Chapter IV

FROM MEDELLIN TO PUEBLA

Ideological polarization of the "left" and the "right" became even more pronounced in the Church in the years after the Second General Conference of the Latin American Bishops of 1968. Medellin did not create the "right". It was there in Latin America from the beginning of the colonial days. Medellin did not create the "left" either, it had its inception in Latin America long before Medellin. Though some such revolutionary groups as Christians for Socialism, Priests for the Third World, Golconda Group and Camilo Torres Movement seized on the Medellin documents as support for their radical political activism, the Medellin Conclusions could in no way be described as a platform for revolution. The real causes of the polarization lay outside the Medellin documents.

It was towards the end of the 1960s that the structural crisis of the capitalist, neo-colonial and dependent system became acute. It was not only an economic crisis, but also political and ideological.

The Development Decade witnessed the great multinational bourgeoisie, especially the North American, progressively
transforming the national bourgeoisies into mere local economic and political sub-agents. National developmental reformism produced only greater dependence, and Latin America fell irreversibly into the vicious circle of underdevelopment. 'Populist', 'nationalist', and 'reformist' efforts wore themselves out completely. The system could never again be able to tolerate another Lazaro Cardenas, a Getulio Vargas, a Peron, a Paz Estenssoro or an Eduardo Frei. The liberal democratic modern state was replaced by a new kind of state called the National Security State. (Chile took a different, socialist path for a while. But in 1973, its military brought it into the main stream of national security states). The dominant liberal ideology was replaced by the ideology of National Security, according to which the State was identified with the nation and all opposition, liberal, socialist or even ecclesiastical, was savagely repressed as a grave threat to national and continental security (Thus in Brazil since 1964, Paraguay since 1954, Bolivia since 1971, Argentina since 1976, Chile since 1973, Uruguay since 1976 and so on). Democratic participation was replaced by authoritarian integration (except, to some extent, in Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico and Costa Rica).

These processes deeply affected the life of the Church. They deprived the institutional Church of its social and political base of support throwing into crisis the social and promotional schemes of the Church. The National Security State required the Church to choose between integration and repression.
Parallel to these processes there was formation and strengthening of leftist movements within the Church and outside it. The left was repressed, but it was also tried, cleansed, and began a qualitatively different process of maturation.

The period starting roughly from 1965 witnessed the rise of any number of movements including terrorist ones, or strengthening of existing ones both on the right and on the left. A few of them such as the Camilo Torres Movement, Young Church (Chile), Golconda Movement (Colombia), Priests for the Third World (Argentina) ONIS (Peru), SAL (Mexico and Colombia) and Christians for Socialism (Chile) were organized either for the radically committed clergy or under their leadership. Unlike many other leftist organizations they were avowedly Christian in origin and drew their inspiration largely from the Medellin Conference. Society for the Defense of Family Tradition and Property, the Christian *cursillos*, the various Anti-Communist fronts especially the Latin American Anti-Communist Confederation, the Christian Family Movement and any number of pious associations were created or strengthened under the auspices of a section of the Church to protect the traditional values, and prevent any change. There were, besides, as many as fifty one movements of the extreme left and twenty eight movements of the extreme right throughout Latin America in 1970.¹ Though they were not connected with the Church

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they drew their members from among the Catholics and some of them at least, especially the ultra rightist ones professed to promote the interest of the Church. It is not possible to discuss all the myriad movements on the left and on the right. From among the many movements Christians for Socialism seem to represent a typical ideology of the Christian left while the Doctrine of the National Security seem to stand for a typical ideology of the Christian right.

**Christians for Socialism**

The orientation towards liberation in the broadest sense, as already discussed above, is the key to the thinking identified with Medellin. Many socially committed Catholics found attractive the conclusions that emerged from the Medellin Conference based on a consideration of the socio-economic, political and cultural realities of Latin America. Within a very short time, however, it became evident that the implementation of the conclusions of Medellin, as indeed those of the Second Vatican Council, would be no easy task. The alliances, allegiances, coalitions, and interests nurtured over several centuries had created a variety of interlocking bonds and links which could not be altered by the exhortative documents of Medellin. Latin American analysts of the modernization efforts, encouraged by development planners, pointed out the ever increasing dependency on the United States and the
creation of financial and political structures that would insure allegiance to an international system headed by the United States, in which the Latin American countries would always remain subservient.²

Out of the seven hundred and more bishops in the Latin American Church, only very few initiated programmes directed at bringing about at least an attitudinal change as envisaged by Medellin which would lead to actual social transformation projected by the Second Bishops Conference. One of the most persevering efforts in this field has been undertaken by bishop Leonidas Prosano of Riobamba, Ecuador.³ He believes that people themselves should discover the contradictions in their lives and learn to solve their own problems. He attempts to facilitate these types of changes by such techniques as weekly talks on a network of radio stations and by leadership training through the process of conscientization. The local ecclesial community in the process of formation in Riobamba, in an effort to be faithful to the Gospel and in the spirit of Medellin is


taking steps to "sever its links with the capitalist system and help to liberate the oppressed", by denouncing abuses and injustices, arranging for its lands to be part of the agrarian reform, awakening the people to a sense of community and preparing them for responsible political participation.

Nonsignor Sergio Mendez Arceo of Cuernavaca, Mexico, is another Latin American bishop whose efforts to change attitudes, in the spirit of Medellin, so as to confront the problems of the poor, have involved him in much controversy. Still, he continues, as he says "to take the painful task of being leaven".

He supports a Christian socialism because, he says:

I share the conviction that our underdeveloped world has no recourse open to it but socialism: i.e., social appropriation of the means of production and authentic representation of the community in order to prevent these things from being utilized as tools for domination by an oligarchy or a totalitarian government.

