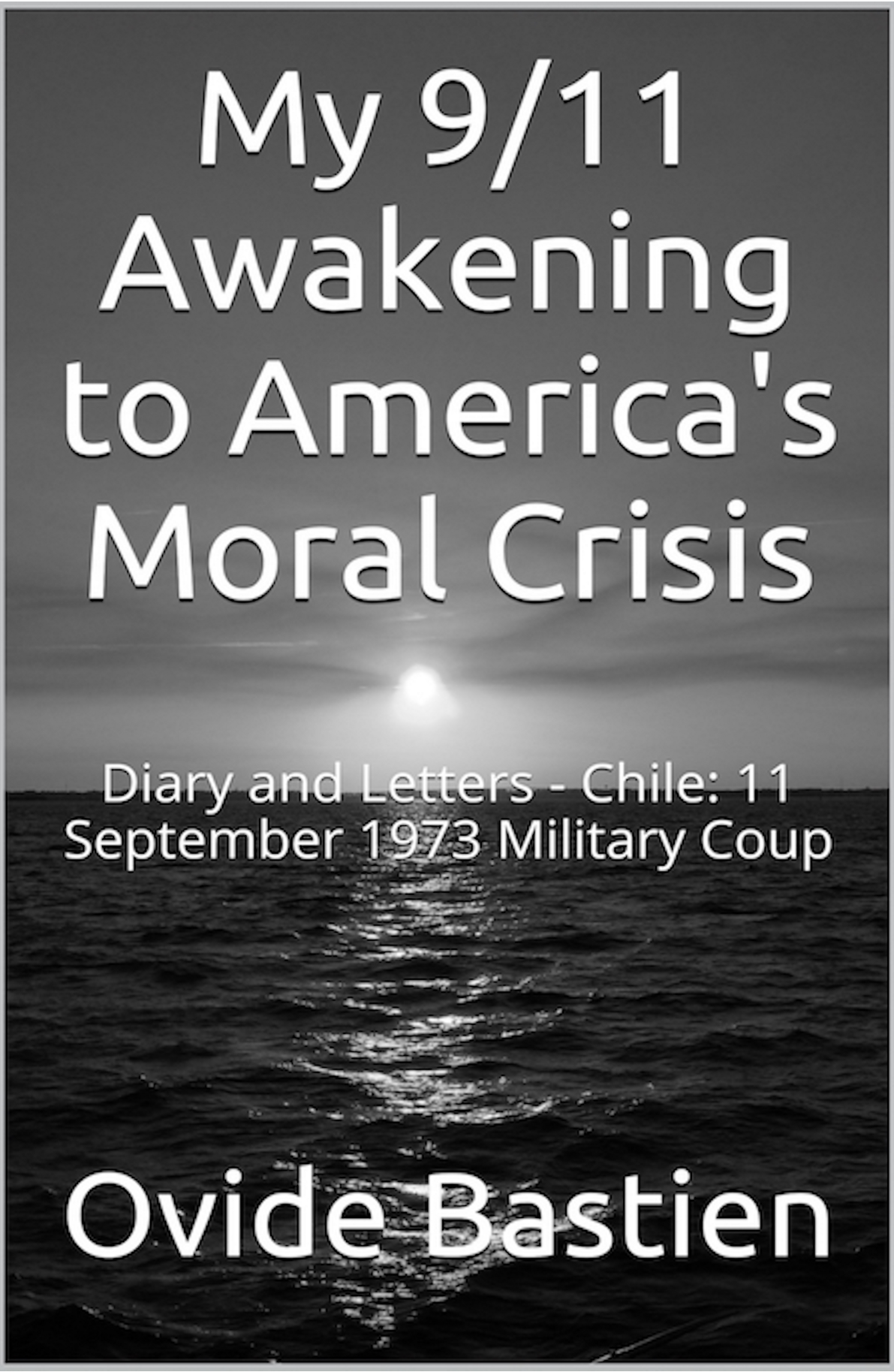




My 9/11 Awakening to America's Moral Crisis

Diary and Letters - Chile: 11
September 1973 Military Coup

Ovide Bastien

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Diary and Letters

**Chile: 11 September 1973
Military Coup**

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About the Author

I was born and raised on the farm in the region of Windsor, Ontario, part of a large French Canadian Catholic family. My hardworking parents had little formal education: Dad had only one year of schooling and Mom had not completed grade school. Pursuing an ideal that was very powerful at the time—becoming a priest and missionary—I spent eight years in the seminary of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, two of these in Rome. After leaving the seminary at the end of 1968, I taught philosophy at the “Cégep de Rouyn-Noranda”, did volunteer work for the solidarity NGO, SUCO, and then left for Chile in the summer of 1973 in order to pursue my studies on developing country issues.

The experience of the coup d’État of September 11, 1973 that ousted Salvador Allende plunged me into a profound, life-altering crisis. I discovered that the United States, a country whose presidents constantly repeat that their nation is the best in the world—God bless America—readily uses economic sabotage, propaganda, assassination and torture to defend its interests. I discovered that the Canadian Ambassador, Andrew Ross, while openly welcoming the military takeover, was accepting only a dozen of the thousands of Chileans who, desperately trying to escape imprisonment, torture and possibly death, were knocking on his door.¹ I discovered that the Catholic Church, which I had always identified with a universal love that prioritized the marginalized, was clearly siding in Chile with the military by accepting, a mere one week after the coup d’état, to pray with the military junta in a ceremony that was being broadcast throughout the country thanks to the only television station to have survived the coup, Channel 13 of the Catholic University of Chile!

After returning to Montreal in the summer of 1974, I published “Chili: le coup divin”, a scathing criticism of the complicity of the Chilean Catholic Church in the military coup and participated in a very intense speaking tour. Convinced that one must first understand the world in

¹ It is important to note that thanks to the Canadian whistleblower, Bob Thomson, who was soon caught and fired, to the work of conscientious reporters and, above all, to an extraordinary movement of Canadian solidarity, more than 7,000 Chilean refugees were eventually welcomed into Canada.

order to change it, I then pursued my study of developing country issues, focussing on that area which I felt I knew less about: economics.

As I had a growing family and needed to earn a living, I accepted, before writing my master's thesis, a job teaching economics at the college level, a career that I ended up pursuing until my retirement. Not surprisingly, how and what I taught in economics was deeply affected by my experience in Chile. Students, I felt, must experience reality in order to understand it. To this end, I created, with colleagues at Dawson College, the North South Studies profile that included a one-month field trip to Nicaragua. Founded in 1993, this profile still exists and, after my retirement in 2011, I am still collaborating with it on a volunteer basis by managing small development projects in Nicaragua.

“Chili: le coup divin” was published by “Les Éditions du Jour” in September 1974, in Montreal, Canada. I republished it as an ebook on Amazon in 2014: http://www.amazon.com/Chili-divin-French-Ovide-Bastien-ebook/dp/B00KGHSQXK/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1437831373&sr=1-2&keywords=ovide+bastien

“CHILE: Underside of Economic Miracle”, first published as a class manual at Dawson College from 1995 to 2011, was republished and updated as an ebook on Amazon Kindle in 2014 (http://www.amazon.com/Chile-Underside-Economic-Ovide-Bastien-ebook/dp/B00LPN337I/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1437831373&sr=1-1&keywords=ovide+bastien) and in print on Amazon in 2015.

To see the talk I gave on Chile during the Social Forum that was held in Ottawa, August 22, 2014:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJqi5bSLN0c>

To listen to the half-hour radio interview on the Chilean Coup that Christ Dayo from the CHRY News Collective gave me in late September 2014:
<https://www.mixcloud.com/discover/ovide-bastien/>

Foreword

At the end of July 1973, Wynanne Watts, my then wife and I travelled to Chile in order to learn about developing country issues. After spending four years in Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec, Canada—she studying social science and me teaching philosophy in the regional college located in that city—we felt the need to explore the roots of poverty and the immense gap between the haves and the have-nots in the world. Our French speaking Canadian province of Quebec was undergoing profound changes—later coined the Quiet Revolution—and we both admired and wanted to learn from the ongoing revolutionary process of the Popular Unity government in Chile.

Our plan to spend two years studying in a Chilean university was abruptly altered by the military coup that violently ousted President Salvador Allende a little more than one month after our arrival. As other foreigners living in Chile, our first instinct was to attempt to get out of the country as fast as possible. However, like someone who sees a house burning down with someone caught inside, we decided to stay in order to help those trying to escape imprisonment, torture and possibly death. To stay also in order to tell the outside world what was going on in a Chile where all the news were strictly censored.

When we returned to Canada in the summer of 1974, one year after the coup, I published “Chili: le coup divin”, a book denouncing the complicity of the Chilean Catholic Church in the military coup. As I was planning to publish another book in which I would relate my experience in Chile, I asked my relatives and friends to give me the letters I had written to them during my stay in Chile. Most of them did, but in the end, that project never did materialize.

What follows includes extracts of the diary I wrote in Chile and these letters, including a few written by Wynanne.

Why publish these now, forty-two years after the military coup? Because I believe that each and every one of us is constantly searching for meaning, trying to live a life that is fulfilling and

gratifying, and attempting to make our world a better place. Because I believe that my Chilean diary and letters, filled with considerable emotion and deep questioning, may help you in your own search for meaning. Because I find it encouraging to see that in the last two days two gross injustices are being addressed, this after decades of silence and impunity: the Chilean military who, forty two years ago, tortured and assassinated the internationally renowned Chilean folklore singer, Victor Jara, have been called to face justice after a judge announced charges against them; and the seven Chilean army officers who had doused with gasoline, and set fire to Carmen Gloria Quintana and Rodrigo Rojas thirty years ago have also been called to face justice.²

As I watch the news every day and read about Islamic extremism, the growing Western concern about Russian intervention in Ukraine, the increasing use of drones in assassinating those deemed to be the leaders of terrorism, the wave of police violence against blacks in the United States, etc., I am becoming ever more convinced that people in the world need to develop basic common values that foster peace, mutual respect, and harmony and, at the same time, intercultural diversity. Painting the OTHER as evil, and me as GOOD represents a very bad start for this endeavor. Learning to be self-critical, as individuals but also as nations, would represent a very good start.

Unfortunately, some of the most powerful countries in the world, and the multinational corporations they represent, are fast on pulling the trigger of violence to smash the violence of the OTHER, and terribly slow in examining the profound seed of violence in THEMSELVES. As this latter violence may represent one of the fundamental roots of the violence of the OTHER, violence merely keeps on escalating. Wood instead of water is being thrown onto the fire.

You are being simple minded, some may argue. Given that Islamic fundamentalism is obviously a complex and multifaceted issue, perhaps they are right.

But perhaps they are wrong. Last night as I watched President Barack Obama assert, in the long interview he gave to BBC's Jon Sopel, that one of the things that he regrets not having been able to achieve so far in his presidency is passing common sense gun regulation; as I watched him deplore the fact that, "...if you look at the number of

² Jonathan Franklin, "Chilean army officers in custody over 1986 attack on activists burned alive", The Guardian, 22 July, 2015; "Former Chilean military officers charged in 1973 murder of singer Victor Jara", The Guardian, 23 July 2015.

Americans killed since 9/11 by terrorism, it's less than 100. If you look at the number that have been killed by gun violence, it's in the tens of thousands"; as I listened to all this, I wondered whether the blind spot Americans have, especially Congress, relative to gun regulation does not correspond to another, perhaps considerably more destructive blind spot they have regarding their behavior on an international level.

When I read ex-president Jimmy Carter's, "Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis" (2006), a book I very much appreciated and enjoyed, I was taken aback to see him clearly imply that under the presidency of George Bush Jr., America's moral values, contrary to what had been the case under previous governments, were endangered. While I admired his critique of a government that adopts a pre-emptive war against Iraq, fosters a growing income gap between rich and poor, and increases environmental degradation, I was deeply troubled by his assumption that under previous governments America's values were okay.

Were American moral values not endangered when President Richard Nixon exclaimed in 1970, after Salvador Allende's electoral victory, "That son of a bitch, that son of a bitch!"³ Were they not endangered when, after Salvador Allende nationalized, through a constitutional amendment unanimously adopted in Congress, the American copper firms operating in Chile, the same President Nixon exclaimed, "It's time to kick Chile in the ass!"⁴ Were they not endangered when, on 9/11 (Tuesday morning, September 11, 1973) the Chilean military brutally ousted Salvador Allende, not in an amateurish way but after the CIA had helped the Chilean elite take all the precautions necessary to make the economy scream and to create a situation of chaos, disorder and insecurity? (To see a detailed description of this destabilization plan, see [La Spirale](#) the award-winning 139-minute documentary film produced by Armand Mattelart⁵). Were they not endangered when the Pinochet dictatorship, supported by the US

³ Thomas Powers, "The Man Who Kept the Secrets : Richard Helms and the CIA", New York : Knopf, 1979, p. 230. Quoted in Nathalie Davis, "The Last Two Years of Allende", Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 7.

⁴ This statement appears in US documents declassified only in 2014. It appeared in the Chilean daily El Mostrador May 24, 2014. <http://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/pais/2014/05/24/richard-nixon-y-su-indignacion-por-la-nacionalizacion-del-cobre-es-hora-de-pegarle-a-chile-en-el-culo/>, consulted on July 20, 2015.

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHFcjGWX9Ag>

government, imprisoned dozens of thousands of Allende supporters, tortured thousands of them, killed a few thousand, and imposed a radical free market revolution that fostered an economic development marked by gross income inequality and environmental degradation?

My experience of the Chilean 9/11, as noted in the following diary and letters, awakened me to America's endangered values and plunged me into a revolt that will be with me until my very last breath.

This book includes my diary and letters but very little information on Chile. If you want to understand the historical context in which my diary and letters were written, it would be preferable to read "CHILE: Underside of Economic Miracle", a class manual I wrote for my students at Dawson College and that includes not only my diary and letters but also the history of Chile from 1964 to 2015, with a special emphasis on the year of the military coup and the impact of the neoliberal economic revolution imposed by the Pinochet dictatorship.

Chapter 1

First Days in Chile Before the Coup

Letter: August 2-3 (First Impressions)

Dear Mom, Dad and family,

We are now in the middle of winter, still alive and kicking, trying to get rid of a cold that really hit us hard as soon as we arrived here on July 23rd. Since two days we are living in a small apartment situated in the heart of Santiago, equipped with electric heating, hot water, and a kitchen about half the size of your bathroom! Before that we were living in a relatively inexpensive hotel. No heat, no hot water, no windows in our room, about 50° to 56° Fahrenheit. A very nice place to get rid of a cold.

From Mexico City we flew straight to Santiago, Chile. We had previously planned to stay one week in Lima, Peru, but after those two very busy weeks of camping — we traveled over 4,000 miles from Windsor to Mexico City! — we decided we just wanted to get settled down as soon as possible.

***August 3rd:** Tonight we have been invited to the Sheraton Hotel to have supper with the Director of External Affairs of the province of Quebec, Mr. Denis Vaugeois, who is visiting Chile for three days. Those from Quebec who are now in Santiago have all been invited. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss ways in which Quebec can cooperate with Chile. (...)*

Food here in Chile, like many other things, is rare. We are told that the average worker earns approximately four to five thousand escudos a month. An apple can cost from 15 to 30 escudos depending on its size. A shirt can cost 2,000 escudos. The smallest portable typewriter costs 88,000 escudos. Our apartment costs 30,000 escudos per month and most of them ranged from 60,000 to 200,000! (...)

People will wait in line up to one hour and a half in order to get lunch at a reasonable price. Yesterday, Wynanne and I stood one full hour

in line to get an inexpensive lunch at 35 escudos. And we arrived early. When we left, there were at least 300 people still standing in line. Their ages ranged from 16 to 70 years old.

If you want to buy bread, you also have to stand in a long line. The same goes for sugar — when it is available —, tea, cigarettes and many other things. Right now gas is rationed; people have the right to buy only so much.

Yesterday, when Wynanne was shopping, she noticed about ten men walk into the store, enter a room at the back and come out armed with sticks — the kind used to fight mobs in the street.

The buses in Santiago are incredibly overloaded. There are very often three or four people standing on the steps of the bus, their bodies completely out of the bus, just holding on to one of the bars or somebody else!! Sometimes there are very few people on the bus and the driver somehow decides to go right by the bus stop. I am told that most of the buses are privately owned and therefore quite independent.

Monday, if all goes well, we should be registered at the Centro del Estudio de la Realidad Nacional (CEREN) of the Catholic University of Chile. Classes only begin about the middle of August so from now until then we will keep on trying to find some food — we are fairly well organized now — and give Spanish another go. So far we have been so taken up by the basics that we have had no time for Spanish.

Last night we watched TV. We bought ourselves a second hand TV and radio. We don't understand much but I am sure that within a couple of months we will. (...)

Hope you are all well. Hasta la vista! Wynanne & Ovide

N.B. Letters often don't make it, we are told. If you feel we are slow in answering your letters, it might mean one of them got lost.

Letter: August 4-5

Dear Dominique and Diane,

(...) It's hard to describe in a faithful manner what we have experienced since arriving here. The fact of arriving in the middle of the Chilean winter and of immediately catching a cold; of living for one week in a hotel not equipped with heating and hot water and deprived of any window; of hearing people repeat that everything is scarce here in Chile right now and that we are terribly courageous to

have come here in such dire circumstances; of realizing, in our search for an apartment, that everybody here, be they progressive or conservative (this assertion only reflects our very limited experience here), only wants dollars, not escudos: all that leaves us with a very bleak picture of Chile.

August 5: (...) Salvador Allende recently called for a dialogue between political parties. This appeal seems to please the conservative parties. However, Allende is having trouble within his own socialist party. The latter fears that all dialogue with politicians who do not accept the basic revolutionary platform of the Popular Unity Coalition—anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism—will put into jeopardy the revolutionary process.

The truckers, as far as I know, are still on strike. As of yesterday, so are most of the buses in Santiago.

The dollar was worth 156 escudos at the official rate on July 23, and about 1,600 in the black market. One week later it was worth 240 escudos at the official rate and around 1,800 to 2,000 at the black market rate.

The situation is certainly very explosive. Allende's bodyguard, Arraya, was recently assassinated and violence seems to be erupting everywhere in the country. Allende seems to be in constant meetings. One week ago, at the end of a speech that lasted nearly two hours, he broke into tears. The night before last, we heard him giving a press conference: he described what was happening, pleaded with all to adopt an attitude of tolerance with one another, and praised the CUT (it represents all the unions of Chile) which is calling on workers to volunteer their time in order to meet, as much as possible, all emergencies.

(...) I must leave you. Pardon my disorganized letter, which corresponds to what we are living here right now!

Regards to Bruno, Louise and Michel,

Hoping to read you soon,

Wynanne & Ovide

Inflation, black market

Wynanne and I left for Chile in early July. We traveled by car from Windsor, Ontario, to Mexico City with a colleague from the Collège de Rouyn, Michael Hartney. After spending a week in Mexico, we boarded the plane for Chile and Michael drove back home to Ottawa.

When we arrived in Chile, we first visited the Oblate priests in downtown Santiago. We did not know them personally but thanks to our Oblate friend in Rouyn, they had accepted to help us. They directed us to an inexpensive hotel, Hotel Windsor, where we stayed for one week. We paid a little less than \$4 per night. Breakfast was included: one cup of tea with lots of sugar and plain bread. Outside it was 11° C, humid and sort of gloomy. July in Chile is winter. By our winter standards, it was not very cold but the fact that the hotel we were living in did not have any heating made it miserable for us. I got a pretty terrible cold, which, combined with the fact that we knew next to nothing in Spanish, made the experience rather unpleasant.

On July 25th, two days after our arrival, a work stoppage occurred in the country. In Quebec, we were accustomed to strikes resulting from unions and workers negotiating for better salaries and working conditions. Not so in Chile. We soon realized that this stoppage was initiated from the top, not from the bottom. The owners of the enterprises were obviously the heart and soul of the strike and their objective was simple: they wanted nothing else but the toppling of the Popular Unity socialist government.

After spending one week in the hotel, we finally rented an apartment. We paid \$20 per month for a three-room, completely furnished apartment (including dishes and sheets!) in downtown Santiago on Miraflores Street. The owner obliged us to pay in dollars. He did not want to have anything to do with the Chilean national currency, the escudo. He was not alone to reason this way. In all the newspaper ads, we were unable to find one single apartment that did not demand dollars instead of escudos! The price of the apartments in the ads varied from \$8 to \$100 per month.

For \$100 we were able to purchase, after pretty extensive researching, a second hand television and radio. The radio was equipped with short wave, something that would later turn out to be invaluable.

As we were settling in to our apartment, we discovered in a discussion with a Peruvian friend of Japanese origin, that practically all houses in Chile have a special little room for the servant.

“You are in Latin America here, she said. You must stop thinking like Canadians. Everyone here has a servant. That’s the way it is. Anyway, you won’t manage to wash all your clothes by hand, stand in line to do your shopping, do your house cleaning, etc. if you have a job, or are full- time students.”

Art and Natalie Warner, two Quaker volunteers from the United States who had just arrived in Chile and were renting a comfortable house in a wealthy neighborhood, told us:

“The people in our neighborhood are all astonished that we do not yet have a servant. We are wondering whether or not we should hire one. At home in the States, we never had one nor felt the need for one. Why should we need one here?”

We were somewhat scandalized by all this and were determined we would never hire a servant.

It soon became clear to us why so many people refused escudos and preferred US dollars in their transactions. The rate of inflation in Chile at the time was approximately 500% per year! In other words, the escudo you received today was already worth less, in purchasing power, the very next day! On the other hand, if you could put your hands on dollars, the opposite was true. The dollar received today could purchase more tomorrow. Sitting on an escudo for even a small amount of time was thus losing purchasing power. Sitting on a dollar was making money, actually adding rapidly to your purchasing power.

