his now-classic text, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Gutiérrez 1988) (published in Spanish in 1971 as *Teología de la liberación: Perspectivas*), Gutiérrez drew on the work of the neo-Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch, who was influential both to the New Left and European political theologians.[12] In *The Principle of Hope,* Bloch considered cultural forms, such as art, music, and religion as repositories of both hope and future potentials waiting to be expressed. According to Peter Thompson (2013, 92), "The utopian dimension in Bloch is an attempt to claim back for humanity that which they have ceded to the Holy Spirit

[12] On how Bloch influenced both the New Left and European political theologians such as the Catholic Johann Baptist Metz and Protestan Jürgen Moltmann, see especially chapter 1 in Gerd-Rainer Horn (2015).

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without denying the value of the spiritual." Bloch saw religion as a product of human activity containing immense emancipatory potential, and in so doing, he suggested that human beings are not already made but are incomplete, unfulfilled, and in a constant process of attainment. Bloch did not dismiss religion as false consciousness but recognized that it contains an embedded hope. It was Bloch's notion of hope as a "'daydream' projected into the future" (Gutiérrez 1988, 123) that most attracted Gutiérrez to his work. Although for Bloch the "not-yet" was a dynamic and open-ended process, for Gutiérrez, it was the contemporary Latin American revolutionary experience that made "utopian thought viable and highlight[ed] its wealth of possibilities" (Gutiérrez 1988, 135).

Gutiérrez drew on Bloch's notion of utopia and adapted it to the Latin American context. He elaborated on what he called three elements of utopia: its relationship to historical reality, its verification in praxis, and its rational nature. The latter statement directly responded to claims that utopian thinking is irrational or unrealistic. He argued that utopia's "relationship to historical reality is neither simple nor static. It appears under two aspects that are mutually necessary and make for a complex and dynamic relationship. These two aspects, in Freire's words, are denunciation and annunciation" (Gutiérrez 1988, 136). The act of denunciation of injustice and annunciation of a better future, however, demanded praxis. Gutiérrez even stated: "If utopia does not lead to action in the present, it is an evasion of reality" (Gutiérrez 1988, 137). Thus, only concrete actions in the present could lead to social, economic, and political liberation, the kind of liberation embodied in Che Guevara's "New Man" and Camilo Torres's "Integral Man," that is, "body and soul, spirit and matter, human, economic and social" (Torres 1970, 141). Utopia, for Gutiérrez, played a mediating role in the process of liberation: "Faith and political action will not enter into a correct and fruitful relationship except through the effort to create a new type of person in a different society, that is, except through utopia" (Gutiérrez 1988, 138). Gutiérrez's emphasis on the relationship between utopia, history, and liberation influenced how CpS members approached Marxist-Christian rapprochement during the early 1970s.

CpS leaders drew from liberation theology not only in their desire to maintain an active dialectic between theory and practice but also in suggesting that salvation must occur in the contemporary moment rather than in the afterlife. Sister Francisca Morales of the Amor Misericordioso Congregation, joined CpS because, for her, there could be "no solely political or religious option, they have to be united; the religious have to be inserted in the political and social reality, if not, they do not understand the ways of the people. If you want to accompany the people and be part of the people, hopefully really be part of the people, you must learn from them."[13] Giulio Girardi, an Italian theologian, former Salesian priest, and founder of Christians for Socialism in Italy, was an integral part of the initial discussions of the eighty Chilean priests and their declaration in support of socialism, and he subsequently became an active participant in the Chilean CpS.[14] In his talk during the Fifth International Week of Theology, Girardi expounded on the issue of class struggle for the church. He questioned the traditional religious paradigm that God created nature and men and that the evils of the world were simply the result of God's will. For Girardi, this perspective suggests that since Man has already been made, there is little to be done in this world to alter the conditions that structure his life. Class struggle, according to this position, is unnatural since it disturbs the order of things. Girardi criticized this view as a "Christian doctrinal conception of reality as static, fixed, hierarchical."[15] The historical

[13] Francisca Morales interview by author, May 25, 2017, Santiago, Chile.

[14] Giulio Girardi played a critical role in advocating for Christian-Marxist dialogue in both Italy and Chile. His book *Marxismo y cristianismo* became highly influential. For the Spanish translation, see Girardi (1968). The spelling of his name appears most often as *Giulio*.