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5 Author's interview with bishop Arceo Mendez in Cuernavaca on 17 July 1977.

Perhaps the Churchman in the forefront of Medellin efforts, who is best known, is Dom Helder Camara, archbishop of Recife-Olinda in Brazil. Dom Câmera's call for non-violent activities and his outspoken denunciations of the unjust national and international economic system have made him the target of constant attack both within and outside Catholic Church circles. His opponents include the military establishment, national and international capitalists, bureaucrats, and oligarchs, and the section of the Church aligned with them. There were a few more bishops in Brazil and other countries of Latin America who initiated concrete actions towards the kind of social change envisaged by Medellin. A few others were content with issuing declarations in support of Medellin. But there were many who stifled the attempts of groups like Golconda, Third World Priests, or SAL, to hasten the liberation of the oppressed.

Proponents and sympathizers of liberation theology faced severe opposition from large and powerful segments within the institutional Church who not only questioned their interpretation of Medellin but also accused them of being agents of Marxism.


8 Authors interview with Roger Vekemans in Bogota on 10 August 1977. During the interview he used unprintable epithets to describe some of the theologians of liberation, especially those of his confreres who had been his one-time associates at CEDIAL in Santiago, before he moved to Bogotá.
Inspite of such disparaging criticism liberation theologians like Hugo Assman and Gustavo Gutierrez emphasized the need to construct a socialist society to bring about the profound transformation envisaged by Medellin. Gutierrez wrote:

Only a radical break with the status quo, a profound transformation of the private property system, access to power of the exploited class, and a social revolution that would break this dependance would allow for the change to a new society, a socialist society—or at least would allow that such a society might be possible. 9

For many, the formation in 1970 of the Popular Unity government in Chile, headed by Marxist Salvador Allende, elected through a peaceful and democratic process, signalled the beginning of a new era for concrete action towards the much talked about social transformation.

It was in this context that eighty Chilean priests who lived and worked with people of the working class and who were committed to rapid social transformation met in April 1971 to discuss the Christian participation in the effort to develop and implement socialism in Chile. At the end of the workshop they issued a declaration known as Declaration of The 80. 10 They pointed

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out from their own experience the exploitation of the working class and the attendant subhuman conditions. The cause of the situation, according to them, was clear. They wrote:

It is the capitalist system resulting from domination by foreign imperialism and maintained by ruling classes of this country. This system is characterized by private ownership of the means of production and by ever growing inequality in the distribution of income. 11

Such a situation, they maintain, cannot be tolerated any longer. They propose socialism under construction in Chile as the only solution. Socialism which is characterized by social appropriation of the means of production which paves the way for a new economy, is capable of creating new values as well as paving the way for a society that evinces more fellowship and brotherhood than capitalism. Their option for socialism flows from their commitment to faith. To be a Christian is to be in solidarity, in fellowship with other human beings which means in Chile participation in the historical process of constructing socialism. They declared:

As Christians we do not see any incompatibility between Christianity and socialism. Quite the contrary is true.... The fact is that socialism offers new hope that man can be more complete, and hence more evangelical; i.e., more conformed to Jesus Christ who came to liberate us from any and every sort of bondage. 12

They find Marxism as an instrument for analysing and transforming society and advocate collaboration with Marxists in the context of Chile.

11 Ibid., p.3.
12 Ibid., p.4.
The Declaration of the Eighty received wide publicity and comments, favourable as well as hostile. The bishops of Chile in a declaration took objection to the political option of the Declaration of the Eighty. They admitted that like any citizen, a priest was entitled to have his own political option. But in no case should he give this option the moral backing that stems from his character as a priest. They insisted that priests abstained from taking partisan political positions in public. They reiterated Medellin's option to commit themselves to thoroughgoing and urgently needed social transformations and promised the legitimate government in Chile respect for its authority, and collaboration in its effort to serve the people. But they expressed their reservation about the socialism under construction in Chile because there were sound reasons to believe that it was predominantly Marxist in its inspiration.

In December 1971, a group of priests from Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru and Chile decided to plan a Latin American convention of those Christians who regarded socialism as a necessary precondition for the construction of a just society. The idea of such a convention was promoted by the group known as

The proposed convention was prepared for and circulated. The draft outlined the objectives and a basic outline of the themes to be discussed. In January 1972, a memorandum was circulated to the bishops of Chile by the Permanent Committee of the Chilean Bishops Conference. It pointed out that the proposed convention had no official approbation from the bishops, and reiterated the basic stance of the Chilean bishops towards political activity by priests.\footnote{15}

In reply to the invitation to the convention, cardinal Raul Silva Henrique of Santiago wrote declining the invitation and pointing out that it was a political meeting intended to commit the Church and Christians to the struggle on behalf of Marxism. The reply included also a critique of the draft agenda.\footnote{16}

Preliminary national conventions, as suggested by the draft agenda, were held. Their reports were presented in the International Convention held in Santiago during 23-24 April 1972. The Convention was attended by over four hundred delegates from all over Latin America including Cuba. President Salvador Allende sent a message of greetings in which he stressed the pluralistic character of the Chilean revolutionary process and the close and

\footnote{15} "Confidential Episcopal Memo on Upcoming Convention (12 January 1972)", in Eagleson, n.10, pp.35-38.