On July 23rd, one dollar was exchanging, at the official bank rate, at 156 escudos. On the black market, the same dollar was exchanging at 1,500 escudos! One single week later the same dollar was exchanging, at the official rate, at 240 escudos. And the black market rate was 1800! On August 10th, the official rate had jumped to 300 escudos and the black market one to 2100!

Despite my many years in three different universities, I could not understand what was going on. What is a black market? Why such a huge difference between what you could get for a dollar if you would exchange it in a normal bank at the official government rate and what you could get for it if you would offer it to practically anybody on a street corner, in a restaurant, etc.?

According to Father Veillette, an Oblate priest in Santiago, the Chilean minimum salary was, in mid July, approximately \$1.50 at the black market rate. In other words, about 1,700 escudos. That means

that for \$1.50 per month, you could hire, full time, a servant who would wash your clothes, do your cooking, clean house, do the grocery shopping and take care of your kids. A very good deal to say the least.

For a measly 10 cents you could buy a bottle of excellent Chilean wine. That is, if you would exchange your dollars in the black market and if you already had at least one empty bottle of wine. For several days we tried to buy one bottle of wine. Without success. No one, but no one accepted to sell us a bottle. Even if we offered to pay ten times the going price. *"We need your empty bottle* they all said. *"In Chile right now, there are no more wine bottles!"*

For a country that was theoretically creating an economic revolution in favor of the many, this, even to a green horn in economics like me, did not sound right. If I can get something for nothing, I thought to myself, it certainly means that someone, somewhere, is working for nothing. And where have all the bottles gone?

Despite our qualms of conscience, we did end up exchanging some dollars in the black market. Besides the enormous and very tempting economic advantage it gave us, a very simple reality brought us to this. After standing in line in banks for two days, we still had not managed to make it to the right bank teller. When we would get our turn in one line, they would either tell us we were in the wrong line, or stamp some piece of paper and send us to another long line. Furthermore, the more we questioned Chileans and foreigners living in Chile about the black-market the more we realized that it was practically universal. The Oblate priests used it. Our Canadian and American friends in Chile, who were very progressive and sympathetic to the Popular Unity socialist revolution, used it. We were repeatedly told that even the members of parliament of the Popular Unity used it. The American Lutheran Church financed Chilean students at \$5.00 per month; these dollars were exchanged or escudos in the black market.

Work Stoppage

As I explained earlier, two days after we arrived in Chile a work stoppage occurred. It was initiated by the wealthy and obtained the support of a significant portion of the middle class. With every passing day, the work stoppage extended to new sectors, provoking an intense polarization. A large number of the truck owners of Chile

went on strike.⁶ Those truckers who kept on delivering goods did so at a very high risk. Some were gunned down; others, more fortunate, were able to get away only with a few flat tires, caused by *miguelitos* – bent nails welded together and sharpened at both ends – strewn by the millions over Chile's highways. The buses in Santiago, mostly privately owned, functioned only sporadically. In a city not equipped with a subway or any other public transport system, transportation became a nightmare. Thanks to our dollars, we were able to purchase two second-hand bicycles, which made our life a bit easier.

Letter by Wynanne: August 25-26 (Shortages, Work Stoppage, Street Fights)

Dear Andrée, George and children,

For nearly three days now I've been thinking about writing to you but it takes me about that long to coordinate my thoughts and to try to figure out how to put on paper what's happening here and my feelings about it all.... But every day, something else happens. With each new experience, I feel that for the first time, I've really understood. At the same time, when I attempt to explain it all, I'm more confused than ever. Yet I feel I must explain it. I want to.

We think often... very often... about Rouyn, l'Abitibi and the whole gang. I feel an urge and a need to put everything we learn here about Chile and development in relation to Quebec and l'Abitibi. And when I ask myself "But who will understand what's it all about?", I can only answer with some kind of intuition, some kind of blind faith, Andrée. So... here I am! Mixed up little ol' me!

I hope Pierre and Hélène let you in on the news we sent earlier when we first moved in to our downtown apartment. We're right in the heart of Santiago, which has its advantages and disadvantages. All the stores, restaurants and the market are just around any corner... but then so is the Presidential Palace, the Congress and the universities, which means demonstrations and trouble quite often.

Do you remember in October 72 when the truckers in Chile went on strike? It was very serious as the truckers are the ones who bring all the supplies in from the farms and the ports and generally deliver and distribute goods around the country. That strike lasted 28 days. A few days after we arrived in Chile, the truckers (here they are well off, conservative and against the Popular Unity government) went on

⁶ It is important to realize that in Chile the transportation of goods throughout the country depends fundamentally on trucks.

strike again. Today, some 31 days later, the strike is still on. The government foresaw this sort of trouble and accumulated a stock of food for three to four weeks. That stock is now practically all gone.

The truckers insist that their strike is not at all political but in reality, it is obvious that it is. They have parked all the trucks in a couple of fields and have armed themselves. The serial numbers have been removed from the trucks and important parts have been taken out. Because the United States is running a blockade on Chilean copper, Chile's credit on the world market is the lowest in the world. As a result, Chile can't get replacement parts or new trucks. The gas problem is the biggest. With no delivery trucks, there is a terrible shortage of gas. (...)

Many of the doctors have joined the strike initiated by the truckers. All the students have been out of school since July 23 for a rather prolonged winter break (normally seven to ten days). Some say this is because of the lack of gas for transportation. Others argue that students are constantly demonstrating, some for and some against the Popular Unity government.

Anyway, yesterday high school and university students demonstrated against the government smashing buses and trucks. They marched on the streets three blocks from our apartment. The police fought back with tear gas and water trucks (the truck drives down the street and soaks anyone within 50 feet either side). The four hours of street fighting closed all the stores and made the air unbearable. I guess you guys must know what tear gas does to you! Another Quebecois here has clued us in on what to do — handkerchief and salt.

Yesterday was the third consecutive day there has been rioting in the downtown sector. We are about eight blocks from the Presidential Palace — La Moneda — the ideal place for holding demonstrations. As a result of all this there is constant talk of civil war or a coup d'état. Either of these could be rough, especially for those of us living in the center of town. Both neighbors and friends have advised us to stock up for three to four weeks: food, candles, batteries for the radio and general provisions. So we have! C'est pas drôle!

August 26th

Back again this beautiful Sunday morning after supper out last night with a Quebecois and his Peruvian girl friend. Great discussions on socialism, Marxism and capitalism. What's the answer for Quebec??? and how???

I am very interested at the moment by the impact of the media. Here the concept seems so totally different. Radio, television and newspapers are a real means of education of the people, the workers. Imagine the power of a people's TV and radio and paper in l'Abitibi! Maybe Richard Aubry really had a profound intuition when he suggested we create a cooperative community TV station in Rouyn. Pierre Barbès objected that merely creating many coops — food, TV, Caisse populaire, etc. — would not suffice, that what is needed is a global development plan. But it seems to me that we cannot create a global plan if we don't start awakening people immediately, if we don't start counterbalancing the growing publicity promoting superfluous goods by a public awareness strategy focusing on the real interest and needs of the people.

Here, they are trying. Popular education seems to really work in Chile and it is moving ahead in great strides. I want to learn from them. I want to know what to do and how to do it. In the food coop that we set up in Rouyn, I think we had the beginnings of a dream, and a way of making this dream come true. By sharing our ideas and experiences, by learning from places like Chile that seem to be more advanced, we might be able to do something, to sow the seeds of hope and pride for the people of Quebec... Wow!, what a dreamer I am today. Now I just have to practice what I preach. (...)

I would like to write to Renée and share my thoughts with her but I realize I can't write in French. I can't express my heart to her. So you, Andrée, you must see her and tell her what I want to say, please.

And then there are all the mundane daily things that come from living in a developing country that I am sure you know all about: standing in line every other day for one hour to buy two bottles of milk and one kilo of bread; having only a twenty gallon tank of hot water that you must turn on and off as you need it; cooking on a two-burner gas stove and an oven with no window and no thermometer; washing all your clothes and sheets and towels by hand in a bathtub; ironing with an iron that weighs a ton and has only the control of "plugged in" or "not plugged"... Yet, we live well here. (...)

We're sort of homesick for Quebec, to say the least (especially me anyway). Please write and let us know the news from "home". Are you pregnant? Did George get a job? Is the gang all together?

Please give our news to all the others. Take care and write soon,

Lots of love,

Wynanne & Ovide

Every day, Wynanne and I bought several different newspapers. And every night, we would watch the news on TV. They would last anywhere from one and a half to two and a half hours. One day, it was reported that Salvador Allende's main bodyguard, Commandante Araya, had been assassinated. Another day that several gas stations had exploded. In fact, we ourselves witnessed the explosion of one in downtown Santiago. One night, when Allende was addressing the entire nation live on TV, there was a total blackout that lasted for several hours: one of the very important hydro lines had been sabotaged.

Diary: August 26 (Struggle between Left and Right in Media)

After spending a little more than one month here talking to people, spending some four to five hours every day reading different newspapers and magazines, and two to three every evening listening to the radio and watching the news on TV, I would like to put down on paper the present situation in Chile as I see it. What strikes me a lot is the fact that, for the first time in my life, I feel as if I was in the communist or socialist bloc. The left here constantly speaks of China, the Soviet Union, Romania, North Korea and especially about Cuba. For the Chilean left, it is obvious that Cuba represents a sacred ideal, a source of admiration and inspiration....

The right, on the other hand, seems to represent a current of thought in which I have always lived. It spends its time systematically attacking communism in all its forms, just as the left criticizes constantly both capitalism and American imperialism. For the right, communism threatens religious freedom, democracy, intellectual freedom and economic prosperity.

I just can't get over how TV and the mass media in general are used in this country. The left makes all kinds of TV programs on Cuba, Romania, etc. It uses the media to sensitize the public to the major current problems in Chile. The fact that those doctors now on strike are wealthy and very privileged is openly denounced. Their salaries are made public and the fact that they cater mostly to the wealthy is emphasized. Ordinary workers are often interviewed and they speak with an amazing freedom and audacity. Last night, I started watching TV at 9 p.m. and finished at 1:00 a.m. First I watched channel 9, of the University of Chile. Quite obviously, it is a channel of the left. Apparently, the new rector of the university, a rightist, is trying to have the channel closed.

According to the news on channel 9, the doctors on strike have decided to abandon even the emergency rooms. On the other hand, they are continuing their private practice. This kind of transparent and open criticism is one of the most moving I have even seen. I recognize here values that I tried to defend, with little success, in the board meetings of CUSO-SUCO. Each individual should work primarily to help his fellow man and woman. Using a technique, setting up a business, etc. primarily to accumulate material wealth is immoral. If that is what freedom means, the freedom to accumulate wealth, then it is nothing but a façade for what is in fact mere selfishness and greed. If a doctor is free to do business in this spirit of accumulation, if that is what economic realism is all about, if that is what the law and the constitution protect, then one must seriously question this law and constitution. One must have the guts to speak out loudly and clearly.

Diary: August 27 (The Poor Pay for Black Market)

The more I reflect on this black market issue, the more I realize that it is hideous and immoral. And yet those who make use of it all seem to be so refined, so nice! I just found out that thanks to the black market, I could travel to Canada, a return trip, for a mere \$300! On whose back? On that of the majority of poor Chileans, of course! At the very moment when Chile is deeply indebted; when it lacks the money necessary to purchase the wheat it needs to feed its population; when it is being boycotted by the international financial institutions that usually make loans to developing nations, a boycott initiated by the United States; when Chileans are literally piling up on each other in old and overcrowded buses and obliged to stand in line for hours to buy bread, milk, coffee, butter, toilet paper, oil, etc.; at that very moment, one can travel to Canada for next to nothing!!! In other words, the worse it gets for the population in general in Chile, the easier it is for a small minority here to buy things for next to nothing by dealing with the black market.⁷

⁷ I realize now how my analysis of the black market was strictly moralistic at that time. I lacked the analytical tools that could have allowed me to understand this issue in a broader and more technical sense.

Diary: August 28 (Conservative Press Hints Military Necessary to Fight Communism)

Today El Mercurio, Chile's major conservative daily, published this ominous article:

"The advance of communism in some cases and a situation of economic chaos in others have resulted in military takeovers in most countries in Latin America. The military rule in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia, that is, in a total of six countries out of ten. In the southern cone, only Chile and Argentina are not under military rule."

Letter: September 9 (Possibility of Civil War or Coup)

*Dear Michael,*⁸

We were wondering whether you made it back alive and in one piece to Ottawa and I suppose you were wondering about us too. Well we made it, with a couple of hours stop in Lima, Peru, and we are now trying to get settled down. What makes it a bit hard is that Chile itself, as you might have seen in some small corner of a newspaper, is far from being peaceful yet. Tension and violence seem to be growing, the polarization between the left and right is increasing and everyone is waiting for what's going to happen next. That could very well be civil war.

One thing seems sure: if the left stays in power, order can hardly be established through legal means because Allende and his Popular Unity government have absolutely no power to pass legislation, Parliament being under the complete control of the conservatives. And these conservatives merely keep on blocking the bills proposed by the government because these bills, it claims, all have a Marxist coloring. On the other hand, if the right manages to get Allende out it can hardly be through legal means. So it will either be by bleeding the country to death by doing everything to create public disorder, economic chaos, general work stoppages — and that is precisely what is now happening — or it will be through a direct coup d'état. In either case, order will only be re-established, if at all possible, through a massive repression of the left.

⁸ As already explained, Michael Hartney was a colleague of mine from the Collège de Rouyn-Noranda. Wynanne and I drove by car from Montreal to Mexico City. After visiting there for a few days, Michael returned to his home in Ottawa with his car and we boarded the plane for Santiago, Chile.

What really astonishes me is to see that although the lines people stand in to buy their basic necessities are getting longer and longer, mainly as a result of the general work stoppages initiated by those who control commerce and transportation, the left is as strong as ever.

Last Tuesday on September 4th, over one million people celebrated the third anniversary of the electoral victory of the Popular Unity government. And there were also other celebrations of this kind throughout Chile. These people seem more determined than ever to prevent both civil war and a coup d'état. I think it is this determination, and especially the growing organizational structures that are developing at the grass-roots level as a result of this determination, that are preventing or at least postponing a coup d'état.

Wynanne and I have both started attending lectures at the CEREN (Centro del Estudio de la Realidad Nacional), an institute that is part of the Catholic University of Chile. It takes us three quarters of an hour to get there by bus, when the buses are not on strike. One of my profs, Luis Maïra, is of the Christian Left party, and is a member of the National Assembly. He lectures on the political institutions of Chile and the fact that he has a direct experience in politics should allow him to be very concrete in his teaching. (...)

Be good... Wynanne sends her greetings, Ovide

Letter by Wynanne: September 9 (Standing in Line for Food, Terrorist Attacks)

Dear Léo,⁹

We're still alive, believe it or not! We arrived in Santiago on July 23rd to find a cold and forbidden city. The first week here we'll never forget — in a hotel with no heat, no windows, no hot water, newspaper for toilet paper, and both of us sick with wicked colds. But one week later we had found our little apartment with heat, hot water, windows (even a balcony) and toilet paper! The apartment is completely furnished, sheets and dishes too, for \$20 a month. The next project for us was to learn Spanish and find food — no mean task. But we found out that we can do both at the same time quite easily. Since we must stand in line every other day for one hour and a half for two

⁹ Léo Dénommé, a very close friend of ours who died of lung cancer in February 2000, was then an Oblate priest. He was then working as the pastor of the Oblate parish in Maniwaki, Quebec.

liters of milk and one kilo of bread, we spend that time reading the newspapers (we counted eleven different dailies) or talking to our neighbors. Standing in line for coffee, sugar, oil, meat and margarine periodically gives us lots of time to practice talking and understanding too. We were able to buy a TV and radio after one week here and so we are learning from that too. It's really incredible to see what TV, radio and newspapers can be when they are put to the use of the people (i.e. the workers) and their interests — POWERFUL!

The country has lost its center in politics; the split between left and right, between Capitalists and Marxists, defines itself more clearly every day. The commercial and transportation sectors are on strike for an indefinite period. Only the government food stores are selling goods. They will be able to keep on selling as long as the non-striking and volunteer shippers can continue getting food to Santiago.

The number of terrorist attacks on highways, railways and gas reserves are augmenting day by day. Everyone speaks of an imminent civil war. The universities of the right are on strike to support the truckers but we are in a leftist center of studies; the leftist students and profs continue coming to school. Meanwhile, there is often street fighting and since our apartment is right downtown and about eight blocks from the Presidential Palace, there is often tear gas around. Many stores close out of fear, if not because of the work stoppage.

In the rich sectors of town (rightist) the people cannot get food because of the work stoppage. Allende has announced that there is enough flour to make bread for the capital for two or three more days, that's all. He is bidding for time because each day he is in power is another day for education and the sensitizing of the poor. And I think it's working.

Last Tuesday, September 4th, was the third anniversary of the Popular Unity government. There was a great happy parade and singing and dancing in the streets of Santiago as well as in other parts of the country. Here there were over one million people parading for five hours past the Presidential Palace, saluting Allende. (...)

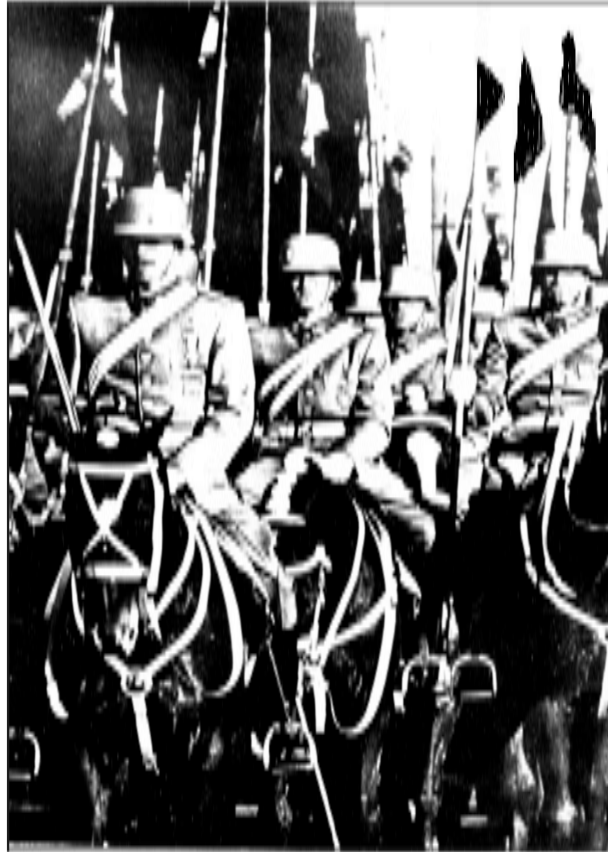
The right is scared. They know that if they loose the battle at this point, capitalism and private enterprise are finished in Chile. It's a hot bed here but very interesting. (...) We're learning what socialism, Marxism and communism and another kind of Christianity mean for different people here. There are many differences within the left but

First Days in Chile before the Coup

basically they all want equality for ALL men and women, be it in dress, housing, food, policies and the development of the country.

For me it's the first time I see this in action and not just in words or in a dream. Wish you could live it too, Léo. It really 'turns you on'. Hope they let us stay here to see the process through. Please write us news of you and Quebec. We are pretty homesick sometimes.

Lots of love and peace, Wynanne & Ovide



Chilean Military

Photo by SQAL

Chapter 2

The Coup: September - December 1973

Diary: September 16 (First Moments of Coup, Allende's Last Words)¹⁰

If I have yet not written down my impressions and reflections on the coup d'état that took place on September 11th, it is merely because I was in a state of shock. Furthermore, I was too preoccupied with immediate matters like trying not to get killed or hurt, trying to get in touch with my friends here in Santiago to see how they were and merely if they were still alive...

September 11th, 7 a.m. My alarm clock woke me up. I set it every morning at that time so that I would not be the very last one in line and would be able to get at least one piece of bread. By the time I made it to the bakery, about sixty people were already standing in line. Practically no one was talking. We were wondering if there would be bread in this quarter of the city. Yesterday, for the very first time, there was none at all.

A newspaper vendor walked by so I decided to buy El Mercurio. On the editorial page, there was an article on the international scarcity of wheat. The Popular Unity is wrong, it affirmed, in accusing the United States of discrimination. If they are presently refusing to sell wheat to Chile, it is possibly because they are trying to curb their own inflation. Furthermore, it added, "the American Department of Agriculture says that the United States has completely sold out its existing stock of wheat."

All of a sudden, I noticed two army tanks moving at approximately 70 kilometers per hour in the direction of the Presidential Palace.

¹⁰ This and the following chapter are made up nearly exclusively of excerpts from my diary and from letters I sent to Canada during my stay in Chile. Wynanne Watts, my wife at the time, wrote a few of the letters.

Somewhat perplexed, I watched to see how the other people were reacting. No reaction....

About one hour later, around 8:30 a.m., I finally made it into the bakery. Someone grabbed me by the arm. It was Olga, my next-door neighbor. "Things are not looking good, she whispered in my ear. Apparently the Moneda — the Presidential Palace — is surrounded by tanks."

After receiving my share of bread, I hurried to my apartment. Wynanne informed me that she thought she heard Allende's voice on the radio, but that given that it was so early, she had assumed she was mistaken and had just turned the radio off.

We turned the radio on again. Sure enough, Allende was speaking: "Valparaiso — the second largest city in Chile, a port city — is completely occupied by the military. Workers, you can go to work as usual but stay alert in your workplaces. In Santiago, everything is calm and I count on the soldiers of Chile to restore order."