[15] Giulio Girardi, "Cristianismo y lucha de clases" (presentation to the 5th International Week of Theology, Bilbao), Sergio Torres Personal Archive.

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conception of human and social development transformed Christian religious life and social commitment. By recognizing that class struggle was an undeniable feature of Latin American social upheavals of the period, CpS leaders questioned the notion of the unity of the Catholic Church. Thus, according to Girardi, "[to] accept class struggle also among Christians does not mean that we want to divide the Church, but to become aware of a division that already exists" between poor and rich Christians.[16] Gustavo Gutiérrez had long advocated that a new way of doing theology required what Clodovis Boff (1987) calls a "socio-analytical mediation," which entails a contextual, concrete, and historical knowledge of society. In addition to foregrounding praxis as the fundamental place where theology occurs, liberation theologians rejected a solely spiritual hermeneutics and instead sought to highlight the political aspects in their reading of scripture.

During a meeting in Coronel-Lota in the south of Chile, demonstrating the creative convergence between Christians and Marxists, Giulio Girardi reassured miners that their Christian upbringing and Marxist-inspired political organizing were not in conflict with each other.[17] On the contrary, Girardi recognized the value of Marxism as a "mobilizing doctrine."[18] He also acknowledged that the increased everyday interactions between and among Christians and Marxists in Chile could no longer be avoided. He suggested that conversations such as the one taking place in Coronel had to occur with the workers; otherwise, the CpS's intellectual work would be rendered useless—it "could fill books, but it could not fill our life."[19] Girardi likewise explained that traditional perspectives on the relationship between Marxism and Christianity had contributed to mischaracterizing both. As Bloch had done earlier, Girardi insisted that one must not dissociate the ideology of Marxism (which had often been seen as incompatible with religion) from its socioanalytical elements. Such a distinction, he explained, is the result of the spread of Althusserian ideas and the implied epistemological rupture it demanded between Marxism as science and Marxism as ideology.[20] Instead, Girardi advocated, "We must consider, on the one hand, Christianity as a dynamic reality, as a dynamic way of living and thinking, and Marxism, on the other, also as a dynamic system, as a system which cannot be considered complete, but rather in motion."[21] Girardi went as far as to say that one could not engage in dialogue with dogmatic Marxists and that a strictly rigid interpretation of Marx was not Marxism. For him, the relationship between Marxism and Christian faith had to be a "creative" one, much like Bloch. Only by seeing both Marxism and Christianity as open, dynamic systems could faith assume its "force of contestation and transformation of the world," that is, its utopian dimension.[22] Years after the coup in Chile and the dissolution of CpS, Girardi still maintained that convergence between revolutionary Christians and revolutionary Marxists was possible, especially via the influence of dialectical Marxists such as Antonio Gramsci and Ernst Bloch (Girardi 1988).

The secretary of CpS, the Jesuit Gonzalo Arroyo, expressed similar sentiments on the critical relationship between Marxism and Christianity. He emphasized that a Christian way of life and thinking changed with the experience of living in shantytowns and interacting closely with workers. There exists, he said, "a certain solidarity, a certain fraternity, which anticipates the solidarity that we seek for all society, which is the *anticipation of the Kingdom of Christ* in which there will be truly effective love for others,

[16] Girardi, "Cristianismo y lucha de clases."

[17] The Coronel-Lota mines in Concepción province were emblematic sites for working-class militancy and for the formation of multi-class alliances throughout the twentieth century, see Schlotterbeck (2018).

[18] Giulio Girardi, "Cristianismo y Marxismo" (text of a talk given to a workers' group in Coronel), Sergio Torres Personal Archive.

[19] Girardi.

[20] Girardi.

[21] Girardi, 8.

[22] Girardi, 11. Girardi used the word *creative* to describe the relationship between Christianity and Marxism.

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in which there will be justice for all, in which there will be true peace, peace founded not on inequalities and privileges for some and misery for others."[23] This notion of a present that already anticipates the future—or of a future that is already somewhat immanent in the present—reveals Bloch's utopian influence.