\footnote{16} "Initial Response of Cardinal Silva to Gonzala Arrayo (3 March 1972)", ibid., pp.41-47.
affectionate relationship his government intended to maintain with all the Churches especially the Catholic Church. He expressed his hope that the convention would enrich the broad and deep revolutionary movement transforming Chile. After two days of discussions a final document emerged. The final document after analysing the revolutionary process underway in Latin America and stressing the duty of Christians to identify themselves with it concluded with the words of Che Guevara:

Christians should opt definitively for the revolution—particularly on this continent where the Christian faith is important among the masses of the people... when Christians dare to give full-fledged revolutionary witness, then the Latin American revolution will be invincible; because up to now the Christian have allowed their doctrine to be used as a tool by the reactionaries.

The Chilean bishops met early in April at Punta de Tralca and after prolonged discussion on the role of priests and religious in politics concluded that no priest or religious could belong to the movement known as Christians for Socialism. But the publication of the joint pastoral, setting out this norm was postponed on request from the Christians for Socialism that the bishops examined carefully all their documents and declaration

17 "Message from President Salvador Allende (28 April 1972)”, ibid., pp.158-59.
before such a norm was set. In the light of the detailed study some modifications were incorporated and the joint pastoral letter was issued on 16 October 1973. But, one month prior to that, in a coup the military seized power after murdering Allende. The Christians for Socialism became a primary target of repression by the military regime and most of its leaders were forced to go into exile. The repressive measures destroyed the movement in Chile and rendered the publication of the joint pastoral somewhat irrelevant. Still, they contain some norms which were accepted as standard norms by many bishops in other parts of Latin America. The bishops prohibited priests and religious from participating in Christians for Socialism because "it takes position so clearly and decidedly political that it is indistinguishable from political parties". But they did not prohibit the lay people from participating in it. They insisted on the fundamental distinction between the civil secular task of the laity and the supernatural mission and activity of the Church itself and its hierarchy, including priests and religious. There is no doctrinal condemnation of Christians for Socialism. They simply point out what they consider to be doctrinal errors and ambiguities especially in their option for a particular political ideology and acceptance of Marxist interpretation of society and history.


21 Ibid., p.182.

22 Ibid., p.185.

23 Ibid., p.191.
Though Christians for Socialism has been nearly suppressed in Chile and other countries of Latin America under military regimes it continues its activities in other parts of Latin America and Europe. The Second International Meeting of Christians for Socialism was held in Quebec in 1975, and the movement is still kept alive through the efforts of its leaders in exile.

The Church had supported Allende's initial Socialistic moves. Cardinal Silva of Santiago, on the occasion of the inauguration of Allende's government pointed out: "There are more evangelical values in socialism than there are in capitalism".24 Beltram Villegas, a Catholic priest of Santiago represented the views of many other priests when he wrote:

I fully agree that the capitalist regime is inhuman and execrable, and that a socialist regime can be more respectful of human dignity. I can even go so far as to say that a socialist regime can be more evangelical by virtue of its preferential concern for the 'down-trodden and oppressed'. 25

But, Villegas, and many others in Church, were uneasy about the formation of a Church-based group with a political ideology.

The Second Vatican Council had pointed out: "In building the Christian community, Priests are never to put themselves at the service of some human faction or ideology". 26

24 Cardinal Silva, cited in "The Declaration of The 80", n.10,p.4
25 "Letter to 80 Friends (19 April 1971)"., in Eagleson, n.10,p.7
first reaction to the declaration of 'The 80' the Chilean bishops said that their action amounted to taking partisan political position in public. But, they admitted that like any other citizen a priest was entitled to have his political option. But in no case should he give that option the moral backing that stems from his character as a priest. 27 Cardinal Silva also took objection to their reducing theology to an ideology. 28 He said:

There is no doubt that Christians ought to involve themselves in the liberation of human beings, combatting any and every oppressive structure no matter what label it may wear. In so far as the concrete forms of this involvement are concerned, it is only natural that there should be diverse options and that these options should be embraced with liberty, sincerity, and mutual respect. 29

The Chilean bishops in their joint declaration pointed out that the Christians for Socialism in their commitment to the socialist experiments as flowing from their Christian faith "have invested the Christian faith with an ideological character which in fact it does not have". 30 They do not view with favour the activity of the group because it "seeks to form a front for

29 "Authorised Summary of Cardinal Silva's Views", ibid., pp.65-66
penetrating into the Church and converting her into a political force from within". 31 The danger is: "As the members of Christians for Socialism see it, membership in the Church is conditioned upon a political option". 32 "The group of Christians for Socialism takes positions so clearly and decidedly political that it is undistinguishable from political parties...the result is to disqualify other Christians who do not think the same way or who hold contrary opinions". 33

The Christians for Socialism maintain: "We Christians do not have a peculiar political approach of our own to offer and we do not have such an approach". 34 But, they believed sincerely that a socially involved Church must be politically involved also.

The new ideological option of the Christians for Socialism was at the heart of the debate about the movement. At the first meeting of 'The 80', drawing upon their own pastoral experience and the Medellin conclusions, they defined their option in these terms:

To be a Christian is to be in solidarity, in fellowship, with other human beings. And at this moment in Chile fellowship means participation in the historical project that its people have set for themselves. 35

31 Ibid., p.216.
32 Ibid., p.205.
33 Ibid., p.182.
35 "Declaration of The 80", n.10, p.4.
This amounted to not only support for socialism but a clear ideological option. Chile had one of the strongest democratic traditions of government in Latin America. Allende's opponents in the elections in 1970, were the Conservative Alessandri and the Christian Democrat Radimiro Tomic who was an advocate of liberal reform and traditional developmentalism. Their defeat at the polls indicated the growing Chilean disenchantment with conservatism and developmentalism. In electing Allende, the Chilean people were hoping for more rapid and far-reaching reforms, for governmental policies which would break the cycle of dependency which the developmentalism of Frei was unable to halt. The option for the programme of Popular Unity government was economic, social, and political.