Wynanne asked me to go out and buy vegetables about one block away. When I got there, there was absolutely nothing left on the stand. On my way back, suddenly I heard machine gun shots. My heart started beating wildly. I walked fast but did not dare run. Once I reached the street corner where we live, I noticed two carabineros — the national police force — armed with machine guns and speeding away toward La Moneda. A bit further down the street, there were other carabineros forming a barricade.

Once back in the apartment, we started cooking a large pot of beans and the little fish we had left. We also filled up the bathtub with water. We had not forgotten the night, a couple weeks back, when the entire city of Santiago had been deprived of water and electricity because of an act of sabotage, perpetrated at the very moment that Allende was addressing the nation on radio.

Meanwhile, we continued listening to the radio. All of a sudden, the station we were listening to was silenced. We searched and found another station sympathetic to the Popular Unity. A few minutes later, that one too was silenced. While we were searching for yet another leftist station, we came across one of the opposition. The voice was military. So was the music. "The press, radio stations and television channels serving the Popular Unity coalition must suspend their functions as news media forthwith. Otherwise they shall be attacked by land and air."

Just on the other side of the street from our apartment, about forty feet away, was Radio-Candelaria, a pro-government radio station. We checked to see if it was still on the air. It was. We did not know what to do and were terribly scared.

Bomber jets started flying over Santiago. Outside, we heard more and more gunfire. Most of the shooting seemed to come from the direction of the Presidential Palace, La Moneda, about ten blocks from our place. Rounds of machine guns. Heavy artillery. Snipers on the roof of our apartment were exchanging shots with the military on the street who were calling for their surrender.

As we were listening to the radio, we heard the Popular Unity song 'Venceremos' —We shall vanquish—, the very same one we had watched thousands of proud Chileans sing as they were marching in the streets on September 4th. Tears came to our eyes. A sense of deep sadness came over us. I could still see that worker on television, very simple and very proud. I could see him asserting that most doctors are more interested in making money than in catering to the needs of the penniless masses. I could see him describing in great detail the behavior of these 'professionals' during the work stoppage. I could see this woman, comparing the health clinics in the wealthy neighborhoods of Santiago, modern and extremely well equipped, to those in the poor ones, very backward and with very little equipment. I could see this incredible cultural liberation that I just found absolutely amazing. Thousands of ordinary citizens not afraid anymore, ready to stand up and defend themselves. Who understood that lawyers all too often are not devoted to fighting against injustice but prefer selling their services to those who have lots of money. Who could understand that those who constantly suffer the greatest injustices, the poor and marginalized masses, are alone and defenseless.

More rounds of machine guns. Fear. Fear of the unknown. Civil war? The massacre of thousands of people? Repression?

The radio announcer informed us that President Allende was now going to speak. Fully aware that what was happening was of historical importance, we started recording¹¹:

¹¹ Most of this text of President Allende's last speech to his people comes from our tape recording. However, the first three paragraphs, which we were not able to record, come from the novel published by an American friend of ours who was also in Chile at the time, Caroline Richards: *Sweet Country*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York

“Surely this will be the last opportunity I will have to address myself to you. The air force has bombed the towers of Radio Portales and Radio Corporación. My words do not come out of bitterness, but rather deception, that they may be the moral punishment for those who betrayed the oath they took as soldiers of Chile, titular commanders-in-chief....Admiral Merino, who has self-designed himself commander of the Army....Mr. Mendoza, the callous general who only yesterday declared his loyalty to the Government, has been named director-general of the Police.

“In the face of these facts, the only thing left for me to say to the workers is that I will not resign! Placed in a historical transition, I will pay with my life for the loyalty of the People. I say to you that I have the assurance that the seed that we plant in the dignified consciousness of thousands and thousands of Chileans cannot be forever blinded.

“They have the power and can smash us, but the social processes are not held back, neither with crimes nor with power. History is ours, and the People will make it. Workers of my country: I want to thank you for the loyalty which you always have shown, the trust which you placed in a man who was only the interpreter of the great desires of justice, who gave his word that he would respect the Constitution and the law, and that I did.

“In this definitive moment, the last thing which I can say to you is that I hope you will learn this lesson: foreign capital, imperialism united with reaction in Chile, created the climate for the Armed Forces to break with their tradition, that to which General Schneider was faithful and Commander Araya reaffirmed. They were victims of the same social sectors that are staying in their homes today, waiting for a third party to restore their profits and privileges.

“I address myself above all to the modest woman of our land, to the peasant woman who believed in us, to the working woman who doubled in her efforts, to the mother who knew of our concern for her children. I address myself to the professionals of our land, to those who were patriotic and struggled against the auspicious

and London, 1979, p. 79-80. To see both the Spanish and English version: <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2006/allende110906.html>. To listen to the actual speech itself: <http://www.cooperativa.cl/noticias/pais/dd-hh/escucha-completo-el-ultimo-discurso-de-salvador-allende/2013-09-11/124950.html>.

sedition carried out by upper-class oriented schools, a sedition aimed at restoring a capitalist society geared to the wealthy few.

“I address myself to the youth of Chile, to those who sang, who offered to the struggle their joy and spirit. I address myself to the Chilean man: to the worker, and peasant, the intellectual, to those who will be persecuted. For fascism has been active in our country for many hours, carrying out acts of sabotage and terrorism, blowing up bridges and railways, destroying oil and gas pipelines. All the while counting on the silence of those whose duty it was to stop them... History will judge them.

“Probably Radio Magallanes will soon be silenced and the calm mettle of my voice will no longer reach you. It does not matter: you will continue to hear me, I will always be side you or at least my memory will be that of a dignified man, that of a man who was loyal.

“Workers of my country, I have faith in Chile and in her destiny. Other men will overcome this gray and bitter moment where treason tries to impose itself. May you continue to know that sooner than later the great avenues through which free men will pass to build a better society will open.

“Long live Chile! Long live the People! Long live the Workers!

“These are my last words. I have the conviction that my sacrifice will not be in vain. I am sure that it will at least be a moral lesson which will punish felony, cowardice and treason.”

We remained sitting, deeply moved and saddened... A few minutes later I knocked on the door of the apartment next to us and asked to use the phone. Fortunately, I was able to get through to our friend, Jacques Gélinas, a former Oblate priest who spent several years in Bolivia and had experienced several coup d'états. “The military announced, I told Jacques, that all pro-government stations should get off the air immediately. Otherwise, they will be attacked by land and air. Radio Candelaria is right across the street from us and is broadcasting. What should we do, run off on the streets where there is constant shooting or stay put and face the prospect of getting bombed or shot at with rockets?” Jacques answered calmly that we were to stay put. That the military, in such circumstances, would only bomb the towers of transmission outside of the city and then undoubtedly invade, with a few soldiers, the radio station itself. As soon as things

calmed down on the streets, he invited us to come to his place, to get out of the downtown area.

A few minutes later, Radio Candelaria, the last pro-government radio station, was also silenced. The beginning of total silence for the Chilean left...

The military broadcast several communiqués on the radio. They accused the Popular Unity government of not respecting the right to strike, the right to private property, freedom of expression, freedom of association. They announced that they would rid the country of the cancer of communism, which, during the last three years, had been plunging it into chaos, moral, political and economic. Anyone attempting to resist the new government would be shot, they made clear. They named long lists of people who were to report immediately to the military. The Armed Forces, they insisted, had remained perfectly faithful to their traditional professionalism. What they were accomplishing was not in the least political. They were indeed against a Marxist dictatorship but remained deeply in favor of ideological pluralism. They invoked the name of God. All they wanted was peace and freedom, and that Chile return to being a big unified family once again. We have restored democracy in Chile, they said. We must, however, clean up Chile, get rid of all that is foreign to our true 'chilenidad' (that which defines one as a true Chilean).

Workers of Chile, they affirmed with an authoritarian voice, do not be afraid. We want your well-being, social justice. We will not touch your economic gains: you will be able to maintain them.

The communiqués were interrupted by music. Sometimes the military marches were replaced by lighter music, and even a considerable amount of American hit parade, in English! At one moment they were playing: "Raindrops are falling..."

I was in a state of shock and was experiencing a deep sadness. I felt as if death had invaded my heart. A death impossible to express in words. I felt I was learning something I could never have learned in all the many books I had read. A death I wanted to cry out to the entire world. But that would not, I sensed, be really understood by most people. What was happening was outrageous, cruel and illogical.

Never in my life had I ever seen so much freedom of expression as in Chile! So many meetings, strikes, so many grass root organizations, so much political and social awareness.

10:55 a.m. The military ordered the carabineros—the National Police Force—who were still in the Presidential Palace, La Moneda, with Allende to get out.

11:15 a.m. The military announced that the women still in the Presidential Palace had exactly three minutes to get out. We were then told that six women were leaving La Moneda.

A few minutes later, someone knocked on our door. We were scared. Who was it? We could still hear constant gunfire on the streets. We peeked through the little hole in our door and recognized Patrick Boucher, the reporter who works for Le Devoir whom we had met at the party on 4 September. We let him in. He was weeping like a child, shivering and transpiring considerably.

“I got caught in gunfire, he said, right here on the corner of Miraflores and Monjitas. I threw myself on the ground. The bullets were whistling over my head. I tried getting into your apartment building but the door was locked. And there was no bell I could ring to let you know I was there. Fortunately, somebody saw me from a window and I asked him to let me in. Thank God, he did. I was on my way to the Presidential Palace. At Plaza Italia, there was a barricade, so I had to make a detour. But then I got caught in heavy gunfire. There was shooting from all sides. I had to find a way to get out of there! I frantically looked for your address. I wasn’t sure I had it. I found it in my pocket.”

11:55 a.m. Two jet bombers started flying over the city in the area of the Presidential Palace, not far from our place. Then we heard what sounded like bombing. It lasted approximately fifteen minutes. The radio announced that the Palace was on fire. Then we heard the military order the firemen to come to the scene immediately.

Outside, gunfire continued relentlessly. Sometimes machine guns. Sometimes pistols. On a few occasions, bazookas. One bazooka shot actually hit our earthquake-proof concrete building and made it literally shake.

All afternoon we stayed glued to the radio that we had placed in the middle of our apartment, far from the windows. The shooting continued but there was no news of what had happened to Allende. On TV, only the Catholic channel, directed by Father Raul Hasbun, was broadcasting. But other than the messages from the military, peaceful and relaxing (!!!) music, a few prayers that sounded full of

gratitude..., absolutely no news about what was happening in the country. Quite obviously, there was total censorship.

Suddenly realizing that our radio was equipped with short wave, we started trying to get news about Chile from other countries. From Buenos Aires, Argentina, we heard that according to a rumor Allende had committed suicide.

On the local news at night, the military repeated more of the same. But not a single drop of real news about what was happening. Not a word of those wounded or of Allende.

The TV camera showed us Allende's house, which had also been rocketed. It slowly went from room to room for approximately one hour. We were shown an impressive arsenal of arms and the announcer insisted that they were of Russian and Chinese origin. We were shown heaps of food: so much soap, 50 light bulbs, 20 boxes of coffee, etc. The idea they were trying to convey was simple: as you were experiencing shortages of all kinds, Chileans, look at how your president was living!

The camera moved to the washroom and slowly focused on a bookshelf filled with literature on Cuba. We were shown one book at a time, as if what we were viewing was the Devil in person.

Then we were shown Allende's desk, covered with considerable pornography.¹² (...)

The next day, at noon, channel 13 once again gave us yet another tour of Allende's house. This time it lasted about one and a half hours. The technique used to tarnish the president's reputation was so gross that it made me sick to my stomach. Of Allende himself, not a single word. Nor of the dead and wounded in Chile. Yet outside, the shooting, sometimes very intense, continued intermittently.

After this very 'Christian' TV report, the announcer said a prayer to Jesus and Mary. "The country is moving towards unity, Lord," he said. 'Towards justice and brotherly love....'

¹² It is interesting to note that the same desk mysteriously reappeared, several years later, but in another country! Following the American invasion of Panama, in December 1989, the camera, from a TV station completely controlled by the U.S. invaders, also visited the house of President Manuel Noriega. For a long time it focused on the same desk, and with the same material – pornography, etc. – found in Chile in 1973! This surprising fact was revealed in the excellent documentary film, *Panama Deception*, produced by Barbara Trent, Joanne Doroshow, Nico Panigutti, David Kasper, 90 Min, August 1992 (In Dawson film library).

I was beginning to experience a deep feeling of revolt inside of me. A revolt I had trouble containing. I remembered the words pronounced by Father Raul Hasbun on this same channel 13 just two days before the coup d'état. He was actually quoting the Bible: "One recognizes the value of a tree by the fruit that it bears. If this fruit is not good, the tree must be pruned or altogether cut. Allende and the Popular Unity have created fruit that all Chileans can see. May he who can understand, understand."

I remembered what people had been telling me since the beginning of the coup. I could see the face of Yoshi's¹³ friend who lived in a poor neighborhood. I could see her weeping as she told us how the soldiers came and shot a young man of 23. He was in favor of the Popular Unity government and the president of the local organization set up by the people to prevent acts of sabotage and terrorism. His corpse was abundantly shown so that those able to understand would indeed understand! I could still hear what people would constantly relate when you talked to them: this one got machine gunned, this one got his hands cut off, and this poor neighborhood was bombed. All this kept ringing in my ears.

I could see the face of the Bolivian who visited Jacques when we were there. He was literally terrified. He told us that we had to immediately get rid of all Marxist or progressive literature we had. That we should dress up as if we came from rich neighborhoods: shirts, ties, etc. That those with long hair and beards should have them cut. Not to do so, he insisted, was dangerous. Olga told us the same thing. So did Andrée.

On the short-wave radio of the United States, Voice of America, they were reporting that all was going well in Chile; that Allende had plunged Chile in economic chaos; that the new government was pledging to restore order and peace... In a word, more or less the same, sanitized version of events forthcoming from the strictly censored media here. (...)

Radio-Havana, Cuba's short-wave radio station, announced that there were 10,000 prisoners in the National Stadium of Chile.

Foreign reporters, we were told, were being denied access to the country.

¹³ Yoshi was Jacques Gélinas' wife. Jacques had been an Oblate missionary in Bolivia for several years. At the time, he was doing research in Chile. Jacques and Yoshi were our close friends in Chile.

In writing this, I know that I am taking a risk. If they find me making such commentaries, I could be arrested. Patrick Boucher thinks I'm not prudent. Nor does Wynanne. However something pushes me to jot down my thoughts immediately. Not in one month. The world must know what is going on here! The news must get out!

Diary: September 17 (Contradictory Media Reports)

The more I see what is happening the more I feel the ABSOLUTE NECESSITY to take notes on everything I observe and hear directly from the people I come across. The lies of the military Junta are so big, so numerous, their assertions are so blatantly contradictory that I know not whether I should laugh, cry or do both at the same time. Never in my life had I ever imagined that I would see so much corruption.

It's 9:00 p.m. I just listened to Radio-Havana, Radio-Moscow and then Voice of America. The first two report that there are thousands of deaths in Chile, generalized torture, thousands of prisoners. On the other hand, Voice of America gives very little news on Chile. And what it says corresponds essentially to what we are hearing here in the strictly censored media of the military. Not one single word about the number of dead, wounded and prisoners. Not a word about torturing! On the other hand, they report the fact (?) that the military Junta has discovered a secret plan that had been prepared by the Popular Unity government: some generals and members of the opposition parties were to be assassinated. What objectivity! What a wonderful sense of responsibility on the part of the radio station of the most powerful country in the world!

The justice now reigning in Chile is military justice. They accuse those they want to. For whatever reason. They execute whomever they want to. They freely blacken the Popular Unity and president Allende. All the media sympathetic to the government have been taken over. The left is reduced to an absolute silence, so the military can accuse freely. The accusations may be true or false: there is no way of knowing it. However, the least that can be said is that the military Junta inspires no confidence whatsoever. And what does Voice of America¹⁴ do? It simply repeats the stupidities uttered by the Junta! The American Embassy is fully aware, of course, of what is going on here.

¹⁴ *Voice of America* is the short-wave radio station of the United States. It broadcasts throughout the world.

Art Warner told me his American friends, because they were feeling more and more worried, had phoned the embassy to find out what they could do to protect themselves: "Take a Bufferin aspirin!" was the reply.

The media reported today that the military had told Allende four times that if he were to surrender, his life would be safe, but that in the end he had committed suicide with the reporter Olivares. (...)

This afternoon, I spoke with an Oblate priest, the director of the College of Antofagasta. I asked him what he thought of what the military had been reporting: less than 100 dead and some 300 slightly wounded in all of Chile. "The personal secretary of Pinochet, he replied, is a student in my college. I have direct sources. Two days after the beginning of the coup, Thursday the 13 September, there were already at least 5,000 dead. The prisoners have no rights whatsoever; they are being tortured."

This morning Jacques and Claude came over. We had lunch together. Claude heard from three different sources that every night one could hear constant shooting in the National Stadium where thousands of prisoners are being held. The only conclusion one can reach: prisoners are being executed.

(I started hiding my diary notes and reflections. Where, I wondered, would be an absolutely safe place? I found such a place inside our washroom. I would remove the two stainless steel tubes supporting the sink, tightly curl up my notes, place them inside the tubes, and reinstall the tubes under the sink.)

Diary: September 18 (Repression, Attitude of Church)

Jacques was talking to the owner of his apartment who is sympathetic to the military. She claims that some 80,000 Chileans are probably dead by now. "You know, she commented, at least 800,000 Chileans voted for Allende".

This number is quite probably much exaggerated. But it is very hard to know what is happening when everything is so strictly censored. Today, the country's leading rightist newspaper, El Mercurio, gave the following, quite obviously ridiculous figures for the country as a whole: 95 dead (72 civilians, 14 police officers and 9 soldiers) and 4,700 prisoners (4,400 in Santiago and 300 in Valparaiso).

Yesterday someone informed us that many bodies were being sent to the airport, not the morgue. If this is true, the only feasible hypothesis,

according to Jacques who has a long experience in Bolivian coup d'états, is that they are dumping bodies in the ocean. Knowing the number of dead would then become an impossible task.¹⁵

Are all these things rumors? How can one know? We are deprived of all news except what we learn from our contacts. We hear nothing about Valparaiso. Even the telephone communication with that city has been cut. All international flights are still suspended.

Jacques told us missionary nuns from Quebec had just taken refuge in the home of one of the secretaries working for the Canadian embassy. In the shantytown where they were living the military detained and tortured two men. They were members of the Christian Democratic party. They were later released thanks to the personal intervention of Cardinal Henríquez. The nuns saw women getting beaten by the military. They also saw the military carrying the bodies of workers out of the SUMAR industry: some 150 of them.

The Church in Chile is a very powerful institution and has considerable political weight. Today, the traditional national day of Chile, Cardinal Henríquez accepted to attend an official religious ceremony, in presence of the four military leaders who are masterminding the coup d'état. During this ceremony, he made a long homily in which he offered the new government "the total and disinterested collaboration" of the Church. The whole ceremony was televised live and transmitted throughout the nation. I find this absolutely revolting!

Diary: September 19 (Criticism of Leaders of Catholic Church)

I have often heard that the Catholic Church was not rooted in the working class. I have often discussed with people who tried to persuade me to believe that the Church sides with the powerful and rich.

At 31 years old, I did not share this view at all. Eight years spent in a religious community studying philosophy and theology, long hours of prayer, the ideal of justice and love that I perceived in the historical Jesus and constantly tried to imitate, the intense joy which I

¹⁵ According to newspaper reports, at the beginning of 1995 ex-soldiers in Argentina decided to get a load off their conscience. They admitted that following the Argentinean military coup d'état that occurred not long after the Chilean one, they had participated in operations which consisted in dumping prisoners from airplanes into the ocean. The prisoners were still alive but drugged. A Catholic priest was on the plane to help the prisoners get ready for their death.

experienced in community life, —all this made me feel that this view of the Church was unfair and biased.

Today something has changed in me. What I have experienced since the coup d'état of September 11th has brutally awakened me. From the window of my apartment, I saw the Chilean Air Force bomb the Presidential Palace of a man who had just received—elections of March 1973—44% of the popular vote, a 44% that represents without doubt the most marginalized and poor sectors of Chile. I heard the last words of this dedicated man, expressed in a calm and very touching manner.

For four consecutive days, I heard constant gunfire outside. I saw jets leave on their mission of destruction. I heard people weep as they told me how their friend had been tortured and shot. I heard a Canadian priest who told me of the president of a JAP in his neighborhood who was shot in front of his wife and eight children. I heard that workers had been shot merely because they admitted they were socialists. I discovered that a Bolivian student at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences—FLACSO—in Santiago was detained, tortured and then killed; the director of this United Nations institute, called upon to identify the body, said it was very mutilated.

I saw terror spreading like fire among all those the least bit sympathetic to the Popular Unity government. I saw people cut their hair short, get rid of their beards and dress up like the rich, for fear of the military. I found myself obliged, like thousands of others, to get rid of all books and articles of a leftist orientation. I saw people obliged to hide and escape from the country just because of their ideas, or because, as this fine Chilean doctor, they were involved in concrete projects to help the have-nots organize. I saw smiling, high-class Chileans, report a frightened neighbor to the military. I can still hear this Chilean relate to me how he saw the soldiers cut his friend's ears off. To make a prisoner talk, they sometimes pull out fingernails, cut a finger or two, sometimes the entire hand.

In this situation of brutal repression, what does the head of the powerful Catholic Church of Chile do? He offers the military Junta “his complete and disinterested collaboration”. He kneels with them and prays the Lord so that he will assist them “in their very noble and difficult task”. He calls on all Chileans to collaborate with the patriotic military. Then he takes refuge in noble, vague and pious principles. Accepting to be crucified for matters of principle was okay in the time of Christ, when the Church was still young, somewhat

naïve and charismatic, when it had not yet learned to compromise, to make deals with the powerful, to be diplomatic. What the Chilean Church needs today are not values that would make it risk persecution, and possibly torture and death, but rather principles to save it from crucifixion!