Like Bloch, the "Final Document" that resulted from the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism in 1972 expresses the notion that faith can have critical, creative dimensions: "The Christian committed to revolutionary praxis discovers the liberating force of the love of God, of the death and resurrection of Christ. He discovers that his faith is not the acceptance of a world already made and of a history already predetermined, but that his faith is the creative existence of a new and fraternal world, or historical initiative fertilized by Christian hope."[24] The kind of utopianism embedded in the quote is certainly nonteleological and self-interrogating. Likewise, the Final Document imbues faith not only with critical valences but also with the writers' notion of a socialist society. For the Latin American delegates meeting that day, "[the] construction of socialism is a creative process in conflict with all dogmatic schematics and with every a-critical position. Socialism is not a set of ahistorical dogmas but a critical theory, in constant development."[25] In "¿Que hacer? Cristianos en el proceso socialista," Diego Irarrázaval framed consciousness-raising [*concientización*] along the same lines, as "a dialectic between the present and the future, that is to say, as an eschatological force."[26]

Debates over the precise role of Christians in concretely building socialism became more divisive in CpS over time. The disagreements reflected the broader tensions within the Popular Unity coalition and between leftist factions. As political polarization and right-wing sabotage of Allende's government deepened after his first year in office, the question of partisan affiliation within CpS became increasingly heated. Two examples demonstrate the divergent positions within CpS. The Spanish priest Ignacio Pujadas formed the Comunidad de Cristianos Revolucionarios, a revolutionary Christian community in Forestal Alto, Viña del Mar, in October 1971.[27] Unlike other base communities, this one was not open to all. It required acceptance by current members and "revolutionary discipline." The community declared that if members could not prioritize monthly meetings and other required activities, a "revolutionary tribunal" could ultimately decide to expel a member from the community.[28] Referencing Che Guevara and Camilo Torres, the Forestal Alto community mandated strict acceptance of their principles, claiming that "only revolutionary discipline can lead us to revolutionary morality. Only revolutionary morality can lead us to revolutionary Christianity. Only revolutionary Christianity can liberate men."[29] Not all members and allies of CpS, however, shared the dogmatic perspective on what liberation entailed.

Although the leadership of CpS never sought to break from the Catholic Church, the individual ideological positions of prominent members worried CpS affiliates. Such was the case with Congregation of the Sacred Heart priests Pablo Fontaine, Esteban Gumucio, and Ronaldo Muñoz, who founded the San Pedro San Pablo parish in Santiago's southern periphery for missionary work with the poor. In their letter of February 11, 1973, to then

[23] Gonzalo Arroyo, "Significado y sentido de Cristianos por el Socialismo," Jornada Nacional, November 26, 1972, 3, Sergio Torres Personal Archive.

[24] Final Document, April 23–30, 1972, Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo, pt. 2, *punto* 3.5, Official Version, Santiago, Chile, Sergio Torres Personal Archive. Reproduced in Ochagavía (1972, 365).

[25] Reproduced in Ochagavía (1972, 362).

[26] Diego Irarrázaval, "¿Que hacer? Cristianos en el proceso socialista," Jornada Nacional, November 25, 1972, Sergio Torres Personal Archive.

[27] "Comunidad de Cristianos Revolucionarios: Primera declaración de principios," December 1971, in Richard (1976, 239–241).

[28] "Comunidad de Cristianos Revolucionarios. Primera declaración de principios," in Richard (1976, 240).

[29] "Comunidad de Cristianos Revolucionarios. Primera declaración de principios," in Richard (1976, 240–241).

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secretary of CpS Guillermo Redington, they expressed concern that CpS was becoming "sectarian" and "politically partisan."[30] For Fontaine, at stake in the recent ideological pronouncements of the CpS coordinating committee was the abandonment of their initial goal of being a "critical force within the left." Fontaine admitted that he, Gumucio, and Muñoz were questioning their CpS membership. Fontaine's letter arrived after CpS leader Pablo Richard had engaged in direct confrontations with the church hierarchy, attacked social doctrine and the PDC as reformist and as cover for the status quo, and affiliated with the Movimiento Izquierdista Revolucionario (Leftist Revolutionary Movement, MIR).[31] Political activity that was becoming openly partisan worried Fontaine, for it threatened to foreclose the distance necessary to imbue Christian faith with critical valences. Fontaine had written in 1970 that "Christians do not intend to guide the revolution or take advantage of it for personal gain, but they would like to be a ferment of true humanization, understanding by humanization not only the construction of a new, open, fraternal and supportive man, but of a man who is more than man, who hopes for all men a life without limits, to which he is driven by the force of a love without measure" (Fontaine 1970, 172; Fontaine 1973). These differences reflect the diverse ways in which CpS members conceived of Christian salvation and historical liberation to produce competing models of engagement with socialism.