Christians for Socialism accepts the Marxist analysis of class struggle, the intensification of which "represents a new stage in the politico-ideological struggle, and it rules out any pretention to neutrality or a-politicism". In this politico-ideological struggle they want the Church and especially the priests and religious to be on the side of the oppressed. The final document says: "Their personal commitment induces them to take on a political responsibility, which is required if they are to effectively display the love for the oppressed that is demanded by the gospel".

36 "Final Document", n.34, p.105.
37 Ibid., p.168.
Pablo Richard, one of the founding leaders of Christians for Socialism, now living in exile, notes the significance of calling the group Cristianos por Socialismo as opposed to Cristianos para Socialismo. (Both are usually rendered in English as Christians for Socialism). According to him "para" signifies Christians committed to the construction of a socialist society, while "por" indicates that the Chileans were "Christians who live their Christianity in the struggle for Socialism". He adds that the Christians for Socialism did not see themselves as Christians who had joined a struggle to overthrow a non-socialist government, but who had had to choose a course of action within an ongoing socialist programme, and had decided to publicly support it and work for its success. He thinks that the debate, therefore, was different from what it would have been under a non-socialist government. 38

The Christians for Socialism pointed out that the Church, in fact, far from being 'apolitical', had, in many cases, supported the Christian Democratic Party and specifically the Frei government and opposed what it perceived as a Communist danger. The ideological character of the Church's position was manifest in what the Christians for Socialism described as "the functions it performs within the framework of the modes of production and other socio-economic formations". 39 Bonino has noted that theologically

38 Author's interview with Pablo Richard in Paris on 2 May 1977.
this function stems from understandings of religion's
dependence on dominant groups and its conception of man's
relation to God and neighbour. The Christians for Socialism
accused the Church hierarchy of refusing to acknowledge its own
ideological bias and of pursuing social strategies which
explicitly supported a developmentalist ideology. Gonzalo
Arroyo who was instrumental in organizing Christians for Socialism
and who was its Secretary General for long, recalls his
association in the 1960s with the efforts of the Church in
support of the Christian Democratic ideology of developmentalist
and considers that the so-called 'apolitical' stand of the bishops
adopted in their joint declaration is itself, in fact, a political
and ideological stand against the socialist experiment in Chile.
The military coup of September 1973, he thinks, has put into doubt
the openness of the institutional Church to the forces of even
peaceful revolution in Latin America.

Linked to the bishops' criticism of the ideological
direction of the movement was the charge that it represented a
move towards clericalism. The issue of clericalism was a
particularly sore point within the Latin American Catholic Church,
since at different points in its history its power had been misused
to support various campaigns as well as governments. Moreover, as

41 Author's interview with Gonzalo Arroyo in Paris on 8 May 1977.
Christians for socialism pointed out the very apolitical stand of the bishops in the context amounted to a de facto support of the status quo, and therefore, to clericalism.

But the central question was one of active political involvement of the Church in its social involvement, the perennial question of Church and politics in new garbs. The Christians for Socialism were honest enough to admit that their social commitment necessarily led them to political commitment. As Girardi says, the originality of the movement of Christians for Socialism lay in its being theological and political at the same time.42

Theologians of liberation such as Gutierrez, Assman and Comblin have made the point that secular history and salvation history are really one. The dichotomy between everyday life and God's plan for the salvation of mankind is only an analytical distinction, not a real difference. It follows then, that the social and political strategy of Christians ought to be to integrate themselves into the historical reality of their nation and region. In Chile, the election of a socialist president and the implementation of a socialist programme were seen as "signs of the times" to be worked with.

The Chilean bishops also say:

In so far as the Church is in the world and in history, in so far as it is the work of man and for man, it is part of the social realm. From this standpoint no one would deny that the activity of the Church is in some way political. It is a 'political animal', even as all human relationships are political. 43

At the bottom of the controversy on political option lay, perhaps, the socio economic perception of the Christians for Socialism which was a negation of the interest of the dominant classes. They defined development indirectly by explaining its opposite, underdevelopment. Dependent capitalism, it is argued, is the root of the underdevelopment because it maintained the relationship of inequality which prevail as a result of the current trade relationships among capitalist countries. Therefore, socialism is needed in order to provide, the necessary conditions in which development (liberation) can occur. They call for radical rather than incremental change. Gonzalo Arroyo writes:

Underdevelopment is characterized by the internal and external dependent relationship caused by the economic, social, cultural, and political domination supported by both the national oligarchies and the international system, ideological penetration by means of communication and the control of political decisions by means of economic considerations. 44

Christians for Socialism hold that the way to escape underdevelopment is to destroy the links of structural dependence. This can be accomplished only by a radical transformation of society, replacing unjust and oppressive social, political, economic and cultural relationships and structures with equitable

43 "Declaration of Chilean Bishops", n.13, p.196.
44 Gonzalo Arroyo, "Christians, the Church and Revolution", in Eagleson, n.10, p.244.
and humanizing ones. 'Social Christianity', the theologico-philosophico-political milieu of Medellin explained in empirical terms why radical transformation was desirable. 'Revolutionary Christianity', the theologico-philosophico-political milieu of Christians for Socialism, using the dialectical method of analysis, details how it is achievable. (The movement of Christians for Socialism is, in this sense, one logical step forward from Medellin). Faith in Jesus Christ, solidarity with the oppressed, and a scientific analysis of dependent capitalism leads revolutionary Christians to support socialism.