That is why Cardinal Henríquez carefully abstains from condemning the military takeover and the brutal and massive repression that is now underway. That is why he sticks to pious principles: they are universal enough to be true, and too general to be pertinent. He readily speaks of sacrifice but does not have the courage to denounce the concrete atrocities now taking place. He does not have the courage to convene all his priests and to publicly denounce the massive repression, the wave of hate and fascism that is now rampant in Chile. Nor does he have the guts to stand up to the military, who claim in public that they are acting in the name of God, and to tell them: Basta! Enough! To stay in his Episcopal Palace, assembled with his priests, and to tell the military that he is willing to be bombed for values that are sacred.

Where is love? In these empty words of diplomacy emanating from this “representative of Christ on earth” or in the heart of this atheist who died in his Presidential Palace because he refused to abandon, under the threat of violence, a mandate given to him by his people? What is the meaning of the Cardinal’s political neutrality? What does his silence in the context of this ongoing Human Tragedy really mean?

May those who have an inferior and less noble calling do what they have to do. May they cleanse Chile of that diabolical Marxism that has sown hatred in hearts, that has invented the concept of social classes and class struggle, that has invented domination and exploitation, that has tried to indoctrinate the marginalized masses living in slums so that they would come to believe that that they are not equal to those who live in the ritzy neighborhoods with their big, expensive cars, their large luxurious houses, their servants. As if all Chileans were not equal! Before the law. Before life. As if all Chileans were not, as sons of God and children of Mary, part of one big family. As if “los Chilenos rotos” — “the low-class raggy Chileans” — were not equal to the successful ones. How ridiculous!



Cardinal Henriquez and Military Junta Walking Out of Church
Ceremony of September 18, 1973.
Photo from *Chili: Le coup divin*

Go ahead, dear military, do what you have to do! Use guns and tanks! Meanwhile, we, of a higher calling, will stay neutral. Completely neutral. We will go to our cathedral. We will pray for peace. For love. For justice. We will pray that the grace of the Lord may be with you when you fill the National Stadium with prisoners, when you execute the communist leader in front of his home, when you shoot the socialist worker in his shop, when you torture the Bolivian immigrant, the Mapúche Indian, when you burn Marxist literature in the streets of Santiago.

When things calm down in three or four years the Church may then decide to denounce the atrocities. But now? Never! Did the military

Junta not make it ultra-clear who is the boss, and that it would not tolerate any criticism whatsoever?

Lord Jesus, you have no idea how happy I am that you died on the cross for us. What a beautiful symbol! I can sit here, on the pew of the cathedral and contemplate you for hours on end. Then I feel better inside, liberated. I can leave those modest and unrefined Chileans run in the streets of Santiago, shooting with their pistols at soldiers armed with machine guns, tanks and Hawker Hunter fighter jets. And as these Chileans, who have lost their way, bleed in their hearts and body, I can make the Church bells toll to celebrate the victory of the wealthy elite.



Photo: Chili: Le coup divin

Military Junta: *From left to right: General Gustavo Leigh Guzman; Head of the Air Force; General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte; Head of the Army; Admiral José Toribio Merino, Head of the Navy; General Mendoza, Head of the National Police Force*

In the Canadian Ambassador's Residence

My wife and I were still in a state of shock and disarray on September 20th when we decided to take refuge in the residence of the Canadian Ambassador, Andrew Ross. One part of us felt that it was high time to leave this country, as most foreigners were doing frantically. Another part of us felt that it was important to stay, on the one hand to help what seemed like thousands of Chileans who, for fear of imprisonment, torture and death, wanted out desperately, and, on the other, because getting information out seemed to be an urgent and essential task. On the 20th, that part which was pushing us to leave dominated momentarily.

When we arrived at the gate of the very large and luxurious residence, it took us at least fifteen minutes of negotiating, a crisis on my part and my wife's tears, before they would let us in. Mrs. Ross did not greet us but asked immediately why we wanted in. To her, the situation in the country was rather calm. When we noticed Jean Latulipe, a Quebecois priest who lived in a shantytown and who was on the military hit list, Wynanne ran up to him, held him in her arms,

and started weeping tears of relief. That seemed to impress Mrs. Ross somewhat. She excused herself for the cold welcome she had given us.

Diary: September 20 (In Canadian Ambassador's Residence)

Five refugees had already been accepted in the residence when we arrived. Four more were accepted in the afternoon, but only after long and very painful negotiations. Two of the new refugees are Brazilians and two Chilean. The Brazilians just found two of their friends shot in their beds. One Chilean worked in a radio station. She was able to escape but her friends were less fortunate, they all got shot. The other Chilean was a psychiatrist, a widower; he had to leave his four children behind with relatives. He was told that the military were on his tracks and that he should disappear fast.

The few conversations I have had with Mr. and Mrs. Ross—they have very limited contact with us, eat at a different table and, of course, much better food—make it clear that they are quite pleased with the military intervention. Mrs. Ross is quite proud to reveal that one of their friends, a military officer, has been named by the Junta as Minister of Health. Mr. Ross is quite blunt about the fact that if anyone is arrested in Chile right now, it is only because they have done something wrong.

In the El Mercurio that was available, dated September 19th, I just read that the Inter-American Bank of Development had just granted Chile a new loan of \$65,000,000. Quite obviously, the credit squeeze is now over.

At 6:00 p.m. Hugh Moser, an employee in the residence, addressed us. "Is there anyone here, he said, who does not understand English?" Only four of us even understood the question so he continued in a very broken Spanish: "The house you are in is very beautiful. We, of the North, like cleanliness a lot, sometimes even to the point of making a psychosis of it. Please make an effort in this sense, especially in the bathroom." At this point, Jean, who had spent thirteen years as a missionary in Chile and was very insulted by Hugh's condescending attitude, curtly replied in a perfect Spanish: "We also like cleanliness!" Hugh continued giving us instructions about who was to sleep where — the men in Mrs. Ross' studio and the women in another room—, asked us to keep the curtains closed at all times and never to step outside in the yard.

After Hugh's instructions, Mrs. Ross herself addressed us as she rocked her little dog in her arms.

"Wynanne, maybe you could look after washing the clothes, she said. I don't like people who aren't used to appliances using my washer and dryer. And please, I do not want anyone to go to my studio in the day. Sometimes I go up there to do some artwork. I don't think I have any more clean towels that match the color of the tiles in the bathroom next to the studio, so please don't use that one."

The scene was unreal and painful. In the room there were people who had just tragically lost some of their beloved, who still did not know the fate of many of them, who were being suddenly and violently uprooted from their country. Prisons, torture and death were written all over their face.

At about 7:30 p.m. David, a Canadian commercial attaché, and Mark, the first secretary of the embassy, arrived to visit us. They told us the situation was dramatic. "It's a son-of-a-bitch out there!", David remarked. Apparently a delegate of the United Nations Commission for Refugees has just arrived in Chile. Discussions are being held concerning the possibility of using some Church buildings as refugee camps. Yesterday, we collaborated with Jacques and other Canadians. They are still outside the residence and are trying hard to help those in danger to come and join us here. We constantly put as much pressure as we could on the Ambassador, and we were partly successful: a few more were accepted.

Diary: September 21 (Return to Apartment)

This morning, September 21st, Mr. Ross informed us that from now on he was putting us incommunicado. In other words, no more contact with the world outside the residence whatsoever. No visitors, no phones and no letters. When I saw that we no longer could do anything from inside the residence to help people get in, I decided to come back to our apartment. The fact that Mr. and Mrs. Ross seem to have a soft spot for Wynanne, undoubtedly because of her WASP background, allows her to play an important role; she has been able to obtain quite a few things for the refugees. She has therefore decided to stay in the Ambassador's residence for a few more days.

I hope that the contacts I made this afternoon will allow six more, three Brazilians and three Chileans, to get into the residence. Mark Dolgin said yesterday: "Ottawa says none at all and we have a few; that's the present situation." (...)

When I returned to my apartment it was not so much anger that I felt but a state of depression. I just can't take it anymore. Hearing people tell me how this one has been tortured, that one shot. Seeing people whose life has just been shattered, seeing families torn apart. Observing the fear of death written on the face of so many.

I feel sick and tired of listening to completely censured news all day. Of reading newspapers announce only a few dead whereas I can feel in my heart the massacre of thousands. Sick and tired of this campaign of hatred that is going on against Allende, a man whose last words I found so deeply human, democratic and spiritual. Sick and tired of hearing in my heart the cry of thousands of Chileans, political leaders, union leaders, doctors, ordinary workers, students, teachers, many already dead or imprisoned, many absolutely terrorized. Of hearing this cry, and, at the very same time, witnessing outside in the streets, order, cleanliness, damned cleanliness, only cleanliness!

The possibility of buying in stores everything you want — oil, sugar, bread — and that which, before the military takeover, could only be found with great difficulty if at all. Of hearing this cry, and, at the same time, seeing Mrs. Ross, wealthy and secure, rocking her little dog as she instructs terrorized Chileans not to go in this room, to try to be clean and tidy, to keep their children quiet. Seeing Mrs. Ross complain that because of the curfew she was not able to go to her hairdresser as usual.

I am sick and tired of reading an El Mercurio which on the one hand condemns the Soviet Union — the title of the article: Barbarism reappears in Russia — because it prevents its well known dissident, Alexander Soljenitsyn, from living in the same city as his wife and, on the other hand, supports one hundred percent a regime here in Chile that tortures, imprisons and murders on a massive scale.

Testimony of a person subjected to torture in the National Stadium

In her novel *Sweet Country*, Caroline Richards, an American who was also living in Chile at the time of the coup—as we collaborated to get news abroad and to help Chileans subjected to repression to get out of Chile, we rapidly became friends—, reproduces parts of the diary of the personal secretary of Mrs. Salvador Allende. The name she gives her in the book is Eva Maria Aráya; this is not her real name¹⁶.

¹⁶ Enrique Sandoval, a Chilean friend who teaches at Dawson, told me this was not

Eva Maria was arrested by the military on September 12th, on the second day of the coup. She was detained for a few days in the National Stadium with thousands of others, interrogated, tortured and released. The following excerpts recount two of the sessions of torture she underwent:

“I am fairly certain that it was on Friday, 14 September—the third day of my internment, that I was interrogated for the second time.

“I had dreaded another confrontation with the interrogators because my arms still smarted from the burns I had received the other time. I was trembling when I took my place and waited for the process to begin. If my stomach hadn’t been empty, I would have vomited.

“The questions were almost identical to the ones I’d answered before. I was accused of having access, as Mrs. Allende’s assistant, to expensive luxuries — the American cigarettes in my pocket were cited as evidence!; I was quizzed about Mrs. Allende’s reputed bank accounts in Europe; and my relationship with Miguel was dragged up again. After an hour or two I was allowed to rest while the interrogators drew up a report which was then read to me. It was not a confession, and I wasn’t asked to sign it. Nor was it a set of formal charges, for — a fact I didn’t know then — I was going to be released.

“Afterwards I was led by an armed guard to a gallery on the main floor from which one could hear not shouts but howls. I was told to undress. Then I had to sit on a bench outside the door. There were many curses and shouts from within, and finally I was escorted inside. There I saw the table to which I was about to be tied, and the powerful lights above. The torturers put cables on my body, dampened my skin, and began to apply the current to my breasts and vagina. I have no idea how many times they did it, or how long each shower of current lasted, but each time I thought that I would die. In my agony I hardly heard the insults rained down on me, nor did I respond to any questions. I’m not sure any were asked. My biggest fear was that they would kill me by accident, that they would inadvertently apply more current than they meant to. Once I even whispered hoarsely, earnestly, “It doesn’t take as much to kill a small person.”

her real name. He once had her as a student in Chile.

“Eventually there was a break for a few minutes while the torturers consulted with someone who had entered the room. I remember thinking, ‘If I die, there will be no poems about me, no great novels or works of art.’ It seemed like an important consideration; I wanted desperately to decide if I was resigned to such ignominy and obscurity. There seemed no satisfactory way of approaching the question. Yet once the current was applied again, and I heard myself screaming, I was suddenly struck with the resemblance of my cries to those of other prisoners I had heard, both men and women, and to animals. At its extremist pitch, pain reduces us all to a wordless roar, like the voice of the sea. ‘I wouldn’t want to be singled out,’ I thought. ‘I’d rather take my stand with the great, anonymous swell of those whose lives were tiny affirmations and echoes, hardly audible and quickly forgotten.’ There were ocean waves transforming themselves into strings of hill, and back again. Sea gulls exploded like fireworks into a rain of colors, which, striking the land, undulated into flames shaped like women. These women sang melodies which assumed square and elliptical shapes as they floated upwards, ultimately converging in an enormous eye which, as it swam towards infinity, shed colored tears on landscapes and on seasons. I was transfixed by my extraordinary vision. When I finally awoke from it, I was once again in the hall where I had first been stationed, my clothes stacked at my side, some other prisoners crying over me.

“I believe it was on Saturday, my fourth day, that ‘gymnastics classes’ were initiated for the female prisoners. I was led, along with perhaps twenty others, into a small basketball court evidently used for practice. There an officer with a whip, something like those that animal trainers use, told us to undress. As we hastened to obey, he smirked at the four or five milicos who were lounging around. The guard who had accompanied us occasionally struck us to make us hurry.

“I have sometimes wondered if the scene which followed was an amateur orchestration of a military man’s primitive fantasies or a sophisticated psychological torment designed by experts from the CIA. Perhaps that is a meaningless distinction. In any case, our ordeal was an exquisite exercise in shame. Even as we disrobed, we sensed our own degradation: our clothes, in which some had finally urinated and defecated, reeked; so did our bodies, sticky with blood and sweat.

'Well now, you are all grown-up, married ladies,' the officer began. 'I want you to have a little fun. You must be pretty lonesome for your husbands by now, so I want you to pretend you're with them. That's right, get down on your knees, spread them out. Now: pretend you're humping away, let's hear you sigh. I want to hear you come—all of you.'

"None of the women moved. Some began to cry. 'What's the matter with you?' the officer shouted. 'Are you all frigid Marxist bitches? Start humping. I want to hear some terrific orgasms.'

"About this time some of the guards began to circulate among the women, threatening to strike them if they didn't obey. That many did is scarcely surprising or blameworthy, yet when I heard them I was smitten with the most profound despair I had felt since my captivity began. One guard was moving in my direction, and I shuddered.

'Come, you asshole!' he shouted at the girl next to me, who was perhaps twenty years old and pitifully thin.

'Come yourself!' she hissed at him, and as he struck her with the butt of his gun, I could hear the cracking of her bones.

"About this time one of the other officers felt inspired to join in tormenting us. 'I know what the problem is,' he said. 'Some of you haven't had a good shit in days, have you? Well, that's not right, I'm sad just thinking about it. Everybody says you Commie women are the best shitters in the world. You've missed it, huh? So spread your legs again, ladies, and this time don't come, just shit!'

"Once again there was the heartbreaking sound of inconsolable sobbing. At first no one would obey. But as the guards circulated among the group, getting down on their hands and knees and showing the women how they were to grunt, there were those who obeyed. Many defecated in spite of themselves, and I wondered sadly what human beings really are, whose bodies blindly obey impulses at odds with the soul's deepest longing.

"My turn wasn't long in coming. One of the soldiers shouted at me, 'What's the matter, girlie? Think you're too good to shit?'"

"I wanted to insult him, spit at him, but my mouth worked soundlessly, like a deaf-mute's. For a few seconds I knew what it was

to be literally a blithering idiot. I neither saw nor feared the blow that mercifully relieved me of consciousness.”¹⁷

Diary: September 22 (Coup Creates Miracle in Stock Market)

This morning I went to the Canadian Ambassador’s residence to bring clothes to Wynanne. I also placed our small tape-recorder in the suitcase along with a dozen empty tapes; she will be able to record direct testimonies from the refugees. I left a message for Wynanne: “If you want to come out, I think it’s okay. However, do whatever you think is best”.

This afternoon, around 4 p.m., I returned to the residence. This time, after a long negotiation, I was allowed in. Wynanne warmly welcomed me. A few refugees came to greet me but the atmosphere was terribly heavy. And everybody was dying for news.

Mark Dolgin informed me that the military are not allowing anybody to leave the country with tape-recorders, tapes, films, written material... Talk about control!

Today, I bought all four conservative newspapers. The big news:

- *The military have just outlawed all socialist and communist political parties.*
- *Other news: “When the Allende government was elected, there was a terrific drop in the volume of trade in the Chilean stock market and the value of shares plummeted. All this changed, as if by magic, with the new government. Things are back to normal.” (El Mercurio, p.17); “Socialism, be it Marxist or merely technocratic, thinks it can ignore the basic and unavoidable law of supply and demand. No Chilean, however, should underestimate this law, since the London stock market for metals determines the fate of our major export, copper; this law has now returned with a vengeance: as the value of metal stock shares was going up, Allende just had to fall!”*
- *“Within 30 days, all doctors will be able to return to the practice of curative medicine” — in other words, the Popular Unity’s insistence on preventive medicine is out the window (La Tribuna);*
- *“Because of the tactic of a few extremists who have been removing their own wounded and dead, one must not discard the*

¹⁷ Caroline Richards, p. 112-114

possibility that the number of civilian casualties may turn out to be higher than previously announced” (El Mercurio, p. 22).

Diary: September 23 (Meaning, History)

I feel that my experience in Chile is opening my eyes something incredible. The interpretation I give to each fact, each event forms the meaning of my life. This meaning represents the way I understand myself, my way of perceiving my past, present and future both individually as a person and collectively as a people.

A person without history is necessarily alienated, without identity, reduced to a mere object. (...)

First one conquers a country by force, using considerable violence. Those who resist, the native Indians, are said to perpetrate massacres. Then one interprets this conquest as a holy mission, one of bringing the good news to savages and civilizing the previously uncivilized — humble servants of God just as the military Junta sees itself as the hand of God. Finally one sets up a cross, builds churches, writes a constitution declaring that all are equal and with full rights, signs treaties with the conquered, trains lawyers to make sure that there is law and order and condemns the use of violence, torture, etc.

Diary: September 26 (Burning Books, Revamping School Programs)

Wynanne returned to our apartment last night. She was very tired. Her mood seemed strange. To live locked up with people running away from brutal repression while being completely cut off from the outside world, ends up creating a special way of being and feeling.

People in the residence, *she says*, do not react anymore. When a new refugee arrives and starts telling us about his or her experiences — torturing and killing — no one reacts. It is as if they were merely stating that it is raining outside.

The military are not just burning all Marxist or socialist literature. They are also revamping all the programs in the schools.

Today I met the wife of a Chilean lawyer and her two sons. One of them works on a fishing boat in Valparaiso. He told us that some fishermen had caught bodies in their nets in the last few days.¹⁸

¹⁸ On two different occasions while I was in Chile, I noted in my diary that I had come across people who reported that bodies were being dumped into the ocean. The first time was on September 18, 1973 (see above). On July 14, 2000, nearly 27 years

Diary: September 28 (Helping Doctor Bellemare Escape)

Yesterday there was considerable tension between Wynanne and me. In the evening, we both started to feel a bit better. Ever since the September 11th, we have been under considerable stress. For the first time since I don't know when, we were able to have some time alone this afternoon, and we did not feel caught up by some urgent task, helping this one, trying to get someone accepted in Mr. Ross' residence.

Around 7:30, there was a knock on the door. It was Doctor Roberto Bellemare whom we had first met at Art Warner's place. In the Popular Unity government, he was director of the outpatient clinics of the Social Health Service of Chile. He has several degrees from American universities.

Roberto's face was as white as a sheet. Just two days ago, he had informed us of his decision to stay in Chile despite the real danger. And now, fear, sadness and a deep anguish were all over his face. He had just received his first pay, he said, from the university where he had accepted to lecture. Two hours later, about 5 p.m., one of his friends, sympathetic to the military government but still close to him, told him that he must disappear, and fast. "Roberto, he warned, I discovered that your name is on the list of those the military are after.

later, the newspaper Clarín published an article titled *State Terrorism*. The article reports the testimony of the Christian Democrat Senator, Jorge Lavandero, who chaired the Human Rights Commission of the Chilean Senate in 1998. Lavandero claims that two former members of the secret police under the military regime had told him, during investigations, that there were at least 2000 Chileans disappeared following the coup. Approximately 1200 bodies would have been thrown, by helicopter, in the ocean. The others would have been buried. In 1988, the remains of many of the buried would also have been removed and thrown into the sea, as the fact that Pinochet had lost his referendum meant that the families of the victims would start taking actions against the military.

In the same article, the reporter relates that in 1984, Andrés Valenzuela, a member of the Armed Forces who was then working for the Secret Police, told him the following: *In 1975, one of the helicopters that were participating in this kind of mission arrived in the military base, Aérea de Colina, with about 15 prisoners aboard. It was a helicopter of the Chilean Air force, but at the time the Air Force collaborated very closely with the Secret Police. The helicopter left, and when it returned, I was told by one of the agents who participated in the mission, 'Fifo' (Adolfo Palma Ramirez) that they had thrown the prisoners in the ocean, if I remember correctly, in front of San Antonio. He told me that the prisoners were not dead, just drugged. In fact, one of them woke up, and he had been obliged to knock him out. Before throwing the prisoners in the ocean, three army officers would open up their stomachs with their daggers so that they would immediately drown and sink to the bottom.*

You will be imprisoned. I checked my information with two other good sources. You must disappear, and fast!"

Wynanne ran to Olga's apartment and phoned Mark Dolgin, the First Secretary of the Canadian Embassy and a man who has shown sympathy towards the persecuted. Mark told her we should immediately go to Mr. Ross's residence.