The Latin American and Third World dimensions of CpS

On November 29, 1971, during a visit to Chile, Cuba's revolutionary leader Fidel Castro met members of CpS and laypeople in Santiago (Silva Solar 1971). Castro indicated that he was genuinely interested and curious to meet leftist Christians in Chile, for he realized that Christians could play a crucial role in the revolutionary process (Daubechies 1972). During the session, Castro emphasized that "the strategic alliance between revolutionary Marxists and revolutionary Christians is possible," once bourgeois values had been extirpated from the Christian faith (Daubechies 1972). The meeting with Castro reaffirmed the conviction of CpS that unless they contributed to fomenting meaningful collaboration between Christians and Allende's Popular Unity coalition, the Chilean Church would run the risk of remaining on the sidelines of history. Although Castro's visit electrified CpS members, some of the attendees wondered: "Can a ruler impose not only a lifestyle, but an ideology, to an entire people, even if it is for the sake of a deeply respectable ideal?" (Daubechies 1972, 62). The meeting with Fidel Castro sparked criticism, so much so that Fidel mentioned it in his farewell speech at the Chilean National Stadium. It also led members of CpS to couch many of their subsequent pronouncements in the language of Latin American and Third World liberation.

Such was the degree of mutual curiosity that, after an official invitation by the Cuban government, twelve Chilean priests visited Cuba between February 14 and March 3, 1972. CpS members could hardly pass up the opportunity to observe firsthand a triumphant socialist revolution. From Cuba, they issued "Message to the Christians of Latin America," not to give in to divisions between Christians and Marxists but to realize that the real divisions among them were between the exploiters and the exploited. They felt compelled to announce that it was time to build a "new Latin American Church" and a "new Latin American people."[32] They ended their statement with a slogan previously used by the

[30] Pablo Fontaine letter to Guillermo Redington and the CpS Coordinating Committee, February 11, 1973, Sergio Torres Personal Archive. Fontaine specified that Gumucio and Muñoz shared his concerns and all three had discussed the letter.

[31] Pablo Richard often wrote using the pseudonym "Esteban Torres." See Torres (1972, 16–18); Esteban Torres (1972), "El futuro de la DC: Definirse o morir," Sergio Torres Personal Archive.

[32] "Message to the Christians of Latin America," March 3, 1972, Havana, Sergio Torres Personal Archive.

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Iglesia Joven in Chile that comes from the Colombian guerrilla priest Camilo Torres: "The duty of every Christian is to be a revolutionary. The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution."[33] Some affiliated with the CpS followed in Torres's footsteps and joined the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army, ELN) in Bolivia. Such was the case with Néstor Paz, whose personal letter Pablo Richard published in his book, *Cristianos por el socialismo: Historia y documentación* (1976). In his letter, Paz defended armed struggle as the only method to bring about liberation and the construction of a "New Man, freed by the blood and resurrection of Jesus" (printed in Richard 1976, 248). Reflective of the radical ethos of the time, the letter romanticizes armed struggle and death. For Paz, there was no "greater love than he who gives up his life" for others (Richard 1976, 246). Members of CpS who advocated armed struggle in the vein of Torres and Che, however, were few and far between.

A little over a month after the return of the Chilean delegation from Cuba, the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism began on April 23, 1972, in Santiago. The planning for the regional congress had started in December 1971, when a working group of priests from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, and Peru discussed the need to reflect theologically on Latin American conditions and to share ideas about the continent's path of liberation (Montes 1972). The Chilean "road to socialism" had sparked worldwide interest, so they chose Santiago as a symbolic location in which to hold the congress. The weeklong meetings were held in the gymnasium of the Hirmas textile factory's industrial union, where more than four hundred Chilean and foreign delegates gathered (Montes 1972). The organizers planned the meeting to coincide with the Third United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which was taking place in Santiago at the same time, to receive better press coverage and to suggest a symbolic alternative to economic dependency. The Chilean minister of foreign relations, Clodomiro Almeyda, gave opening remarks and read a supportive statement from President Salvador Allende at the end of the meeting (Montes 1972, 348).