At the First International Convention, the delegates committed themselves: "to the task of fashioning socialism because it is our objective conclusion, based on the concrete experience of history and on a rigorous, scholarly analysis of the facts, that this is the only effective way to combat imperialism and to break away from our situation of dependence".45

Christians for Socialism on the whole are not doctrinaire in their option for socialism. They view the socialized state as a means to a more just, humane way to organize society, not as an end in itself. Nor do they equate Marxist theory with the Gospel. However they stress:

45 "Final Document", n.34, p.163.
Revolutionary Christians must form a strategic alliance with Marxists... such a strategic alliance goes beyond the tactical alliance of a temporary nature.... This identification with Marxists in political action within history does not mean that Christians are abandoning their faith. 46

Hugo Assman a leading theologian of revolution and one of the chief protagonists of Christian-Marxist collaboration in Latin America stresses the complimentarity of Christians and Marxists in this that while the former possesses genuine eschatology the latter possesses genuinely scientific social analysis. The Christians for Socialism accept the Marxist analysis without abandoning their Christian eschatology. 47

The revolutionary perceptions of Christians for Socialism spelt danger to the interest of the dominant classes. They rallied to destroy it by raising the anti-Marxist bogey.

Christians for Socialism created a new kind of theologizing. The new method called for a new theological language because so many of the current words had become meaningless. The Santiago Convention differed from Medellin in that all the participants were persons who in their daily lives experienced the reality of oppression. It is not surprising then, that their expression of the faith and the Christian life is more concrete. Methodologically, Medellin made an empirical and descriptive analysis of the Latin American reality. The approach in Santiago was more structural.

46 "The Declaration of The 80", n.10, p.4.
47 Author's interview with Hugo Assman in San Jose on 2 August 1977.
and global, and action-oriented than\textsuperscript{48} that in Medellin.

\textbf{The Doctrine of National Security}

Just as the Christians for Socialism is an ideological expression of the Christian left so also, the Doctrine of National Security may be said to be an ideological formulation of the Christian right in Latin America.

Caudillism and militarism were the constant found in Latin America ever since it attained independence. Social scientists ascribe this to the fact that at the time of independence there had not evolved in Latin America sufficient infrastructures that could promote and sustain genuine democracy. As Beltran points out, during independence and after the same people were political leaders and soldiers. This mingling of the political and military role became traditional in Latin America.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{48} See Hugo Assman, "Liberation: The Implication of a New Language", in \textit{Theology for a Nomad Church}, Paul Burns, trans. (New York, 1976), pp.111-128; Hugo Assman and others, "Cr\textsuperscript{\textregistered}ristianos por el Socialismo-impacto y repercusiones de un encuentro", in \textit{Cristianismo y Sociedad} (Montevideo), Vol.10, nos. 33-34 (1972) p.7ff.; Rubem Alves, \textit{Cristianismo \textsuperscript{\textregistered}p\textup{\textsuperscript{o}} liberacion?} (Salamanca 1973), pp.114-22 and 241-50; For a subtle, but damaging criticism of Christians for Socialism see the voluminous work of Roger Ve\textsuperscript{\textregistered}emans, \textit{Teologia de la liberacion y Cristianos por el Socialismo} (Bogota, 1976).

However, in the years after the Second World War this trend was apparently arrested. By 1960 all the countries of Latin America with the exception of Paraguay were under civilian governments either populist or oligarchic, however authoritarian they might have been. This led some social scientists like Liewen, to believe that militarism in Latin American politics was a thing of the past and that the military men were likely to intervene less and less in politics in the future.50

Within a decade, however, the situation began to change drastically. Rockefeller reported the ever increasing role the army in the Latin American countries were playing and were likely to play in the future.51 As Lowenthal pointed out in 1976, in all countries of Latin America with the possible exception of Costa Rica, the military institutions exercised their political influence either directly and openly as rulers, or indirectly as a specially privileged pressure group.52 They were invariably aligned with the forces of right except to some extent in Peru. By 1979 when the Second General Conference of the Latin American Bishops was held in Puebla, Mexico, more than half the population was under direct and

51 See Chapter III above.
repressive military regimes.53

As Calvo writes, the new military domination had a different cast from the earlier ones. It was no longer a caudillo who took over but the armed forces which institutionalized their access to the government on the basis of authoritarian ideological platform which they called the Doctrine of National Security and which provided them with the necessary rationale for their political activities.54 Much of the social tension and the Church-State conflicts in Latin America may be attributed to the Doctrine of National Security as put into practice in different countries.


54 Robert Calvo, "The Church and the Doctrine of National Security", Journal of Inter American Studies and World Politics (Guinsville), Vol.21, no.1, February 1979, p.69.
The Doctrine of National Security does not appear in a uniform pattern in all of Latin America. Calvo classifies them as follows: In the first place are countries under military regimes with a high degree of doctrinal systematization and conceptualization (Brazil and Chile); next, countries with military regimes with the same Doctrine but less systematized (Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay); and countries with governments controlled by the military which has pronounced tendencies towards the Doctrine of National Security (Peru, Ecuador and most of the Central American countries); and finally, countries with formal democracy, where the military possesses the doctrine (Colombia and Mexico). Moreover there is variation in their perceptions of the national goals.