After picking up his wife, Edith, who was not even aware that her husband was in such imminent danger — she was visiting with Art Warner —, we immediately drove to Mr. Ross' residence. Roberto and Edith have six children, all girls, and were leaving them all behind with relatives except for the newborn two month old baby. It was about 9 p.m. when we got there. The servant who came to answer the gate door went back inside. At least five minutes later, Mrs. Ross came out. Noticing that it was raining, she returned inside, got her umbrella and came back. We explained everything, but very briefly... She returned to the residence and came out with her husband. After being filled in on the situation, Mr. Ross answered that he would not let the Bellemars in. That according to the latest information, the wave of violence of the first days was all over. The military, he insisted, were merely arresting people now and most often merely for interrogation. People were getting nervous, he felt, for no reason at all.

Wynanne pleaded with Mr. Ross. So did I. We explained to him that we couldn't come up with a complete file explaining in great detail why Mr. Bellemare was in danger not only of imprisonment but also of torture and death. That he knew darn well that all the information in Chile right now was very tightly controlled and that it was next to impossible to know what was going on in all sectors. That the Junta was giving grossly false information on a daily basis. That people right now had absolutely no defense whatsoever.

The Ambassador repeated that his answer was no. It was still raining. We had no umbrellas and were soaking wet. Anger. Sadness... Disgust and indignation.

I understood why ambassadors are sometimes kidnapped. This person in front of us, bureaucratic and cold, from whom one could smell alcohol at least six feet away. Who had not missed one single Sunday tennis match since the beginning of the coup.

Wynanne, full of deep bitterness, told the Ambassador: "Well, Mr. Ross, I guess we'll just have to go and see the Canadian reporter from

CTV, James Reed, who has just arrived in Chile. He will undoubtedly be interested in our story”.

Very upset and sad, we all silently drove back to the Warners. Since curfew was about to start, we all slept at their place that night.

This morning, we were in James Reed’s hotel room at 8 a.m. We spent two and one half hours telling him what had happened. Having promised I would write him a report on what had been going on in the residence of the Canadian Ambassador since the coup, I returned to the Hotel Carera at about 2 p.m.

I found James having lunch with none other than Mr. Willoughby, the press representative of the military government. Mr. Willoughby was quite nervous about the news coverage Chile had been getting worldwide. He asked James what general criticism he had concerning the military Junta. James could not but be very cautious but he did say two fairly courageous things. First, he pointed out that the major newspaper, El Mercurio, was acting as a mere mouthpiece of the military, a behavior which he found a bit strange. Second, he wondered why El Mercurio was actually hiding certain things. For example, why was there total silence about what happened during the recent burial ceremony of Pablo Nerúda¹⁹ who died just a few days following the military takeover? Why was it not reported that approximately 800 people who were gathered there started chanting: “VIVA ALLENDE! VIVA NERUDA!”²⁰

Mr. Willoughby ignored James’ first remark but pointed out that the news about Nerúda’s funeral would be easily corrected in El Mercurio’s Sunday edition. By so doing, he was merely confirming the fact that the Junta controls El Mercurio.

Diary: September 29 (Conflict with Canadian Ambassador)

About 10 this morning Wynanne and I were having breakfast when suddenly an envelope appeared under our door. It was a small, handwritten note from Ambassador Ross:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Bastien,

Just a quick note to say that I think you should be extremely careful not to draw attention to yourselves. The case of Beaubien, who was picked up simply because

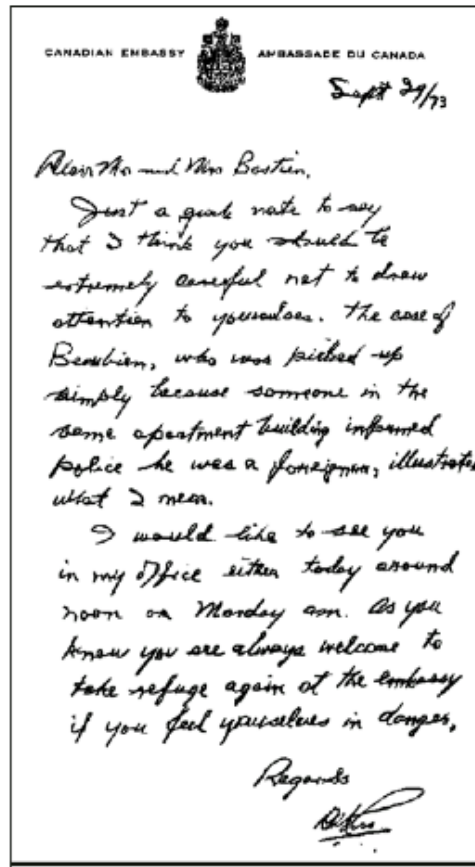
¹⁹ Pablo Neruda is an internationally renowned Chilean poet.

²⁰ In the context of the ongoing brutal repression, that so many people would come to Pablo Neruda’s funeral is impressive. Pablo Neruda, both in his heart and his poetry, was very close to the Popular Unity government. Chanting "Allende Presente!" was extremely dangerous.

someone in the same apartment building informed police he was a foreigner, illustrates what I mean.

I would like to see you in my office either today around noon or Monday a.m. As you know, you are always welcome to take refuge again at the embassy if you feel yourselves in danger.

Regards,
Andrew Ross



What a bizarre letter, we wondered to ourselves. Now why would someone who has constantly repeated that people were getting excited over nothing at all write this way? And why the hurry in meeting us?

We knew that Beaubien had ended up in the National Stadium and had been freed thanks to the personal intervention of Mr. Ross. But instinctively we felt that Mr. Ross was not really worried about our personal security and that the main purpose of the letter was to call a meeting to discuss our Thursday night confrontation. He must be

worried about what we told James Reed, we thought. He probably knows that James' report will soon be on Canadian TV. He might even try to have this report censured.

After discussing the matter, we decided to meet him right away but to be very prudent.

12:15 p.m. When we arrived in the Canadian Embassy Mr. Ross was just coming out of a meeting with six other ambassadors. Here's what he told us: I am worried about you. Even though I considerably admire your humanism and philanthropy, it seems to me that you are too emotionally involved. This puts you at risk since you can easily be led to do things that compromise your personal security. You are aware of what happened to Mr. Beaubien. Even though he had done absolutely nothing, he ended up in the National Stadium simply because of a neighbor's denunciation. You have been doing all kinds of things for refugees.

As I listened to the Ambassador, I could feel that same deep sense of revolt taking hold of me. I knew that Wynanne's nerves were already on edge. And now, all of a sudden, Mr. Ross had changed his mind about the situation in Chile! All of a sudden there was real danger and he was really concerned about people!

— "Mr. Ross, I said, I find your remarks very pertinent. It is true that being emotionally involved can sometimes lead one to do something irrational. But do you not find that in circumstances where thousands and thousands of Chileans are experiencing a brutal repression, not being emotionally involved can bring one to behave in an even more irrational fashion?"

Ambassador Ross: "Indeed. But you are now indulging in philosophical matters, Mr. Bastien."

— "Very true. But I was doing so only because your own considerations were also of that nature."

Ambassador Ross: "All that I want to tell you is that because of your present attitude, you are incurring a certain danger, undoubtedly not of death but at least of imprisonment. I wonder if you shouldn't start thinking about leaving Chile. Carrying on studies in Chile in this moment doesn't make much sense anyway."

Wynanne, from the very beginning of the encounter had asked Mr. Ross what precise facts had brought him to write this morning's letter to us. He merely replied that there were none. We both felt somewhat scared since we knew he was close to the military. But more than anything else, we felt insulted that he should try to indirectly and subtly blackmail us into leaving.

— *"We are going to stay in Chile, Mr. Ross, I replied. We shall assume the risk that you pointed out. We are grateful that you went to the trouble of giving us your advice but it is our deep feeling that there are people in Chile right now who are too concerned about risk taking and who subordinate their actions to diplomacy and economic imperatives. The human dimension is totally ignored."*

Feeling that the tension between Mr. Ross and myself was mounting, Wynanne tried to change the subject by asking the Ambassador what his colleagues felt about the situation. He was very evasive and told us absolutely nothing about the meeting the ambassadors had just had. He did inform us that none of the 67 professors of the Universidad Tecnica del Estado who had been taken to the National Stadium since the coup had been shot.

The encounter lasted some 45 minutes. Mr. Ross asked us to consider his suggestion about leaving and insisted he would be willing to cooperate fully should we need help in this way. We thanked him for his kindness and told him our decision was already taken: we were going to stay.

Letter: September 30²¹:

(Message to General Assembly of SUCO)

Even though I was in Chile, I still remained for a few months a member of the Board of Directors of CUSO-SUCO. There was an upcoming General Assembly of the French part of this organization, SUCO, in which important issues would be discussed. On September 30th, I therefore wrote the following letter to a Board member, Dominique Boisvert, from Montreal:

²¹ The majority of the letters reproduced in this document were written to my very close friend in Montreal, Dominique Boisvert, and his wife, Diane Gariépy. Dominique and I met on the Board of Directors of CUSO-SUCO. Dominique was then still an active member of the Board.

Dear Dominique,

I would have lots of news to give you but what is URGENT, for the time being, is action. That is why I'm addressing myself to you.

On October 4th, SUCO will hold its general assembly in which it will discuss its purpose and future orientation. There is only one thing I would like to tell this assembly, and it is something that is on my mind ever since the 11 September. If SUCO does not decide once and for all to put direct, systematic and constant pressure on the Canadian foreign policy makers, then I no longer understand what international cooperation is all about. The more general and fundamental reasons supporting this viewpoint, you are very well aware of: ever since the beginning of our friendship in the board we have had numerous opportunities to discuss them. They are spelled out, furthermore, in Tibor Mende's book, De l'aide à la recolonisation. However there is another, distinct but deeply related reason, to which I would like to bring your attention.

In close collaboration with other Francophones from Quebec, Wynanne and I have been trying hard, since the coup of 11 September, to get the Canadian Ambassador to give refuge to those Chileans in danger. Many are being tortured: it is impossible to determine the exact number. Thousands have been shot: just how many, it is also impossible to know. Many thousands have been imprisoned and many thousands are on the run, fully aware that the military are on their trail. With great pain and effort, we have been able to get the Embassy to accept a dozen refugees. Quite obviously, it is not the repression that is hitting Chileans that has brought the Ambassador to allow them in, but rather the immense pressure that we, as Canadians, have exerted on him combined with his fear of Canadian public opinion.

I cannot find words strong enough to describe the profound disappointment that Wynanne and I feel concerning the Canadian Ambassador, very cold, very conservative, who hides behind the instructions he gets from Ottawa, who accepts people only if they are in immediate danger of death, only if we can provide proof thereof...

How very disgusting it is to see our country, on the one hand generously financing the sending of Canadian volunteers to the Third World, and on the other hand, refusing downright to grant refuge to Chileans, Bolivians, Uruguayans and Brazilians who are now being tracked down in Chile, in massive and brutal acts of repression which may turn out to be the most serious in the modern history of Latin

America. What did Canada do when the Soviet Union, in the summer of 1968, invaded Czechoslovakia? How did the Canadian Embassy in Prague react? And what did Canada do when people were thrown out of Uganda? What exactly does this damn neutrality of Canada mean and what does the so-called political neutrality of SUCO mean?

I am now working on three papers: one on the complicity of the Catholic Hierarchy in the coup d'état, one on the military junta's so-called ideological pluralism and one on my day-to-day experiences here in Chile. If I do not end up in prison—yesterday, the Canadian Ambassador advised us very strongly to leave the country immediately because he felt that we were in danger. I wouldn't be surprised if he collaborates with the military to have us thrown out of Chile—, I hope to send you these.

When the coup occurred, we were only a few street corners from the Moneda and about one hundred feet from the Ministry of Public Health. There is not one single window left in this large building. It was quite an ordeal.

I hope this letter is not intercepted in the airport. In solidarity and friendship,

Regards from my beloved, He that you know...

Letter: October 12 (Documents on Canadian Embassy, Church...)

Dear Dominique and Diane,

We have received your second letter. I am sorry that the document on the attitude of the Canadian Embassy in Chile regarding the refugees did not arrive in Montreal on the promised date, October 7th. It should be arriving next Tuesday at the very latest. A Canadian friend traveled to Buenos Aires yesterday; he will mail it to you from there. It will be sent either to Jean-Claude Leclerc of Le Devoir, or to SUCO.

The names of those who collaborated in producing this document will be revealed later, when the situation is not as dangerous in Chile. (...)

I am presently working on two other documents. One is on the attitude of the Catholic Church of Chile during and after the coup d'état. The other recounts our personal experience before, during and after the coup. I would like the first document to be published in Quebec as soon as possible but using a pseudonym. Publishing the second one will have to wait; doing so now would be extremely dangerous.

My wife and I are part of two groups that meet on a weekly basis. One is made up of Americans, the other of French-speaking Quebecois. Both groups have the same purpose: documenting as rapidly and accurately as possible what is happening in Chile and sending this information out to Canada, the United States, and other parts of the world. In the context of the extremely tight censorship imposed by the military junta, this task seems very vital and urgent to us.(...)

Yesterday we were talking with an American priest who has been in Chile for a number of years and who had become a Chilean citizen. He was just released from the National Stadium — the makeshift prison of thousands. He was arrested last Friday. Accusation: political activism, being a member of the Socialist Party, being a worker-priest. The military, during his detainment, roughed him up, but less than other prisoners — he was a priest, after all!!! The military asked him what he was doing carrying on as a simple worker whereas, according to his vocation, he is a priest. He was freed thanks to the personal influence of Cardinal Henríquez and other religious leaders. But how many are not fortunate enough to benefit from such personal influences? (...)

We greatly appreciate the solidarity with Chile that is coming from Quebec. Greetings to Clément and Michel,

Us

October 17: Letter to Solidarity Groups in Canada: (Written by Wynanne)

More than a month has passed since Chile became a new country. For me it was a rather unique experience to say the least and I want to tell you all about my personal 'happenings'. Up until now neither time nor peace of mind permitted me to express this. Although neither is normal for me now — or perhaps ever will be again —, let me try.

On my husband's birthday —September 4th — we invited another couple over for dinner. We decided to eat late 'cause we all wanted to go to the biggest birthday party ever: that of the Popular Unity government. About one million Popular Unity sympathizers walked in the streets of Santiago. It was a happy, friendly and joyous demonstration; we marched and sang and chanted. The noise, the cold and the pushing were tremendous, but everyone was together celebrating this third anniversary of the election of the Popular Unity.

One week later, to the day, our alarm went off as usual. That day, it was my husband's turn to go and stand in line for bread... even

though we didn't know if there would be any. Meanwhile, I turned on the radio and went about making the bed and pushing the mop around. I thought I heard Allende's voice on the radio but told myself it was really too early for him to be speaking.

At 8:45 a.m. my husband arrived with the bread. He told me that the military were attempting a coup d'état. I asked him to go and buy vegetables. Once he had left, I thought I perceived something funny... it wasn't as noisy as usual in the streets. Where were the buses? Then I noticed a road block three blocks from our apartment. Five minutes later it was two blocks from us... then on our very corner. Shooting started, machine gun fire.... People in the streets were running and the cars were going every which way. Where was my husband?

When he finally returned, he told me all the vegetables had been sold.

We then settled in for three days of steady gunfire. We filled the bathtub with water in case that would be cut. I cooked two big pots of beans in case the gas would go off. We listened to each leftist radio station be bombed off the air 'till only the military radio was left for the whole of Chile. We watched the bombers arrive and listened to the 11 o'clock ultimatum to Allende.

At 11:50 a.m. someone knocked at the door. Excited and scared, we fumbled for the keys and finally opened the door to the reporter of Le Devoir. He was filthy and crying like a baby. As I made coffee to settle us all down, he told us how he wanted to reach the Presidential Palace, La Moneda... in good reporter fashion. The taxi driver refused to take him there and left him off fifteen blocks away. So he decided to walk. When he was getting close to La Moneda, he got caught in heavy gunfire. He had never been to our place, but managed to fumble through his address book for our number, found it and reached our apartment. A kind soul let him in to our building. (...)

It was only about 6 p.m. on the 11th of September that we realized we had a short-wave radio and thought of using it. We poured over that precious little box for hours... and still do. At about 8:00 p.m. we heard from Argentina that Allende had committed suicide but that no one believed it. It was not until 2:00 p.m. the next day that we knew that Allende was dead. How is another story.

On September 12th at about 4:30 p.m. the action was getting closer and closer to our place. We didn't dare look but we heard the tanks, jeeps and trucks go down our street and then stop. The snipers, who seemed to be on our roof, didn't let up. Then the military shot at our

building with a bazooka. We all went down on our bellies. The building trembled... Thank God, the buildings here are earthquake-proof! Then a huge burly voice yelled several times: "Surrender!" Nothing. Then more firing. Silence.

The tanks and jeeps move on... but only a half a block away, in front of the Ministry of Health. Huddled on the floor and giggling like children, we lost count after a while of the number of bazookas they shelled that place with. Honestly, I don't think an earthquake could be worse.

By the third day—September 13th—my husband decided we must reduce the tension a bit and so he went about cleaning house. As usual, he went to shake the mop over the balcony... 'till our reporter from Le Devoir dragged him back inside, fortunately still alive! Those guys in the street were so nervous they'd shoot at anything... and especially at some idiot with a gun with a rag over the end of it!

At noon of that day, we learned on radio and TV that curfew was being suspended a few hours starting at noon. Free circulation would be allowed everywhere except in the downtown area of Santiago where we lived. From this area, people could only leave, not enter.

We decided to head for friends who live in the rich, and presumably quieter part of town. The reporter stayed in our apartment. With only a toothbrush we went out and started walking. The military were everywhere. People walked quickly and nervously. Flags were flying from contented people's homes. Broken glass was everywhere and bullet holes could be seen in many places. We walked fast for nearly an hour to reach our friends. Once there, we shared our fears and experiences.

The coup had happened; now, the hell was to begin. In order to purify Chile, the persecution of foreigners was—and still is—high on the military's list of jobs to do. All foreigners whose papers were not in order had to report to the Ministry of Defense, and thus faced possible imprisonment, torture, and even execution.

That night we slept peacefully for the first time; only a few shots disturbed us. In the morning, a Bolivian came over... scared. How could he, his wife and two children be saved? His wife's papers were not in order. Already his closest friend was "gone". What could we do? He must hide!

Not long after, a friend who lived in an extremely poor neighborhood arrived... in tears. She said that the military had killed many people there, taken many people away, including the president of their 'población' (neighborhood), and cut off the hands of the 23 year-old president of their JAP — food distribution organization. We had estimated that thousands were dead; her estimate was 15 to 20 thousand.

On the 14th, we returned to our apartment — that was now allowed — and started the long and interminable job of saving lives. Every night it was someone else. In the day, we made contacts with friends to see what they knew and to pass a desperate life in their hands.

On the Monday after the coup, we tried to save the lives of five Bolivians. On Tuesday, by the time all the arrangements had been made, it was too late.

Wednesday, my husband and I decided to enter the Canadian Embassy as refugees but with the plot to help non-Canadians enter. Believe it or not, we were refused at the gate of this mansion. Only after pressure and tears during some 15 minutes, were we allowed to enter. Inside we found four Chileans and Jean Latulippe, a French missionary from Quebec who was very involved, politically, with the poor. Wow! He was still alive!!!

My husband stayed in the Embassy for three days; I, for a week. The atmosphere inside that depressing "prison" was hell. In my opinion the Ambassador and his wife are racist and as fascist as the military junta. It was almost unbearable. Everyday, for the time I was there, there were new arrivals: two Brazilians who had found two of their friends — a married couple — shot in their bed; one who had seen men shot for having scars on their cheeks — presumed to be street-fighters; another who knew of a young fellow who was shot in cold blood in the street for having a pen knife on him.

When the work was more pressing outside than inside, I came out of the Embassy. And my husband was very lonely! It was really scary out there but I soon learned to walk in the streets with a smile and always dressed up in my Sunday best... for security reasons. This was a rich man's coup, you know!

We have learned a lot in the last month. Funny how you simply learn because you have to!

Now we need all the help we can get from you! World opinion is the only salvation here. They are shaking in their pants already.

Believe the double of the bad news you get and complain bitterly to Ottawa... PLEASE...

Letter: October 19 (Written by Wynanne: Sharp Increase in Prices, No More Scarcity)

Dear Dominique and Diane,

(...) Yesterday, as usual every Saturday, I went grocery shopping. Usually, I had to buy my meat, fish and eggs in the central market in the heart of Santiago. But now, all of a sudden, I don't have to go so far; one finds all these things in all small, neighborhood stores. You simply walk in and buy whatever you want and as much as you want. No more long one-hour lines, standing in the humidity and cold at 6:00 a.m.! No struggle to get someone to serve you! No starving dogs in my way. No drops of blood spilling on my shirt in the rush to try to get a mere kilo of meat. None of all this anymore...

In a matter of a few seconds, everything became very clear to me.

Six weeks ago, I had to stand in long lines with thousands of Chilean mothers. We bought one kilo of pork for the official price of 80 escudos. The week after the coup, pork was selling for 980 escudos per kilo in the central market at the free market price.

For the ruling class of Chile, this new price represents a price drop, relative to the black market price, of about 40%. For this class that turned its back on an economic system which allowed practically all Chileans to have access to a minimum of meat, the new situation is wonderful. It can now buy all it wants practically anywhere. The free-market has returned to Chile! Now you can have all you want of everything... as long as you can afford it.

N.B. In box below, I'm listing the price of basic items. However, these do not include the following: milk (it is assumed that free milk is distributed to each family), fish, newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, clothes, heating, soap, medical and dental care.