Although the CpS organizing committee had issued personal invitations to Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez and other Chilean bishops, the hierarchy kept a safe institutional distance from the gathering. The CECH wrote confidential letters to different national episcopal conferences across the continent to warn them that the planned congress did not have the institutional backing of the Chilean Catholic Church, to dissuade participation (Montes 1972, 349–350). Although both the Chilean hierarchy and members of CpS reiterated their desired mutual autonomy and emphasized the freedom of the clergy to organize similar conferences, their confrontation signaled a widening gap.

The only high ecclesiastical authority present at the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism was the bishop of Cuernavaca, Mexico, Sergio Méndez Arceo. This can be explained in part by noting that by 1972, the year of the conference, CELAM appointed the conservative Colombian archbishop Alfonso López Trujillo as secretary general. According to Edward Cleary (1985, 45), this election moved CELAM toward a more "cautious, spiritualizing tendency." The language and tone of Gonzalo Arroyo, the Jesuit leader of CpS, indicates a full embrace of not only liberation theology but also of ideologically charged categories that further increased tensions between CpS and the Chilean Episcopal Conference. Arroyo stated that the Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism was meant as a theological reflection to "purify our faith from those bourgeois ideological elements that often cover it and from those blocks that prevent it from expressing in all its intensity the renewing power of the Gospel" Montes 1972, 348). In an increasingly polarized Chilean political climate, the CpS language and public declarations made the Chilean bishops increasingly uneasy.

[33] "Message to the Christians of Latin America."

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During the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism, each delegation shared national socioanalytical reports informing participants about political conflicts in its country. The "Final Document" that resulted from the gathering placed these varying national experiences within a larger focus on the structural violence produced by Latin America's neocolonial capitalist relations.[34] This regional reality, the writers argued, placed Latin America in a dependent position vis-à-vis capitalist economies and generated inequalities that further worsened the conditions of the poor. For this reason, a regional, united Latin American response was necessary: "A second struggle for independence, where the revolutionary forces of a continent that has in common a past of colonization and a present of exploitation and misery can unite."[35] These Latin American Christians were inspired not only by their continent's independence leaders, such as José Martí and Simon Bolívar, but also by the anticolonial struggles then unfolding throughout the "Third World," such as in Asia and Africa.[36] Thus, for conference participants, the revolutionary commitment of Christians required a "global historical project for societal transformation."[37] The document's language of structural injustice, institutionalized violence, imperialism, and the need for a "strategic alliance" between Marxists and Christians reveals the multiple influences of dependency theory, Medellín, liberation theology, and the Cuban Revolution on Christians for Socialism.

Following the First Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism and their widespread influence in Latin America and Europe, relations between the CECH and the CpS were at a breaking point. The bishops' publication of their condemnation of CpS participants in October 1973 took on a different set of meanings after the coup of September 11, 1973, when the military junta targeted not only union activists, students, and political leaders but also the clergy.[38] After accusing the CpS of distorting the church's mission, of confusing the faithful with their "ambiguity," and suggesting that their intentions were more in line with a political party, the Chilean Episcopal Conference declared: "We prohibit the priests and religious who are part of that organization to carry out—in whatever form, institutional or personal, organized or spontaneous—the type of action that we have denounced in this document."[39] The junta forced CpS priests and sisters, both Chilean and foreign born, into exile, and the violence that ensued for the following seventeen years effectively silenced public mention of CpS.

Leading CpS theologians and priests largely disbanded following the 1973 coup. Diego Irarrázaval left Chile in April 1974, continued his pastoral duties in the Andean region of Peru, and returned to Chile in 2004.[40] Sergio Torres, who shared with me his personal archive of CpS documents, likewise fled Chile in 1973. Torres helped start liberation theology groups during his stay with the Maryknolls in New York. He returned to Chile in 1980.[41] Pablo Richard, perhaps the best known of Chile's liberation theologians, fled to France and later settled in Costa Rica, where he remained until his death. While the coup displaced and isolated CpS leaders, for grassroots priests and lay Christians who remained in Chile, the consequences were far worse, including detention, torture, and even death. Such was the case for both domestic and foreign-born priests who participated in the CpS movement.