Comblin who has written extensively on the Doctrine of National Security says that the ideology of national security

55 Ibid., p.85, footnote no.1.
is the key to understand Latin America's authoritarian regimes. It is the engine that drives the continent, the doctrine that steers the course of the "war" and shapes all facets of national life—economics, culture, as well as politics. He writes:

The National Security Doctrine presents itself as a comprehensive synthesis of all human sciences, a dynamic synthesis capable of promoting a total programme of activities in all areas of social life, a synthesis of politics, economics, psychology, and military strategy. It purports to establish definitive criteria and guidelines for all areas of activity, from economic development to education and religion. 57

Comblin maintains that the Doctrine of National Security is "really a philosophy with all ingredients belonging to an ideology from which the action of at least some of the military regimes in Latin America derives. In other words, the totalitarian praxis emanate directly and spontaneously from this ideology. 58 But, Lopez Trujillo in his attempt to partially defend it admits that there is a philosophical thinking and systematic justification which could turn the doctrine into an ideology, but contends that in reality it is not an ideology and is not understood so at least by a majority of military men. 59

58 Ibid., p.4.
It is true that some militarists like Medina maintain that the doctrine is not ideological because it deals with a government function encompassing almost all national activities. But most theorists of the doctrine propound it as if it is an absolute ideology, if not explicit state so. In any case, the third General Conference of the Latin American Bishops held in Puebla in 1979 declared: "In reality, it is more an ideology than a doctrine".

Comblin and several other authors trace the origin of the Doctrine of National Security to the Nazi doctrine that regarded the state or nation as the supreme organism that the people must serve—a radical break from the traditional Western concept of politics. According to the Nazi doctrine the state was the vital organism that had to grow, struggle, expand and defend itself and people existed only as part of the state, to serve it and defend it. The Doctrine of National Security is closely related


61 See Carlos de Meira Mattos, Brazil: Geopolitica e destino (Rio de Janeiro, 1975).


to two disciplines: geopolitics and strategy. Geopolitics is the study of how geographic space, its form and location, determines, or at least suggests, given types of politics. This discipline formed one of the basis of the Nazi movement. After the Second World War geopolitics has been studied in the United States and Europe. It explained and guided the 'Cold War' and the presumed division of the world into two antagonist blocs. It tended to impose a world view in which the total opposition between the two blocs constituted the fundamental reality and the ultimate explanation for all political facts. According to this view every nation has its destiny marked by its particular position within one of the two blocs.

Every geopolitics has its corresponding geostrategy. Any national strategy is part of a global strategy elaborated in function of the basic world antagonism. War is conceived as total because it involves all citizens of a country and all of its material resources, because it involves all peoples (no one can be neutral or non-aligned), and finally, because it involves all aspects of human enterprise. It is, then, no longer possible for national states to draw the classical distinction between what is civilian and what is military. Politics becomes one with strategy. This strategy is the national security policy.

From the United States the doctrine found its way to Latin America. The systematic elaboration of the doctrine has been carried out first in Brazil and later in Chile. In both countries
it was followed by military take-overs. General do Couto e Silva, one of the chief advisers of President Castello Branco was the earliest theoretician of the Doctrine of National Security in Brazil.\(^6^4\) General Carlos de Meira Mattos describes how the Doctrine of National Security had been discussed and systematically formulated by General Silva and other cadres of the National War College ever since it was founded in 1949.\(^6^5\) But it was only in 1964 that they succeeded in transforming this doctrine into government policy that was the result of fourteen years of preparation.

The Chilean army too attempted to elaborate systematically this Doctrine of National Security sometime after the Brazilians. General Pinochet had been systematizing the doctrine while he was teaching geopolitics in the army's War Academy long before the military coup in 1973. His work on geopolitics had been compiled by 1968, but was published only after the coup in 1973.\(^6^6\) A collection of essays titled "The Armed Forces and National Security" was circulated among the armed forces sometime before the coup.\(^6^7\)

\(^6^5\) Calva, no.54, p.85.
\(^6^6\) A. Pinoch et, Geopolitica (Santiago, 1974).
\(^6^7\) Instituto de Estudios Generales, ed., Fuerzas Armadas y Seguridad Nacional (Santiago, 1973).
But it was only after the coup of 11 September 1973 that a production of literature comparable to that of Brazil was undertaken and made available to the public. Efforts were taken not only to systematize the doctrine but also to propagate it. Seminars were organised. Courses on the Doctrine of National Security were offered in the War Academy. It was made a compulsory subject in the Catholic University of Valparaiso, and in the fourth year of the social sciences programme of the secondary schools. The journal Seguridad Nacional devoted to the study of the doctrine was started in July 1976.

As a result of similar efforts both in Brazil and Chile, the Doctrine of National Security has been vigorously systematized and presented. General De Meiro writes: "The national security policy is formulated under a vigorous process of scientific reasoning, it is divided into a system, a structure, and a technique that constitute the instrument of an ordered and consistent rationale leading to the policies and strategies that will efficiently achieve the desired goals". 68 Comblin observes: "The most characteristic aspect of the Doctrine is precisely its conceptual vigour, its inflexible, abstract rationalism. Everything is derived in a totally deductive fashion from the postulate of total war". 69

68 Mattos, n.61, cited in Calvo, n.54, p.73.
69 Comblin, n.57, p.25.
Expression of this Doctrine on a continental basis surfaced in the eleventh Conference of the American Armies in Montevideo, in October 1975, although development had occurred in each individual country almost independently. In Peru, the doctrine was conceived with some elements of social change included in it. Between 1968 and 1975 several social reforms were introduced as part of the doctrine. Ecuador where the National Security Act was proclaimed in 1976 tended to follow the Peruvian model. The rest of the military regimes including Chile are following the Brazilian model.

The Doctrine of National Security as elaborated by these military men is divided into the conceptual elements and the security system it proposes. The former include such concepts as the State, war, national goal, national power and national security. The latter includes national security policy, national strategy, organic structures of the State, etc. But, the basis is geopolitics as conceived by the Latin American military men in the context of 'Cold War', from which everything else is logically deduced, and which is common to all those who profess the Doctrine.