Diane, please send the above information to the Quebec-Chile Solidarity Committee. I hope that every little drop of information helps to wake people up. It is so important!!

I hope you realize the dictatorship is very concerned about the news circulating about Chile in the world. All the newspapers here

constantly criticize the bad press Chile is getting abroad. So hang in there!

The Canadian Ambassador, Mr. Ross, is impossible and through his inaction causes such harm. Help us save people here.

Thanks. W. and O.

Cost of Living in Chile — per month, in escudos: October 1973	
For the average family — 5.4 persons — earning the minimum salary of 12,000 escudos (\$15 Canadian) per month	
Housing (3 room; exterior washroom)	5,000
Gas (only for cooking)	800
Electricity	200
Water	110
Bread (1 kilo per day)	1,200
Potatoes (10 kilos)	1,000
Spaghetti (8 kilos)	800
Sugar (10 kilos)	1,200
Coffee (one can)	600
Eggs (9 dozens)	1,800
Fruit	1,000
Vegetables	1,000
Transportation	
Bus (only for the father, 6 days week)	1,440
Bus (school for three children)	740
Total	16,890

Diary: November 1 (Chileans Should Adopt Way of Life of Developed World)

(...) The euphoria of those who are fully backing the coup is taking on strange dimensions. Today an editorialist from El Mercurio argued that the 10:00 p.m. curfew may contribute to render Chileans more civilized, i.e. more similar to those in the developed world. Hopefully this curfew, he said, will help Chileans adopt the way of life which one finds “in the great majority of developed nations.”

In New York, in London and in Frankfurt, he continued, people have dinner at 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. [and not at 9:00 or 9:30 p.m. as in Chile], they go out to the movies or the theater at 7:30 p.m. and are back home by 10:00 p.m.; after this hour,

the streets are abandoned to people who carry on activities of a dubious nature and to the police responsible for handling them. This developed way of life, concluded the editorialist, has yet another advantage: besides being more respectful of the biological order of human nature, it considerably favors industrial production.

Letter by Wynanne: November 2 (Becoming Sensitized, Importance of Commitment)

Dear Andrée,

(...) Now that we're wondering what's next?, what now?, my heart is already on the home front. My husband's work (the book I was writing on the role of the hierarchy of the Chilean Catholic Church in the coup d'état) is nicely and neatly drawing to a close and although the fate of hundreds of Chileans is perilous, what can we do? We're up against a brick wall, all of us. (...) It's really sad that we had to come all the way to Chile and live such a violent event in order to wake up, to see reality, to become sensitized. A powerful but very harsh reality... But will it last? The propaganda cover of the military junta is already beginning to eat me away. And what about the people in Canada who didn't have the chance to see what it's really all about, who haven't an inkling of what the world could be, who think, like I did before my experience in Chile, that fascism is only for the extreme leftists and communists... the bad guys on the other side of the Iron Curtain! They must be awakened... and fast! (...)

Each of us is only a tiny drop in the river of History... but a necessary drop. Eventually the waters will rise so high and flow so fast that we'll get to where we're going. What's the solution? We must not dry up, or let ourselves be dried up. We must keep on struggling and we must get others in the fight with us — as every drop counts. And this until "our hour is come" to put our life on the line for the cause. For each and every one that hour, that moment, will be different as will be the manner of struggle for each one.

For me, that 'way' is every day clearer... and today especially. The whole question of underdevelopment and suffering and persecution in the world will end only if and when we stop exploiting each other. And as long as we live in a society that is one of "man eat man", all the other men in the world will be eaten or, at least, gnawed at interminably. We must change ourselves. (...) The work is slow, long, even interminable but it's all part of the Historical process of the struggle for real equality, real love.

After supper: We're watching the evening propaganda — news? — of the military and I'm overpowered! A bunch of women — old, rich biddies — went and got "remarried" at the government seat today. That is, they turned in gold rings for copper ones for the "reconstruction of Chile". The new copper rings were blessed by some pompous priest and all the ladies will now definitely get to heaven! Didn't we see this turning in of wedding rings under Hitler in Germany??!! Even the bishop of Valparaiso turned his gem in. Didn't the German Church do the same in the 1930s? Study your history books to see what's coming!

Love and peace (?) Us.

Letter: November 17 (Dark Outside, Also in my Heart; Rise of True Aristocracy)

Dear Dominique and Diane,

If I did not write before this it is because we are going from one emergency to another! Wynanne is busy trying to get information out of the country. She is collaborating with a growing circle of people here who are working at this. I have been concentrating on writing my dossier on the attitude of the Catholic hierarchy in the coup. (...) This evening we had dinner with a sociologist from the University of Chile. As so many others, he has been suspended.

It's strange to see how there are so few of the very poor in the downtown area anymore. A few days ago, the price of public phones went up by 1000 percent! Most of the poor, who represent the majority, can no longer afford meat: it's become incredibly expensive. The consumer club is rapidly going down. Now the stores are starting to look more like the ones at home. Prices are clearly indicated and there are so-called sales everywhere.

A few minutes ago, we saw on TV that Canada is considering changing its ambassador in Chile. That was great news to us. Not long ago, Mr. Ross tried to convince us to leave Chile. Despite the fact that he had always been claiming that things were quiet and that people were getting nervous for nothing, he told us he was worried about our personal security because of our attitude — "too emotionally involved" — and because we were helping refugees. He told us we were in danger of imprisonment, not of death. Some time later, he was conversing with another Canadian here and he told her that he was worried about our lives. A nice guy... (...)

It's dark outside and it is also dark in my heart. I can see the face of workers who have lost blood, bread, and what is much worse, dignity and freedom.

One of the three last books published since a week or so states in so many words: "the calling to become a military is very noble; it is befitting only for the most select group of patriots, the aristocrats. Not in the vulgar acceptance that this latter expression presently has with the idea of class struggle. What we mean by aristocracy here is what this word has always designated throughout History: that group of people who, because of tradition as well as natural intellectual endowments and preparation, normally assume responsibility for the direction of national affairs, or assist those who do. It is government by the very best. (...) It is precisely because one finds the highest quality of people in the Armed Forces that, in a given moment in history, the quality of a country is thus manifested." ²²

A big hug to both of you. Our greetings to all. Let's not give up!

Letter November 22 (One Third of Students Expelled or Without Courses)

Dear Dominique and Diane,

We just received your letter. We recently met the special Ottawa delegation — M. Geoffrey Pearson from Foreign Affairs and M. Gary Schrow from Immigration — which was sent to Chile thanks to the excellent work you are doing. There were six of us: the doctor and his wife, the journalist from Radio-Canada, the daughter of the Member of the House of Commons, and the two of us. They seemed to be relatively sympathetic to us but reserved; it is obvious, however, that trouble is brewing in Ottawa.

So far we have received all your letters and you seem to have received all of ours. Be careful, however. There is more control now than in the days immediately following the coup. It often happens now that we receive pre-opened letters. (...)

Jean-Claude Leclerc's editorial in Le Devoir on November 14th "30,000 HUNGARIANS — 16 CHILEANS!" was great! It was right on. When you see him, please send him the congratulations of all those who are struggling at this end. It's food for the heart...

²² M. Ibanez, *Fuerzas Armadas y Seguridad Nacional*, collective work, Ediciones Portada, Santiago, Chile, 1973, p. 29. In my letter only a part of this quote was reproduced. I expanded it for the sake of clarity.

Besides those from Chile that Canada has already welcomed, we just found out that only 5 more have been accepted as immigrants. No, I did not forget a zero...Now that 'democracy and pluralism' have been restored in Chile and the universities placed under the direct control of the military, only 'objective and universally valid truths' are being taught. Approximately one third of all students have been expelled or are without courses either because their disciplines are no longer taught or because their entire programs have been closed down.

The CEREN — Centro del Estudio de la Realidad Nacional — of the Catholic University where we studied is now history. According to the Dean of Studies of the University of Chile with whom we had dinner last Saturday evening, there are now only four professors left in their department of sociology out of the original sixty who were teaching before the Coup d'état.

According to what is being said here in Chile, the international press seems to be experiencing a certain amount of mental illness regarding Chile: it is grossly distorting reality. Quite true: while the Arabs are 'torturing' the world with sharp increases in the price of oil and the Soviets are oppressing their intellectuals, here in Chile everything is absolutely pure and free, as long as you only breathe from your right nostril!

In solidarity! Me.

Letter: December 15²³ (Strawberry Picking...)

Dear Mom, Dad and family,

Wynanne and I are both a bit exhausted of our constant strawberry picking. Even though it is pretty cold in Canada, things here are pretty hot. Believe it or not Santa Claus here is dressed up for winter and goes around on a sleigh in about 90 degrees Fahrenheit weather! And he likes strawberries too so he does not like the idea of our taking them away from him.

Wynanne's mom sends us news at least twice a week. Thank you very much for signing up against air pollution. It is certainly one of the worst evils of modern history and seems to be invading Latin American countries in the past few years. Again yesterday someone here was telling me that it is so bad it is causing deaths.

²³ This letter is coded and very cynical. The term 'strawberry picking' refers to our work in trying to help those who were being tracked down by the military, and in danger of torture, imprisonment and sometimes death.

If you have been following the international press in the past few weeks, you will have noted that reporters are still spreading all kinds of lies about Chile. They say that over 15,000 people have been executed in Chile since September the 11th. They say killing is still going on. One article even claimed that there were and still are daily cases of torturing.

When you see how people seem to get a thrill out of publishing all these sensational rumors, you wonder what this world is coming to... Here everything is quiet. Of course, we still are in a situation of war, — a situation that should continue for several months — and we have curfew every night from 11:00 p.m. till 5:30 a.m. An occasional shot here and there, but that's all. People are working. Many are donating their gold rings to the military Junta as a sign of appreciation. The streets are very clean. There are no more crazy strikes. Thousands of workers are freely donating part of their salary — the donation is simply taken away from their checks! The great majority of these workers now earn in one month what an average worker in Canada makes in approximately half a day — but that is normal here: Chile is an underdeveloped country.

Newspapers, radio and TV stations here speak very highly of the military junta. Before the coup, it was incredible what garbage one would find in the media! Now the news reports are short, happy and objective. It makes you want to be alive again! The media here informs us that Russia is still persecuting its intellectuals. To think that had it not been for the Chilean army and the United States, Chile might still be going towards socialism!

There are still several thousands of families in Santiago without jobs. But that problem should be wiped out very shortly: they no longer receive any income whatsoever...

Tomorrow Wynanne and I are going to climb a beautiful mountain, situated right in the heart of Santiago. This should take our minds away from the strawberries! As you celebrate Christmas on the 25th,

Try to remember... Love, Us.

Letter: December 29 (Two Lutheran Friends Expelled from Chile)

Dear Dominique and Diane,

We have received your two December letters. Presently we are living outside of the downtown area. Two of our friends are in Argentina for three weeks and have asked us to guard their home. The move away from our apartment will do us wonders: it had literally turned into an office, with people constantly coming and going. Here the air is also more pure and it's quiet. My wife runs errands constantly and uses the apartment as a kind of base. I am putting the finishing touches on my text on the Chilean Church. It should be done in a matter of days. Hopefully I'll be able to get it published.

The cost of sending you a letter before was seven escudos. Starting now, it will be 200 escudos. A very modest increase in price... The military Junta had declared, after the coup, that the monthly minimum salary of servants would be 12,000 escudos, the equivalent of \$15. It has recently announced that this minimum salary for servants has been abandoned: the market must do its thing, they say. Supply and demand must rule supreme... In October, there were four strikes initiated by workers: the leaders and several others were simply thrown in jail.



"IN EACH SOLDIER THERE IS A CHILEAN; IN EACH CHILEAN THERE IS A SOLDIER"

Billboard appearing in Chile following the coup
Photo by Wynanne Watts, Santiago

Last night, we met a reporter from the Toronto Star. He informed us that he went to great pains not to make any value judgments at all in his articles. He flatly told us that he had no ideology whatsoever! That's enough to make one wonder whether a pre-historic zoo should not be opened for such phenomena.

Our main actions right now target reporters. Since the coup, we have collaborated, sometimes very intensely, with at least fifteen of them. We feel that this task is essential.

The CIA seems to be active even within the refugee camps set up by the United Nations in Chile. Our two friends from the Lutheran Church who were publishing Between the Lines²⁴ are being thrown out of Chile and they say they have proof that the CIA was behind their expulsion. You might soon hear from them in Canada. We hear shooting every night, even in our new wealthier neighborhood. Helicopters keep watch over us every night also. Gosh, when will Washington ever equip them with good mufflers so we can sleep!

Greetings to all,

Peace...We just heard more shooting outside!

²⁴ *Between the Lines* was an information bulletin sent to the United States from Chile on a regular basis. It reported on the economic and political situation and on human rights abuses.

Chapter 3

After the Coup

January - September 1974

Letter: February 8 (Total Control of Media, Fear)

Dear Dominique and Diane,

Last night we had the company of Father Gilles Casabon, the Provincial of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Montreal. He is visiting Latin America. Since I have, at long last, just finished my book on the Chilean Church, I asked him if he could take it out of the country for me. Apparently, controls are now getting even tighter. He said he would give me his answer tomorrow. The Canadian Embassy has refused to allow me to use the diplomatic pouch for this. Yet it has just recently allowed Serge²⁵ to get his documents out. They are probably afraid of Serge because he has written several articles in Montreal newspapers.

What is new in Chile? Very hard to say. Nothing, nothing... absolutely nothing about the real situation. Reading newspapers and magazines, listening to the radio or watching TV has become an incredible psychological burden. Nothing, nothing absolutely nothing! One has the impression of living in a kind of total vacuum. If living has anything to do with communicating, one must conclude that in Chile presently the dead are in the millions! Yesterday afternoon, I was chatting with a university Prof. He says he can't meet his friends, or only very little. Why? Because meeting and talking have become extremely dangerous. There are government spies everywhere. Everybody is afraid of everybody. Even people who were firmly committed to the Popular Unity government are now full of distrust

²⁵ Serge Mongeau is a doctor from Quebec. He was in Chile with his wife and three children. Serge has published more than a dozen books, mostly related to health and preventive medicine. He published a book on Chile: *Le rêve écrasé: Québec-Chili*, Québec-Amérique, Montréal, 1990, 268 pp.

among themselves, for events have clearly shown that even before the coup they were deeply infiltrated.

Another Prof. from the University of Concepción told us that the American ship 'Operation-Unitas' which was not far from the port of Valparaiso on the day of the coup was loaded with spare parts for the truckers. These were unloaded on September 14th. In the Lota coal mines, strikes, caused by the fact that workers and their families were going hungry, were brutally handled: four workers were shot. He expects that there will be popular revolts soon because with the incredible increases in the price of many essential food items, many people are eating only one or two good meals a week.

I'm off to the embassy to give the diplomatic pouch another try.

In solidarity,

Letter: February 11 (Reporter Listens to Moving Testimony with 'Objectivity')

Dear Dominique and Diane,

Normally you should receive my geography document (the expression I used for the document on the Chilean Church) at the end of this week. The Canadian Embassy finally accepted to allow me to use the diplomatic pouch. They asked me to call the next day to see if the text had effectively left; I did, and they said everything was okay.

Last night, we spent the entire evening with a Canadian reporter, Jack Best, who has just arrived in Chile. He is about 50 years old and comes from Ottawa. He works as a freelancer for six dailies: The Globe and Mail, The Ottawa Journal, The Vancouver Sun, The Winnipeg Free Press, The Montreal Star and a sixth that I do not recall. His specialty: Canadian foreign affairs and Canadian defense. He can speak French but with considerable difficulty.

Maria Denise—a Quebecois nun who has spent ten years in Chile and is living in an extremely poor neighborhood, Violeta Para—spent a full two hours giving her personal testimony on the situation in Chile since September 11th. It was the most remarkable and moving testimony I have heard since the coup: precise facts, places, dates, names, surrounding circumstances...Since she works with the Peace Committee headed by Bishop Ariztía, undoubtedly the best organization in Chile attending to the needs of the poor and repressed, she not only knew about individual cases of torture, executions, and imprisonment but she could also describe the global situation in this respect. She said that two lawyers of the Peace

Committee, left-wing members of the Christian Democratic Party, estimated that there were approximately 18,000 prisoners being held in Chile and that torture in some form or another had been practiced on some 70% of them. She also described the rapidly deteriorating economic and living conditions of those living in the poorer neighborhoods.

During the entire testimony, Jack Best listened with a considerable and obvious skepticism. All that he seemed interested in was meeting those who had actually been tortured. He wanted to see with his own eyes. His questions, in the circumstances, seemed completely out of place.

Eventually one of us—there were seven of us—asked him what his impressions were concerning the situation in Chile. His answer: “You know, I’m very slow at forming an opinion”. We made our question more specific: “When you were still in Ottawa, what opinion did you then have on Chile?” His reply: “Oh, my point of view was.... objective, quite objective.” And that was the end of that.

A bit later in the evening he made several remarks implying that he was fully aware of our views. The tone was very condescending and paternalistic. The message was quite clear: you are very committed and involved; therefore your evaluation is subjective, not objective...

We asked him to help us get a young man out of Valdivia. The military had condemned this Chilean to death for “high treason” and quite obviously he would not be granted the right to any kind of defense. The request for help in this case was made to us by the Ambassador of India with whom my wife has been working very closely. If he would use his prestige as a reporter to try to bring this case out in the open by merely asking the military why someone could be condemned to death without a fair trial and any public scrutiny whatsoever — a very modest and democratic question — perhaps the fear of world opinion would suffice to save this young man’s life. Mr. Best flatly refused to help us in any way whatsoever.

As I watched him during the nun’s very powerful testimony, I could not believe my eyes. He did not take a single note. He seemed somewhat bored, ridiculously on his guard. For me, it was like a dream. I would never have imagined that someone could be so prejudiced as to merely shut off reality.

It is possible that I am mistaken about him. You will see it when his articles on Chile come out in the Canadian newspapers. If I’m right,

please do not hesitate to use my letter to unmask his so-called objectivity, one that I would equate more with downright fascism! What is a concrete person's life worth to someone not the least bit interested in lifting his little finger to denounce actively and with personal commitment the systematic torture of thousands of human beings?

Mere emotions on my part? Perhaps. Where are the human institutions in this country? Where is the human being in man hiding? (...)

With every passing day I'm starting to learn that there is a little Hitler buried in every one of us. It takes a long time to recognize it, to see it. There are thousands of people here in Chile and elsewhere in the world that will only wake up when it is too late. And then they will claim that they just did not know what was going on.

Enough for tonight. I hope your baby is coming along well.

Me

Letter: February 14 (Examining Work of Jack Best; Views of Supporters of Coup)

Dear Dominique and Diane,

It is 4:30 p.m. I've just returned from a visit in the población (neighborhood) Violeta Para. The purpose of my visit: to examine how Jack Best would carry out his work as a reporter. Yesterday afternoon Mr. Best called to see if he could actually pay a visit to the Violeta Para población. "I'm leaving for Brazil at noon on Thursday, so my visit to the población will have to be relatively short" he said. I called the nun to see if that was possible. She had not been at all impressed by him the night before but said that she would organize it and give him good contacts. We agreed that I would be Mr. Best's guide.

I met Mr. Best at 8:15 a.m. today at the Hotel Forestal. We took a taxi to the Violeta Para población. As we were driving there, he informed me that he had to be back downtown no later than 10:00 a.m. This report, I thought to myself, will be a fast-food report...

We arrived in the población at 8:45 a.m. We met the nun who immediately brought us to the home of a French missionary priest. The nun had made arrangements so that Mr. Best could meet a Chilean worker who had spent two months in the Quiriquina Island prison camp and had lived with several prisoners who had experienced torture. This Chilean worker was on the run; he was

fleeing to Argentina tomorrow morning, since a lawyer had warned him that he would be given another prison term, this time of at least five years, and that he should therefore leave the country.

Even though Mr. Best had been informed that he was going to meet an ex-prisoner who was now obliged to flee the country, he only addressed his questions to the priest. The latter gave a testimony similar to the one the nun had given the night before. Then Mr. Best asked him: “Are the military preventing you in any way of carrying out your priestly duties?” The French priest replied that they did not appreciate the fact that he was celebrating the Eucharist in private homes but that given the fact that there is no Church building in the neighborhood, there is not much choice. He added that many people did not dare attend the ceremonies for fear of being accused of belonging to a political party (the military had banned, after the coup, all public meetings and even private meetings of more than six people).

After a few more fairly light questions to the priest, Mr. Best looked at his watch—it was 9:55 a.m.—and asked me if I had any questions I would like to address to them. I politely commented, totally puzzled by the fact that he had totally ignored, throughout the interview, our main witness, the Chilean worker, that an ex-prisoner of the Quiriquina Island was sitting on the other side of the table and might have a few things to tell us. Mr. Best turned to him for the very first time and listened to his testimony. And, he actually started taking a few notes, for the first time since the beginning of our encounter. The worker, it was more than obvious, was very emotional and had oceans of darkness buried in his heart; he was dying to get some of this out. Mr. Best, however, was dying to leave... At 10:20 he excused himself and took a taxi back to his hotel. Completely taken aback, I stayed the rest of the morning with the priest and the ex-prisoner to let off an immense amount of accumulated steam...

Last night we had the company of two grade school teachers from Limache, a small town not far from Valparaiso. I had been forewarned that our visitors were very conservative and pro-military and that it was best to be very diplomatic.

When they arrived it was around 10: 00 p.m. Once they discovered that we had been in Chile only since the 23 July 1973, the oldest of the two, a guy about 35 years old, remarked with considerable

enthusiasm: "You arrived just on time to witness our resurrection!" Then he continued: "As foreigners, how did the recent events in Chile appear to you?"