[34] "Final Document," 1er Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo, Introducción, Official Version, Santiago, Chile, April 23–30, Sergio Torres Personal Archive.

[35] "Final Document," *punto* 2.1.

[36] On Latin American independence struggles, see "Final Document," *punto* 2.1.

[37] See "Final Document," *punto* 1.1.

[38] See Conferencia Episcopal de Chile, "Fe cristiana y actuación política," in Oviedo Cavada (1974, 178–212).

[39] Conferencia Episcopal de Chile, in Oviedo Cavada (1974, 206).

[40] Irarrázaval interview.

[41] Sergio Torres interview by author, May 16, 2017, Santiago, Chile.

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The plans of the Chilean CpS for a united Latin American liberation struggle were cut short by the coup. However, the work of politically motivated priests and sisters was hardly over in Chile. Shortly after the coup, the CpS as a movement officially dissolved and its members subsequently participated in grassroots organizing against the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship. As the historian Alison Bruey (2018) has shown, associations between Christians, Marxists, and party militants that had long generated a densely networked social life in Chile did not go away with the coup but slowly rearticulated to challenge the dictatorship. Exiled leaders of CpS continued to maintain links with liberation theologians the world over. In 1975, the Second Latin American Encounter of Christians for Socialism would take place in Quebec, Canada.[42] By 1976, the leadership of the Chilean CpS would partake in the organizing directive of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), which held its first meeting in Dar es Salaam.[43] The Chilean Sergio Torres was the first general secretary of EATWOT. The encounter with theologians from Africa and Asia challenged the Chileans to consider the critical role of race and gender, not just class, when it came to liberation projects inspired by the Gospel (Aldunate et al. 2000, 61). EATWOT went further than the Latin American experience of liberation theology in announcing that it was necessary to construct a fraternal society through the recognition of difference (be it cultural, racial, or sexual) (Hermano and Bonavía 2009, 48). Although a more in-depth reflection on the various "Third World" meetings is beyond the purview of this article, it is important to recognize that the Chilean experience with liberation theology as embodied in the Christians for Socialism movement played a critical role in the elaboration of a Third World liberation theology.

Conclusion

Beginning in the mid-1950s, scores of priests and religious sisters in Chile lived among the urban poor, urging social and political transformation while epistemologically breaking with traditional evangelical paradigms. This wave of liberation in the Chilean Catholic Church reached its peak with the formation of the Christians for Socialism movement, which stood in unequivocal support of Allende's socialist project. Their embrace of Marxist concepts, however, was controversial and caused rifts within the church hierarchy. In turn, CpS's political commitments also stoked tensions with other priests and nuns who advocated a more apolitical role for the church.

This article has shown that the CpS drew on multiple strands of thought, such as on Guevara's "New Man," Torres's "Integral Man," liberation theology, and European political theologians to reconcile the need for liberation in the now with the traditional Catholic conception of salvation in the afterlife. They did so via the capacious concept of utopia. Studies of the Christians for Socialism movement have overlooked the ways in which members' utopian thinking transformed the conventional notions of both Marxism and Christianity. Such thinking allowed CpS to navigate uncharted epistemological territory as it sought to undo the hold of dogmatic perspectives that so influenced the Latin American Left of the 1960s and 1970s. In doing so, CpS pointed the way forward for a dynamic and creative convergence between the two most important forces behind twentieth-century social movements, Marxism and Christianity. The utopian impulse is reflected in the intellectual and theological writings of many CpS members. Although the coup temporarily foreclosed the utopian horizon, the desire for a future free of exploitation guided members' activities in exile and within Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship.

[42] Torres interview.

[43] Sergio Torres, Pablo Richard, and Diego Irarrázaval from CpS are some of Chileans who had an active role in EATWOT (Aldunate et al. 2000). The Chilean Sergio Torres played a critical role in the creation of EATWOT and its intellectual orientation (Hermano and Bonavía 2009).

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