70 It was under this law that a pastoral meeting of some Catholic bishops in Riobamba, Ecuador, in August 1970, was disbanded and the participants including sixteen bishops were arrested as subversives. This created a storm of protest throughout Latin America.


72 Calvo, n.54, pp.74-79.
General Golbery has elaborated on geopolitics through his numerous writings much before 1964. His thinking revolves around two complimentary poles: antagonism-containment, and the shifting relationships between strategy and politics.

Every era has, what Golbery calls, the "dominant antagonism". Today this antagonism has become all pervasive, as two blocs confront each other: the West with its Christian and democratic traditions; and the East with its materialistic and totalitarian Communism. The world today thus displays a biopolarity along ideological lines. The West, then, a unit bound together by basically common values, has a security problem: it must protect itself against the imperialist machinations of the opposing bloc.

Golbery then goes on to analyse the strategic position of each nation in the world in this confrontation, especially of Latin America with particular emphasis on Brazil. In this analysis there is no place for neutrality or non-alignment. United States is perceived as the power centre of the West, not on account of its geographical location, but because of its awesome military and economic might. The security of the West concerns US in a special way, since that country is the principal guardian of a patrimony which the whole Western world including Latin America shares with it, and which the opposing Eastern world covets. The security of the West thus coincides with that of the United States. But

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73 His ideas are synthesised by Michael Schooyans, n.64, pp.2-9.
the converse is no less true. The security of the United States, protector and promoter of the values of civilization, coincides with that of the West.

Golbery then goes on to analyse the possible strategy to be employed by the Communist East. A conquest of Africa would provide a bridgehead toward the conquest of Latin America. If Latin America would be contaminated first, it could prove a bridgehead for conquering Africa. Eventually, Europe would be encircled making it possible an ultimate assault on the United States, the West's power centre.

War in modern times, is total in many respects especially in the sense that the dominant antagonism is no longer bounded by frontiers, because it is also an ideological warfare. Besides conventional war, the Communist bloc is adopting the strategy of infiltration and conquest from within. 74 Communism is infiltrating everywhere in Latin America. Its theory of class struggle is infecting society with a virulent germ of disintegration.

The total war is, then, as much against external aggression as against internal subversion. Comblin writes: "In

74 The military leaders in Uruguay give top priority to the war against subversive aggression of the infiltrators as explicitly stated in their combined publication La Subversion Las F.E. A.A. al Pueblo Oriental (Montevideo, 1977), p.13. So do the Chileans. See Jose Antonio Viera-Gallo, "Esquema analitico de la ideologia de la junta militar chilena" Chile-America (Rome), no.7 (1975), pp.22-23.
an ideological war such as the struggle against Communism the
armed forces see no distinction between civilian and soldier—all
are involved. Furthermore, in an ideological war ideas are weapons.
Therefore, both citizens and ideas have to be controlled. 75

The consequence of this total war of the military regimes
in Latin America has been massive arrests of not only the avowed
leftist revolutionaries and politicians, but all suspected
sympathizers as well, including labour leaders, journalists,
students, teachers and Church personnel. Other forms of
repression such as intimidation, torture, murder, etc., have been
let loose. All those who have proved themselves to be
uncomfortable to the military regimes have been dubbed as
subversives and subjected to repression. The war has created
legions of political refugees who, forced to flee their countries,
are finding it increasingly difficult to find safe havens in
neighbouring countries that also are involved in the same struggle.

Comblin notes that Christianity is perceived by Golbery
and others as an indispensable factor in the psycho-social
strategy and as such, is of utmost importance to the ideology
of National Security. Faith is not important for them. What is
important is the cultural system based on the symbols of
Christianity. The assumption is that, in the western bloc, nothing
is more efficient than Christian symbolism to mobilize the masses
against Communism. For this reason National Security regimes
search for the cooperation of the Church that has been traditionally

75 Comblin, n.57, p.21.
anti-Communist, convinced as they are that collaboration will benefit both the Church and the State. While the State can guarantee the security of the Church and offer it privileges, the Church can help the State to organize anti-Communist campaigns.76

The National Security regimes believe that Communists have infiltrated the Church, even the ranks of priests and bishops. If the Church cannot manage to protect itself from infiltrators, then it is up to the armed forces to preserve the Church from a danger which it does not see. The armed forces may not allow the Church to become any ally of international Communism.

Different sectors of the Church reacted differently to the military takeover, and to the Doctrine of National Security, in general, and its implementation in particular. Large sections of the Church including priests and bishops welcomed the military takeovers in Brazil and Chile as the pastoral letters of the episcopates in those countries reveal. They were viewed as bringing a relief from the socio-economic and political chaos the country was in or heading to. But, not all those who welcomed the intervention of the military supported the Doctrine of National Security as and when it was unfolded and implemented.

There have been organized and influential groups in the Church, which not only support the Doctrine of National Security but even participated in the elaboration of it contributing an

76 José Comblin, "Version Latinoamericana de 'Seguridad Nacional'", in Documentos 'ASEL' (quito, 1976), p.3.
ideology of the integrist type. The Catholic integrists such as the Cursillos and the League for the Defense of Tradition Family and Property (TFP) who are very influential in Brazil, Chile, Argentina and elsewhere in Latin America insist on the historical and traditional aspects of Christianity that support the established order. They conceive the function of the Church as exclusively spiritual, or else, harmoniously integrating the world to serve the spiritual ends. Rejecting ideological and political pluralism they are militantly anti-Communists.

Many military men have been actively associated with these integrist movements. They profess to be true Catholics and say that they defend not only the Church, arriving even to the point of denouncing supposed infiltration of Marxists within its bosom, but also society, supposedly modeled according to Christian principles. For this reason they demand the aid of the Church in their fight against Marxism and subversion. When they do not get this they attack the more progressive sectors of the Church.