Even though being diplomatic is not exactly my forte, I tried very hard to appear not too negative. After a rather difficult moment of silence, I meekly remarked: "The only thing I do not appreciate is the repression I'm witnessing."

Obviously taken aback, he asked: "Repression, did you say? You have actually seen repression in Chile? What exactly are you referring to? Quite true, some people have been made prisoners but they are all delinquents. What do you mean exactly by repression?"

With great caution and prudence I specified: "When it is impossible to say and write what you really think."

He immediately agreed with me: "You know that in Chile, people spend a considerable amount of time talking, debating...That is one of our biggest faults. I hope the military Junta stays in power for at least ten years!"

A bit later in our conversation, he qualified his previous statements by commenting that some degree of punishment was necessary because foreign ideas had been introduced into the country. Not quite clear as to why an idea, because of its mere status as "foreign", would not be valid I asked him to give me a concrete example of a foreign idea (Our conversation was, if anything, free of aggressivity. He seemed to have full confidence in me and was very kind).

"An example, he said? Well, take Marxism. Marxism, you see, was perhaps fine for Russia. There it possibly fostered in some ways a greater liberation and more social justice. But here in Chile the situation is totally different. The more educated people are very noble and refined. There is respect, generally speaking, for absolutely everyone. There are no social classes in Chile. We are all law abiding and equal."

I was observing quietly this man in front of me. He had told me that he was a Christian Democrat. He was wearing a suit and a tie. I knew he was part of the middle class and although not at all wealthy, extremely better off than the large majority of Chileans. I felt his total spontaneity, his transparency and joviality. It was like a dream...

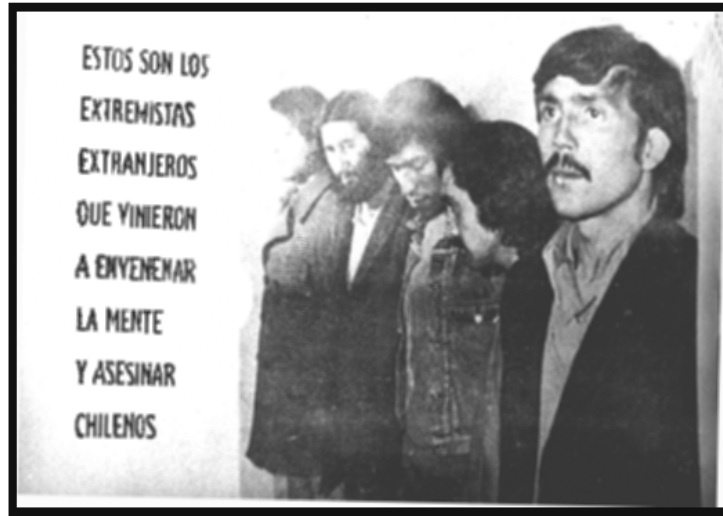


Photo by Wynanne Watts, Santiago
Poster appearing in Chile after the coup. It reads:
“THESE ARE THE FOREIGN RADICALS WHO CAME
TO POISON MINDS AND ASSASSINATE CHILEANS”

A bit later in the evening, as we were taking a snack together, this same schoolteacher — he was doing most of the talking — started speaking of Catholicism. “I’m a full fledged Catholic. As far as I’m concerned, all I want a priest to do is to hear my confession and celebrate mass.” Another one of our guests, also a Catholic but more of the liberation theology type, remarked: “At home I have a swimming pool. Some of the children in my neighborhood are extremely poor. Sometimes they come and ask if they can have a swim. What would Christ do in this situation? My wife and I decided to let them swim for a while. As a Christian, I feel we should share.”

The schoolteacher did not agree: “It is obvious that you are American and not Chilean. I believe that one should never have confidence in people of lower social strata, whether this inferiority is economic or cultural. First of all — most Chileans know this as a fact — if you trust them, they will immediately abuse of your confidence. I would not share my swimming pool with them. As far as I’m concerned, one must always aim towards the top, not the bottom. They are the ones who should move upwards. It is not up to me to stoop down to their level.”

At this point in the conversation, I just couldn't take it any more! With as much calm and composure as I could muster I commented: "Your philosophy is indeed very interesting. Basically what you're saying is exactly what Christ did!" My wife looked at me with darts in her eyes. She wanted me to show more restraint and quickly I did. The subject of conversation thereafter rapidly turned to lighter topics.

That night, once in bed, I just couldn't get to sleep. In the morning of that same day, I had read an article in a book published before 1970 by James Petras and Maurice Zeitlin. In this article, the author argued that the so-called remarkable political stability of Chile and its renowned democratic nature were the result of a coalition reached very early in Chilean history between the elite and the middle class. Thanks to this coalition the controlling political parties were able to maintain a socioeconomic system that simultaneously provided a stable legislative and judiciary system and kept the masses of poor and excluded in their subordinate place. The middle class, maintained the author, does not have a class conscience, or rather it has the same ideology as the elite. This, he argued, is the main flaw in the Christian Democratic Party. Even though it promotes reform, basically it accepts to maintain a grossly unjust system in place. That very night, I had bumped into concrete proof thereof. A proof so overwhelming that I just couldn't sleep. It's enough to make one wonder whether human beings are all asleep...

In solidarity, Us.

N. B. Use the information above as you wish. Please do not mention the población Violeta Para. It could be dangerous for the security of the priest, the nun and the ex-prisoner.

Jack Best's article, *POST-COUP CHILE—Even the Church feeling the heat*, appears in *The Ottawa Journal* on March 11th 1974:

(...) The church hierarchy is being criticized by those, including priests, who feel that it has maintained an unholy silence in the face of government suppression of civil liberties. "The Church is the only institution left that could speak out with the assurance of being listened to," said one Santiago priest. "Instead..." He closed his lips tightly and pointed to them. Bitterness was written all over his face.

Still, it is not easy for a visitor to pass judgment on the extent of the repression. Most foreigners, consciously or sub-consciously, no doubt adopt a variation of the formula used by one diplomat

whose policy is to multiply by two in the case of punitive measures which the government admits to have taken, and to divide by five in the case of abuses alleged by the Left.²⁶

Two thousand or more were killed in the fighting that accompanied the coup, one of the bloodiest in Latin American history, and in the period of retribution that followed as the government rooted out pockets of resistance and moved to eliminate the most dangerous Marxist cadres.

In the process, it appears, a lot of personal scores were settled and instances of summary justice multiplied, giving rise to reports abroad that Chile was going through a reign of terror.

It is probably a valid criticism of the ruling four-man military Junta, composed of well-meaning though politically inexperienced men trying to bring order out of chaos that it has exercised insufficient control over local commanders who have dispensed the military rule, in a needlessly harsh and arbitrary manner.

Apart from those who perished, large numbers of Chileans were held in custody without trial. Gen. Augusto Pinochet, the silver-haired president of the Junta, told me that 14,000 were detained at one stage but all except a few thousand had been released.

Pinochet denied in an interview that prisoners are subjected to torture. "There are thousands of other ways to make a person talk without that," he said, with a touch of unintended irony.

On the day I left Santiago, in a poor neighborhood on the outskirts of the city, I talked with a young labor activist named Miguel who claimed to have been held for 55 days on Quiriquina Island, 100 miles south of here. He said he had seen and talked with men who had been tortured, men who had been immersed in cold water containing excrement: or whose skin had been etched by a piece of cold steel, with the letters of a well-known Marxist political movement. **It sounded like the usual litany.**

So how do you evaluate the accounts of someone like Miguel? All you can do is make a judgment based on your estimate of his credibility and the objective probabilities as far as you can measure them. My inclination was to believe him — by a factor of something more than one-fifth.

²⁶ The emphasis, in this article, is mine.

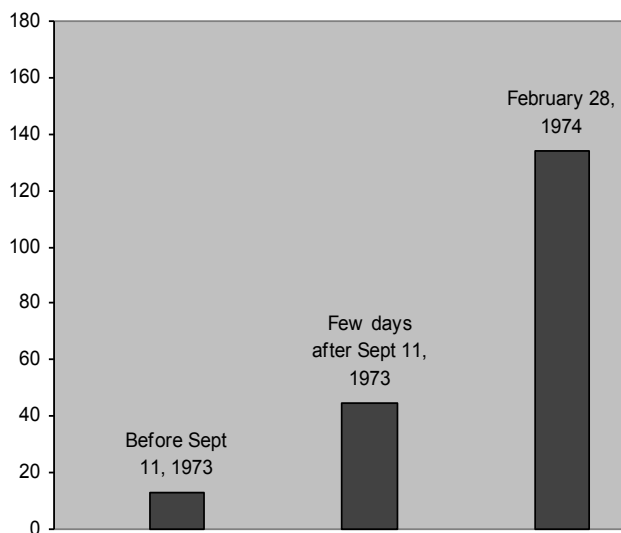
Letter: February 28 ²⁷: (Price of Bread Skyrocketing, More Repression)

Dear Marie-Paule,

I've wanted to write to you since a long time. But I just never got around to doing it. On the one hand, I was plunged in what seemed like an ocean of disturbing events. On the other hand, whenever I would write it was always for a very precise cause and I felt the urgency of getting the news out to those best suited to be multipliers. A few minutes ago Wynanne and I were listening to a cassette from North-Western Quebec called 'Abitibi' by Suzanne Jacob. This makes us feel close to Quebec, to which we are deeply attached, and most especially to all of our friends in Rouyn.

Lots of water has flowed in our life since our arrival here. We feel that we are starting to see more clearly: the clarity originates directly from the fact that the water has been considerably dirty and disgusting.(...)

**Price of Bread in Chile
(escudos per kilo)**



²⁷ She had been my secretary as regional director of SUCO in Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec.

Last night we had dinner with a Quebecois nun who lives in a poor neighborhood of Santiago. Again we heard very disturbing things. This morning, El Mercurio announced that Chile had just purchased another six new Hawker-Hunter bombers. The price tag was of course not mentioned. About two weeks ago the price of bread went up again. After the 'divine' coup it had increased from 13 to 45 escudos a kilo. This time round it went up to 134 escudos a kilo! One has to realize that bread is the basic staple in Chile, especially for the poor. A lot of people are hurting terribly right now, in silence... Meanwhile, the military are announcing that they are setting up a program to combat malnutrition. It's enough to make an extremely ignorant monkey vomit...

Some people claim that there will be trouble for the military in one or two months, that people just can't take it anymore. I have strong doubts. To react in this context would be suicidal: the repression with every passing day is becoming increasingly organized and systematic. Our next door neighbor was telling us a few days ago: "You people are foreigners. You can see what is going on in Chile. And you know that all that the foreign press is reporting about the repression in Chile is totally false!" Having been a student of La Fontaine who wrote: "Pour vivre heureux, il faut vivre caché!" I just told him that I agreed one hundred percent. The idiot seemed to believe me!

Yesterday as I was strolling in our back alley, I bumped into a small boy. He was armed with a wooden machine gun that his father had undoubtedly made for him. Nowhere, at least, did I see "Made in the USA" on it. He did not shoot me because he has not yet grown up. But one day he'll be an adult... Newspapers here are full of nothing. Or rather, they are bulging with military matters: promotions, a gold medal for this one, new military schools. The radio and TV stations constantly bombard the public with slogans about the reconstruction of Chile. These slogans are then regurgitated by "thinking" people. I would have many more things to tell you, but that will have to wait. We terribly miss the cold, the snow... and especially the wonderful friends we have in Rouyn. However, in some ways, we feel closer to you than ever. On revient toujours,.....Us.

Letter: March 4²⁸: (Desire to Study Marx, Latin American History)

Dear Fernand,

It's been some nine months now since we parted with you in Rouyn but it only feels as if it were one or two months. I guess the coup d'état has hit us pretty hard and has blown our psychological clock.

Concerning the events going on here, I will be very brief, since you probably have more information in Rouyn than I do here. Even though the military have the power of arms, all indicates that they sorely lack people's hearts, especially the poor majority. With every passing day, they seem to commit another blunder that could very well mean, over the long run, their funeral. The control of the media is total and nothing indicates an easing off. Only a few days ago, the major daily of the Christian Democratic Party, a party that had collaborated in carrying out the coup, stopped publishing. The official reasons given: financial difficulties. Real reasons: two hypotheses are possible; they closed up as a sign of protest against the military because they disagree on the repression and the economic policies, or because the military ordered them to.

In any case, the majority of the workers and ordinary people are being smashed in a brutal, inhuman and very revolting manner. Their purchasing power has plummeted by some 400% . The exact number, no one in Chile right now really knows given the rapidity and depth of the changes. Unemployment, according to the Peace Committee, has risen since the coup by some 6.5% and has mainly affected, of course, those who were sympathizers of the Popular Unity government. Instead of denouncing an economic policy that is rapidly multiplying the number of needy and marginalized, the Church and the International humanitarian organizations are developing ways to make the growing misery more tolerable. Universities are now returning to their previous status: they are exclusively for the privileged. Tuition fees have skyrocketed. In fact the military are insisting that not everyone has the "calling" to go to university and that the Popular Unity government was not respecting this fact of nature. The price of many basic foodstuffs like bread, sugar, milk, etc. has increased from 1000 to 2000% whereas salaries have only been allowed to double.

²⁸ A colleague from the Philosophy Department of the Collège de Rouyn-Noranda (now known as the Collège de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue).

All that we have experienced is having a powerful influence on my research project. I would like to study Karl Marx. I would like to study Latin American history. I have the strong impression that the type of capitalism that the military are setting up here is similar to the one analyzed by Marx in the 19th century.

Jacques and Michael gave me news about the College. Apparently the union is in a pretty bad state. It seems to me that the fundamental question in the ongoing union debate concerns basic objectives. When I think of the director general who never wants the union to get involved in those matters that are at the heart of contemporary issues; when I see him promoting a purely corporate type of unionism and when I realize that many teachers seem to agree with him and want the union to be completely apolitical and only cater to the immediate needs and working conditions of its members; when I consider all this in the light of what I'm seeing here, I am absolutely convinced that this orientation is too narrow. If unions do not broaden their concerns to embrace those of ordinary people, of human beings in their very concrete and specific condition on a worldwide basis, one would have to be relatively unbalanced to devote lots of one's time and energy to them. And if that knowledge which we are trying to impart to our students does not seek to awaken both their minds and hearts to that situation which some two thirds of human beings are presently experiencing on the planet; if our college programs address basic contemporary issues with the same superficiality and fast-food mentality as we find in the bulk of the mass-media; if the knowledge we transmit basically fosters a status quo which smacks of utter irrationality; if that is our global orientation, then I believe that something is terribly wrong. (...)

It's getting late. There are so many things I'd like to discuss with all of you in the department but that are hard to commit to paper.

My greetings to all members of the department. To Lucie also.

Diary: March 15 (The Power of Ideology)

(...) The other day I was talking with a friend who works for the Centro de Investigación y de Desarrollo de la Educación, a center directed, I believe, by the Jesuits. I asked him who was funding the center. "Foreigners, he replied. Churches in Germany, France, the United States and several other countries". The government of Chile does not provide them with one single escudo. "Here in Chile, he remarked, we don't have any money". But where, I wonder, do those

Chileans who build themselves houses that look more like castles take their money? Where do they find the money to live like kings? (...)

I find it very striking to see how so many institutions here in the area of health, religion and education are totally financed by the “developed” countries. Some are directly foreign but the majority are Chilean. In the latter case, they are always operated with the help of an important number of foreigners. The psychological dependence seems even greater, however, than the financial one. In certain ways, it reminds me of James Bay and the attitude of many natives regarding Indian Affairs.²⁹

In Temúco there is a diocese where more than 95% of the Catholic clergy comes from the First World.

Development? One’s living style. Values, those that are expressed in words and those that are really lived. A solidarity merely expressed in words as opposed to one that is really effective. People who talk as if they did not give a damn about the fate of the very poor majority and whose lifestyle actually reflects this. People who say they are committed to the poor and whose lifestyle differs not an iota from those who do not make this claim.

How very deep is our tendency to rationalize. To measure our commitment by the teaspoon, to lie to ourselves! If I am conservative, then I have a servant, I relax comfortably on my chesterfield, dine with fine foods and expensive wine, and I develop, often with the help of a culture, a religion and a feeling of nobility, a mental framework which makes me feel okay. If I am an armchair leftist, I often have a servant and behave exactly like the conservative. I am skilled in the art of justifying my behavior.

If I am obliged to smash the poor to preserve my “material and spiritual peace” I relieve my conscience by giving them a few goodies. If I am obliged to create massive unemployment for the poor, to imprison them, to submit them to torture, I seek the cooperation of my friends: lawyers, judges, reporters, doctors and priests.

Of reporters I ask but one thing: on the one hand, to deny that there are people being imprisoned, tortured and killed here in Chile; on the other, to insist on making very public all the human rights abuses

²⁹ After leaving the Oblates in 1968, I did not go directly to Rouyn. I first taught primary school for six months in Fort Albany, James Bay, on an Indian reserve.

taking place in those countries where another alien or foreign mental framework is predominant.

Of priests, I do not request political support — after all, religion has nothing to do with politics! — but only that they, on the one hand, manifest patriotism by accepting to celebrate nationally televised religious ceremonies in my presence, to dine with me around a table well garnished with fine food and prayers bursting with noble and pure intentions, and, on the other hand, agree to set up charitable committees to tend to the physical and psychological wounds of those I am in the throes of torturing.

Of lawyers and judges, I merely request that they publicly acknowledge that according to their scientific expertise the rule of law has finally been restored in the country, that freedom has at long last returned to this land, that the constitution, not being sufficiently constitutional, is in need of revision.

Of doctors, I demand that they be very discreet when they treat patients who have been subjected to torture. No pictures, no testimonies.... Simply a patriotic silence.

At first, I claim that I had to smash the poor because their government was not respecting the constitution. Then, a bit later, once they are being smashed, I suddenly discover the existence of a plan Z, and this plan somehow becomes the primary motive of my coup. Finally, I affirm that the coup was never really meant to restore respect for the existing constitution, since this constitution is basically erroneous (the recent speech, in Mexico, of the Junta's Foreign Affairs Minister, Admiral Ismael Huerta). (...)

Letter: March 16 (Studying at ILADES)

Dear Dominique and Diane,

I hope you have received the geography document (code name for the text on the Chilean Church) that I sent you at least one month ago. If not, let me know immediately because that will mean that something is fishy...(..)

My wife and I have decided that we are going to stay here till July 1975, depending of course on the global situation here. We are now studying at ILADES — Instituto Latinoamericano de Desarrollo Economico y Social —, an institute under the direction of Jesuit priests who are sympathetic to the Christian Democrats. We are now living in a lower middle class neighborhood in a tiny house. There are lots of people and it's rather noisy but we are slowly getting used to it.

The bishop of the Chilean Lutheran Church has recently been detained, interrogated and then let free. He signed an awful declaration that is now circulating in the press. It's a declaration that doesn't really say much but it is formulated in such a manner that the military can put it to good use in their official propaganda.

Besides that, nothing very new. Summer is coming to an end. The economic situation remains absolutely abominable for millions of Chileans. In the last week certain of the former leaders of the Popular Unity have "passed away". General Bachelet, who played a key role under Allende in the distribution of food rations, is said to have died of a heart attack in prison. José Toha, Allende's former Minister of Defense, is said to have committed suicide yesterday in the military hospital. (...)

I'm looking forward to hearing from you. Don't overwork! We feel very close to both of you.

Donald Duck!

Letter: March 21 (Book on Church Still in Chile because of 'Mistake')

Dear Dominique and Diane,

(...) It's 11:15 a.m. and I've just returned from the Canadian Embassy. I was going there to help someone with my "Canadian" presence and also to get my mail. I had received your letter dated 9 March and was deeply disappointed to see that you had not yet received my document (book on the Chilean Church). I immediately checked with Marc Dolgin, the First Secretary. He checked and reported back that there had been a technical mistake. On February 14th I had phoned and they had assured me the document had left and all was okay. Now they say that if it didn't leave on February 12th it will surely have left on March 14th! I can't believe it: what happened? I worked like a fool for months to get this manuscript finished hoping that if it could be published when the situation was still hot it could make a difference. And now this... (...)

Jean Charpentier from Radio Canada is now in Santiago. We'll undoubtedly see him soon.

A big hug, On revient toujours....

Diary: March 27 (Questioning God, Meditation, Gandhi)

Internal crisis. Faith in God, faith in the Catholic Church, one, holy and apostolic. Against Protestants. Against communists. Each one with his or her own conviction, each one with a particular faith, a congregation to provide assurance and comfort. For monogamy, against polygamy. Good on one side, evil on the other. A multitude of prejudices...on the part of individuals, on the part of groups.

Fear of disappointing mom and dad. Fear that they will discover that I am no longer a believer, or rather that I am no longer sure that I am one.... Fear of not attending mass on Sunday if I'm in their presence. Fear of upsetting them very deeply. Fear of doing something that could threaten or weaken the psychological cane that provides meaning and purpose to their entire life, to their old age and approaching death. Fear of having to experience a confrontation with them. Of having to explain my way of thinking. Try to make them understand by using reason, but especially experience, the experience of traveling, of living in other cultures. Blockage. Reason trying to reason on the basis of a postulate that escapes reason, and that makes one inclined to hold as unreasonable to step outside of belief.

Meditation attracts me a lot. What attracts me about meditation is the simplicity of a country scene full of life and dialogue and peace and oxygen in the midst of a situation where some are undergoing torture. It is the peasant woman who has remained very close to earth, sun, cows, sheep, and who with her whole being makes one with her environment, through work and play, with an affection full of transparency and warmth. What attracts me about meditation is the quiet yet intense plenitude that it allows one to perceive in everyday life, in the smallest detail, a look, a smile, a handshake. What attracts me about meditation is that it allows me to discover the origin and nature of all that attracts me.