Not all sectors of the right-wing in the Church are integrists and have actively participated in the elaboration or support of the Doctrine of National Security. There are various

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77 Integrismo (Integrism) is used to describe the thought of some traditional Catholic groups who reject the autonomy of the temporal order as well as ideological and political pluralism and postulate a harmoniously integrated world after the model of medieval Christendom.

78 For the relation between Catholic integrists and the doctrine of social security see Julio Silva Solar, "El integrismo-Católico y la Junta Militar Chilena" Chile-America (Rome), no.7 (1975), pp.12-21.
currents with different degrees of support to the Doctrine. The more liberal sectors even within the right-wing have maintained a greater distance from the ideology of national security although it has not kept them from giving their support to the military regimes in general. However, when conflict arose between these governments and the Church they have adopted a critical attitude. Thus, the protagonists of the ideology of national security seems to be progressively reduced in the Church.

In contrast to the integrist tendency there is a large section in the Church who are critical of the Doctrine of National Security as propounded and practiced, but who do admit the need for some such doctrine all the same. Even within this broad grouping not all agree in the evaluation and principles upon which a judgement of the doctrine may be based. There are some who criticize some aspects of the doctrine of national security refusing to attribute it the character of a coherent and well thought out ideology. Lopez Trujillo and Roger Vekemans represent this view. They are critical of some aspects of totalitarian regimes but are not necessarily critical of authoritarian governments as such and are supportive of strong governments and their efforts to put an end to the menace of Marxism in society and in the Church. Their view of the doctrine of national security was projected into the original consultative document prepared for the Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops held in Puebla in 1979.

79 See Trujillo, n.11. See also Roger Vekemans S.J., Caesar and God (New York, 1972) and Iglesia de la liberacion y cristianos por el socialismo (Bogota, 1976), pp.58-59.
80 See Chapter V below.
There is a large section within the same moderate sectors that recognizes the Doctrine of National Security as an ideology and opposes it and is sensitive to the repression flowing from this doctrine. A majority of bishops in Latin America fall in this category. This was evident in the Puebla Conference of the bishops which declared that the doctrine had to be viewed as an ideology and as such incompatible with Christian principles.\footnote{81}

Even before the Puebla Conference several episcopates in Latin America articulated their opposition to the pernicious Doctrine of National Security. Some Brazilian bishops like Helder Camara, Pedro Casaldeliga (the first bishop to be put under arrest by the military regime), and Candido Padim have been outspoken critics of the Doctrine of National Security almost from the beginning of the military take-over in 1964. As repression, under the Doctrine intensified and Church personnel came under increasing attack, a great many bishops turned critics of the Doctrine of National Security. As early as 1963, the Brazilian Bishops' Conference appointed a commission under the presidency of bishop Candido Padim to study the Doctrine and its implementation in Brazil. The Commission's document presented to the Ninth General Conference of the Brazilian Bishops in July 1969, is an elaborate study of the Doctrine of National Security confronting it with the teaching of Gospel and of the

\footnote{81 Ibid.}
Church, and denouncing it as unChristian. Since then several documents have emanated from several individual and regional groups of bishops criticizing the Doctrine and denouncing the repression under it. The pastoral of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference in 1977, reflecting for the first time, the consensus of the bishops on the matter, strongly condemned the Doctrine of National Security in its theory and praxis, and characterized it as contrary to Christ's teaching. After surveying the repression in general and pointing out some conspicuous cases of violation of human rights the pastoral criticized the attempt of the State to put "the ideology of national security above personal security", and the contention of the State that "it is the State that grants freedom and human rights to the people", whereas the truth is that all power has to come to the State from the people and should be exercised in their name.

In 1976, three years after the military coup the Permanent Commission of the Chilean Bishop's Conference issued a declaration condemning the National Security Doctrine and the repression under it. It said:

84 Ibid., p.9.
The events which we are denouncing and condemning are not isolated ones. They are linked together in a well-defined process or system which threatens to reign without any counter-balance in our Latin America. Always invoking the incontrovertible justification of national security, a model of society is being more and more consolidated which suffocates the basic freedoms, tramples on the most elemental rights and subjugates its citizens within the framework of a feared omnipotent police state.... The Church cannot remain passive or neutral faced with a similar situation. 86

A year later, the Chilean Bishops' Conference issued a pastoral letter strongly critical of the National Security Doctrine rights. It demanded not only an end to the repressive measures but also an early return to constitutional form of government. 87

Similar criticism of the Doctrine of National Security and strong denouncement of repression under it have come from many other bishops and National Conferences, especially in the context of human rights. 88 As Comblin points out any pronouncement in defense of human rights is a public action challenging the political system and its ideology of national security. 89 The question of human rights was taken up in the Puebla Conference in 1979 and discussed at some length. The Doctrine of National Security also received considerable attention from the bishops assembled in Puebla.

86 Ibid., p.14. The events they condemned refer to an incident at the Santiago Air Port where some bishops returning after attending a conference in Riobamba, Ecuador, were subjected to illtreatment and physical assault by the men of National Security Doctrine. The Conference in Riobamba had been disrupted by the government of Ecuador and all the participating bishops were arrested and subsequently deported from Ecuador.


88 Several of these pastorals are contained in LADOC, ed., Latin American Bishops Discuss Human Rights (Washington, 1977), 2 Vols.

89 José Comblin, "La Nueva Practica de la Iglesia en el sistema de la Seguridad Nacional, in Documentación del MIEC-JECI ( Lima, 1976), p.23.