Gandhi claims that the truly non-violent human being must, in order to achieve the highest level of this attitude, practice chastity. According to him one should make love — at least he posits this as an ideal — strictly for the sake of reproduction.

Gandhi also claims that only those human beings who believe in God can really practice non-violence.

I tend to think that Gandhi is wrong in both respects. True enough, it would be very easy to make fun of his rather surprising attitude towards human sexuality and love and to forget just how much control

of one's passions and knowledge of oneself the true experience of love requires. Nevertheless, I find his opinion very narrow and suffocating. The human body, the flesh and the senses seem to represent for him an obstacle to the birth of the spirit, to communion and knowledge. Plato and Gandhi seem to share views in this respect. Saint Augustine and a good part of the Middle Age thinkers are also on this same wavelength.

Must one believe in God in order to be non-violent? Must one recognize God in order to be fully human? Is God, as Marx claims, man's production or is it the other way round: God, the creator of man?

When I look at what is happening, when I see the degree of stupidity, of lying, of internal hardness, of hypocrisy, of prejudice... When I see the leaders of the Church, the representatives of God on earth, glorifying a history which is basically filth, kneeling down with torturers in order to commemorate not those Christians tortured 2000 years ago but the good deeds of those who are now actively torturing in 1974.... When I see how so many people can be made to believe all kinds of things that are totally ridiculous and contradict the most elementary truth..... When I see the terrific power the mass media have over peoples' mind... When I see how the Catholic Church controls its own truth just as democratically as the military Junta controls its own truth... When I see what extraordinary and incommensurate capacity a human being has of rationalizing and justifying individual and collective behavior by having recourse to a system of beliefs, a commonly shared world-view, an all encompassing interpretation... When I see just how incredibly divided people on earth are, how so many belong to a particular group with certain beliefs, a congregation with or without God, and consider they are right and all others wrong... When I consider all this I wonder if Marx was not right in trying to shed light on collective behavior by exploring reasons beyond the realm of those reasons explicitly avowed, recognized and articulated, somewhat like Sigmund Freud did in the realm of individual psychological behavior.

Diary: April 13 (Searching for Meaning Based on Something Solid)

(...) *At the end of our session of meditation³⁰ with Art and Natalie Warner Thursday evening, Wynanne made the following comment: “If we don’t celebrate Easter, if we don’t believe in all that, then what is left to celebrate, what is left to give special meaning to your life?”*

That evening, I did not attempt to reply for the simple reason that I had no answer. Yesterday, however, I thought about it and gave her my opinion on this: “Do you think that we should continue believing certain things merely because doing so provides us with a feeling of well-being and of psychological comfort? If we discover that some thing we adhered to is an illusion, should we not adapt our lives accordingly? What is left once the illusion is put aside? Well, you are there and I am there. And millions of human beings are there. And many millions are experiencing a sub-human life, living in a chronic state of subordination and oppression. We both love silence. We love nature, the forest, fresh air, and simplicity. We enjoy our friends and have many deep friendships. Together we are constantly adjusting our lives, trying to discover that which is valid and beautiful. ” (...)

What Wynanne and I are feeling more and more is the need to give life a meaning, but not a meaning whose primary purpose is to provide meaning regardless of its basis in reality, but one that is true and without illusion. We feel the need to adjust our daily behavior to what we discover through knowledge and awareness, and this motivates us, keeps us going. At the same time, however, this attitude has ended up isolating us somewhat. We are cut from our traditions. We are cut from our parents, and, to an important extent, from our old friends. For friendship is not merely based on the fact that each one is searching. It also rests on shared values and beliefs. (...)

Diary: April 20 (Suffering of Voiceless Many, Purpose of Education)

People in North America live in a very special psychological world. They tend to see reality in a very narrow, egocentric fashion.

The educational system in North America will not experience a deep change before those who control the political and economic levers wake up. For the time being it is not centered on world issues: we

³⁰ Starting some time in March, we would climb a mountain near Santiago with our close Quaker friends, Art, Nathalie and their son and daughter, and would spend an hour or two meditating together in silence. Then we would have a discussion.

contemplate our belly button and we call that "world news". Furthermore, this system is really not geared to satisfying deep human needs. Rather, it reproduces a way of life in which it becomes normal to allow what happened in Chile to happen: the military Junta can go on torturing, spreading propaganda, etc. with little fear of reprisal. Canadian and American investments are returning here to resume "business as usual".

It makes one wonder whether North America is not experiencing a psychological disturbance that is so common that it passes unnoticed.

How many messages spring up from the blood, the torturing, the hunger and the oppression of these Latin Americans I see all around me. And just how many of these messages make it into the mass-media of the 'democracies'! How many seconds, how many hours, how many days, months and years are we going to continue listening, like stupid idiots, to those profound messages encouraging us to drink this kind of beer, to smoke this brand of cigarettes, to buy cars, soap, perfumes, etc.? And how many students, how many intellectuals or so-called intellectuals, spend long hours and entire days studying, reading, soaking in thousands of ideas, facts and images and strong emotions, in the near total absence of the cry emanating from millions of human beings literally smashed in their very dignity, treated like dirt, used and abused, reduced to near slavery and manipulated by mass-media! If getting an education boils down to inserting oneself in the socioeconomic status quo, we are in for a very sad, perhaps dramatic future...

Sometimes I dream of an embassy placed right in the middle of a poor neighborhood. Sometimes I dream of an ambassador who rejects wine, whisky, cocktails, a luxurious house, high-fluting manners and diplomacy, and who merely recognizes things the way they really are, and acts on the basis of this awareness in simplicity and love. Sometimes I dream of a business man whose main business is not to cater to his own private interests, financial, economic, immediate pleasures, etc. but rather to serve that which is human in those he meets on life's trail. Sometimes I dream of politicians who are not intellectual enough, educated enough, experienced and realistic enough to know how to hide, nay justify, or at least excuse, a cognac in hand, the thousands of gross human rights abuses that are going on, people being tortured, shot. Sometimes I dream and I hope that someone will believe my dream. And not merely tell me that I'm speaking like an ignorant child.

Sometimes I tell myself that the developed person in today's world is a person without dreams. A person who has learned to accept reality, life, and the way things are without further ado.

The developed person is like someone who claims that he loves meditation but never practices it. Who says he wants to stop smoking but never stops because he wants to go on being able to repeat that he wants to stop. Who proclaims that he wants to help his fellow man get back on his feet but continues kicking him so he can go on repeating this.

The developed person is someone who invests his money in a bank, a trust, etc. and who feels happy if this money generates interest. Most of the time, he does not bother finding out why his money is growing, the important issue being that it is growing. If perchance he does try to find out what is happening, why his money is growing, his bank or trust company will inform him that investments are confidential matters. Business secrets are important.

Being totally nuts is being able to enjoy reading the newspapers and magazines, listening to the radio and TV in Chile right now.

The manipulation of the mind and the exploitation of the body are both the cause and consequence of all torture.

Tell me if you can kneel with a dictator who is in the throes of torturing the poor, and I will tell you if you have the makings of a cardinal.

Letter: April 21³¹ (Does Capitalism Keep People Ignorant and Divided?)

Dear Pierre and Hélène,

We received your letter of March 24th. As always, it's a real pleasure to hear from you. The two of you, our other friends in the College, the snow, and our many discussions around a coffee: all that comes back as we read your letter.

We are moving ahead in life just as before, trying to feel our way, searching for meaning and wondering where we should put our energy. But the kind of subtle emptiness that we somehow experienced when in the College has now disappeared. More than ever before we feel the need to become part of a community striving for an ideal, a lifestyle, a commitment. And those issues that appear vital and

³¹ Colleagues from the Collège de Rouyn-Noranda.

fundamental, we feel we are starting to identify them. When I think of the teachers Union, I wonder if the conflicts do not arise from one thing: the lack of orientation in our interior commitment as individuals and the lack of concrete articulation of such a commitment. United to obtain fatter salaries? United to liberate both student and teacher from that which is oppressive and alienating? United with other sectors of workers to free us from a society that prioritizes individual profit making? United for what exactly?

I sincerely wonder if capitalism, even in its modern version as we experience it in Quebec and Canada, does not prefer to hold people — if not all of them, one heck of a lot —, divided, locked up in their private small world, uninterested in political matters, far removed from the global issues of our contemporary world. What is an educational institution for? What goals should the mass media pursue? Why does one seek to speak to another human being? What is being said and to what end? Should education seek to form that kind of person who, by economic pragmatism, does not hesitate one second to invest millions in a country where torture is commonly practiced? A type of person that does not hesitate to deposit money in a bank or trust without giving a hoot about how interest is made? A person quite content to have a little beer and go skidooing? Am I right or wrong in considering that it is nothing but a collective folly spending, on the one hand, hours on end soaking in commercial after commercial — Labatt, O'Keefe, Ford, Kresge, etc., — while completely ignoring, on the other hand, those concrete mechanisms whereby millions of human beings on earth are made to bleed and die prematurely?

In our college, what is the link between the Sector Deans, the Director General, the Academic Dean, and the members of the various departments — economics, psychology, sociology, philosophy, political science, etc.? Does the economist primarily teach students how to make money, how to make an intelligent use of the stock market, etc.? If so, would it not also be appropriate for him or her to show students the art of torturing or of killing people? Does the Director General really believe that politics are like a private religion that each should learn by himself or herself? Does he think that it is inappropriate to teach students, right at the Cégep level, to become politically involved? Does he believe that the teachers union should strictly limit itself to the collective agreement?

Enough questions.... It's something that is on my heart and that Wynanne and I often discuss. (...)

We often think with you and about you. I'm happy to hear you're taking a break of a couple of years away from the college. One day, I hope, we'll be able to relax together and share our thoughts and feelings more in depth.

You mean a lot to us,

Say Hi to the whole gang!

The two idiots

Letter by Wynanne: April 21 (Cardinal Speaks Up, Christian Democrats Censured)

Dear Andrée and George,

Our thank you is slow in coming but know that we have been admiring your picture, George, of our Quebec ever since the day it arrived. We got it on a Thursday at noon and were leaving for a village out of town for the weekend but before we left Ovide just had to frame it. Now it adorns our dining room in an apple crate frame painted black — super! We really love it! The whole feeling of snow and our winter comes right back to you and you tingle all over. Amazing how quickly we'd forgotten.

That same weekend fall arrived: a breeze, a smell in the air, the feel of the sun, a fallen grape leaf, a bushel of apples. But in these close quarters of our house and neighborhood, under the smog of downtown Santiago and with the blasting radios of neighbors, the seasons are barely detectable. Fortunately friends have offered us weekend trips to the 'campo' (countryside).

One weekend we went to help repair a house on a farm in the south and the guys nearly killed us all. They were attempting to attach a newly filled liquid gas tank to a small stove. The valve on the tank was old and as one was securing the hose to the tank, gas would actually spurt out. So full of the wisdom of their university degrees they decided that what was necessary was to keep on turning the knob until the spurting would stop. And they were actually doing this in a tiny, closed room and by candlelight! Of course the whole thing exploded and they ended up flat on their face and with burns. They ran out of the house. Of course it had to be my dumb honeybunch who decided to go back in. He managed to pull the blazing tank free — flames were shooting up two feet high — from the hose connecting it to the stove, backed out of the house and threw it on the ground. By then the small room was on fire — the house was a Swiss chalet with a completely

wooden structure and the wind was blowing hard! First we got the old folks out of the house — they were sleeping in the next room. Then we found a well not far from the house, primed it, and hauled water to put out the fire. Our nerves were totally shot but all were safe and alive.

The atmosphere at ILADES is good although the courses are very lopsided in you know which ideological direction. But we don't seem to have much time to get down to studies as we've been back into the business of saving lives quite thickly.

The scene is forever worse — more refined, if you like: guys shot in broad daylight in the public place, women tortured by inserting live mice into their vagina. In only one concentration camp — there are about six — where the torturing has been centralized we know that 200 to 300 people go in and out of there every two or three days! Where do they come from? Entire sectors of Santiago are raided regularly, especially poor areas. And they take about 25 of the people — men, women AND children; 11 years old is the youngest I've heard. Meanwhile people are beginning to die of starvation — not malnutrition. In some sectors of Santiago, unemployment among families not touched by imprisonment is as high as 50%.

At Easter, when the Cardinal spoke much too clearly for the Junta — he in fact denounced torturing and loss of human rights —, it became obvious that the right is starting to experience a split. The last Christian Democratic radio station was ordered to close down. Since they had already lost their newspaper, La Prensa, as well as their TV director, it is ultra-clear that the National Party now rules the roost. Meanwhile people suffer — the middle class included — for no one except the very wealthy can make ends meet anymore. Winter is upon us and who can afford heat? We knit and make love. We eat lots of beans and get lots of diarrhea. And Canada invests in Chilean mines and forests and closes her eyes to the 'pueblo' and its tyrannical torturers. But life goes on — it never fails to amaze me! And we do have happy times and laugh.

The jokes about the Junta are priceless. A Chilean asks his neighbor in a crowded bus:

Is anybody in your family in the military?

— No.

Do you happen to have an uncle in the military or a cousin?

— No.

Do you have a next-door neighbor who is a military?

— *No.*

Do you happen to know any military personally?

— *No.*

— *Well then would you please get off my foot!*

In all their suffering the Chileans have a wonderful sense of humor, much like the Vietnamese. We maintain a sensitivity on top of all this too. Weird! I was warmly touched by your idea Andrée of sending an Easter special from Minique's own hand. (...) We love you all so much...

Letter: April 24 (Attempt to Get Refugee into Embassy, Dream of Creating Commune)

Dear Dominique and Diane,

I'm taking advantage of a safe contact who is now leaving Chile to write to you free of any censorship concerns.

Just last week we provided refuge in our house to a person that the military are looking for very actively. We collaborated with our American friends, Art and Natalie to try to get this Chilean into the Mexican embassy. First we met with Bishop Ariztía who has contacts with the Embassy. Once that was arranged, we developed a concrete strategy. Since the military have been guarding the embassy entrances very closely — in fact more closely than before — getting someone into an embassy is not an easy matter. Ruthie, Art and Natalie's sixteen year old daughter, spent several afternoons wandering in the park just in front of the Mexican embassy, carefully observing everything that was going on: at such a time, the milk is delivered; at such a time the embassy gates are open; there is a house right next to the embassy where it would be possible to sneak in and jump the very tall wall into freedom. Once her expertise was done, we organized the escape.

Just as it was starting to get a bit dark, we drove to within three blocks from the embassy. Art walked first, then Ruthie, then myself and finally, our Chilean refugee. If Art saw something fishy, he would take his handkerchief out of his pocket and the others would all turn back. Both Ruthie and I were to do the same if we saw something fishy. We felt very nervous and tense. But everything went remarkably well and our Chilean ran into the yard right next to the embassy.

Convinced that it was a total success, we all drove home to our little house and started celebrating by having coffee and biscuits. As we were celebrating, there was a knock on the door. It was our Chilean refugee, his face covered with blood! He was breathing heavily and had been running hard. He explained what had happened. He did make it into the yard, but there were two girls there with their boyfriends. When he attempted to jump the fence to get into the Mexican embassy, one of the guys ran up to him and pulled him down. That's when he hit his head on a stone on the wall and started bleeding profusely. He was able to break away from the guys who were trying to grab him and ran all the way back to our place.

As we were listening to his story, we were all in a state of shock. Our house is situated in a neighborhood where there are always lots of people on the streets and everything is very promiscuous. The possibility, we thought, that some neighbors, possibly sympathetic to the military government, saw him running with blood on his forehead is 100%! Within a matter of seconds we all abandoned our house, jumped into Art's car, and rushed to their place in the suburbs of Santiago. We stayed there a full three days before we dared come back home. Fortunately, we were able to develop an easier strategy and our Chilean refugee finally made it into the embassy.

Your request that Wynanne and I be the godparents of your child flattered us but we feel you should realize that events here have considerably shaken us up in our faith. We no longer set foot in a Church here in Chile. We feel we must radically dissociate ourselves from an institution that has provided such a bloody regime an important support at a very critical moment of the coup.

However, once a week we get together with our American friends to meditate and share our concerns and values. We have been reading Gandhi quite intensely in the last couple months. We are fascinated by him but are not convinced that his solution is the right one for Chile. On the long run, I do not see any other valid philosophical and spiritual orientation one could provide the world with. However, as I was telling our American friends, only he who has the courage to permanently embrace the fate, the economic conditions and the repression which the poor are facing, has the moral right to preach them the doctrine of non-violence. He who lacks this courage should remain silent, or should collaborate with, or at the very least not hinder their plans to resist with violence. In other words, it is not the

theory of non-violence itself that creates a problem for us, but rather the extremely heroic attitude it logically entails.

Between the Jesus of the Gospel and Gandhi we can see considerable resemblance. Between the Chilean Episcopal Conference with its seemingly endless ambiguity and diplomacy and this Jesus, we do not see any at all.



Photo by Christian Montecino *Chile From Within*
People arrested after trying to enter the embassy of Argentina 1973

If we're staying in Chile, it's because we feel, since the September 11th coup, a certain responsibility. It's also due to the fact that despite our very strong temptation to return to Quebec immediately, we feel that staying our full two years will allow us to grow much more intellectually. (...)

Anyway, that's where we now are... Lately I've been attending lectures in economics at ILADES and I'm reading Marx. The books on Marx I got from the basement at ILADES; there are heaping piles of books in a total disorder! The Jesuits accepted to hide as many of the books of the CEREN library as they could because they knew the military would probably burn all of them. The courses in economics are, I'm sure, the exact replica of any similar course I would take in the States or Canada. Reading Marx in this particular Chilean context turns me on. I'm searching...

Wynanne and I have developed a dream lately. We are toying with the idea of setting up a small commune based on the desire to carry out research on development issues. This research effort would not be

mainly theoretical. We would live together, a certain number of individuals and couples, and help one another discover a concrete life style in conformity with our global analysis of major development issues and congruent with values such as simplicity, authenticity, peace, joy and mutual understanding. Exactly how such a commune would be connected to the world around us is not yet clear to us. But we believe that thinking out in very realistic and concrete terms this insertion is of utmost importance. Of course, we immediately thought of you two. We do not believe that our friends in Rouyn would be up to that kind of thing, at least, not as of yet. In any case, we're throwing this idea at you: give us your reactions. (...)

Before ending this letter, a few words about the general situation right now. The big news these days is that tension has developed between the Church and the Junta. In his homily on Holy Saturday, Cardinal Henríquez has partially put an end to his silence. Besides formulating a criticism that was obviously aimed at the repression exercised by the Junta, he made an astonishing announcement: he said his own life was being threatened. The next day, the Junta recognized this as true, but expressed the opinion that the threat was forthcoming from sectors of the left. This, to say the least, is very far-fetched. In any case, the military have provided the Cardinal with police protection. Today, in fact this very afternoon, the Chilean bishops have made a public declaration in which they declare some solidarity with the workers but at the same time mention that the Junta is 'well-intentioned'. Can you see that in an ethics book: those who massively torture and who have been killing by the thousands and implementing an economic policy of extreme harshness for the have-nots are 'well-intentioned'? What would it be like if they weren't??

Radio-Balmaceda, the Christian Democratic radio station, has just stopped being on the air for a period of six days. This cannot but indicate growing tension between the Christian Democrats and those more on the right. Besides still more repression and economic hardship, the future is hard to predict.

Pinochet has announced this week that some 14,000 Chilean 'extremists' were preparing to attack Chile from Argentina. This is obviously another bit of propaganda in the psychological war now hitting the population. It renders the harsh suspension of civil liberties, the state of war, the numerous raids in the poblaciones more digestible.

Wynanne says Hi.... In solidarity, Ovide

Diary: June 1 (Reflection on Violence and Non-violence)

Should one refuse all violence or only certain types of violence? Should one refuse all forms of violence immediately, even at the risk of facing an immediate death or should one accept, temporarily, forms of violence perceived as necessary to bring about the elimination of mechanisms and social institutions which oppress and smash the many? Should one follow the thinking of the Chilean Bishops who accused the 'Christians for Socialism'³² of having gone astray in their Catholic faith by reading Chilean history within the artificial and totally unfounded intellectual framework of 'class struggle'? Should one argue, as the Bishops do, that the so blatantly obvious oppression of the Chilean masses does not in any way originate from the concrete behavior and actions of certain Chileans and American business firms with very specific names? Should one use the labor of the peasants and workers to build, under the supervision of Bishops, beautiful temples such as the huge and luxurious Maipu Church which we recently visited, temples from which the representatives of Christ on earth will put the consciences of workers to sleep, temples in which ideas, directly emanating from the wisdom of God but somehow always comfortable with the status quo, will be preached?

The Chileans who are now being subjected to torture — in their bodies but more importantly through the implementation of economic laws considered so 'scientific' as to transcend all moral considerations — are totally alone. In our world, they are alone, without support, voiceless, without truth and dignity. (...)

Last week, there was a big controversy over a Peace Committee report leaked to a Mexican daily, El Excelsior. According to this report, systematic human rights abuses are occurring in Chile: massive detentions, torture, thousands of deaths. The Chilean dailies categorically accused the Peace Committee of inventing stories. A

³² This movement, more recently called *Liberation Theology*, originated in Latin America in the late 1960s. It argues that the Catholic Church has all too often sided with the dominant and oppressive forces in society, a trend that constitutes a departure from what the real historical Jesus Christ was all about. Jesus, it claims, questioned the powerful of his time and as a result died on the cross. So did the early Christians, and they were therefore tortured, persecuted and forced to live in the underground. Christians in Latin America - priests, nuns and laymen - who side with the poor and marginalized masses in their struggles against the mechanisms of oppression are often tortured and murdered and sometimes have to live in the underground. In the meantime, the leaders of the Church practice a "real-politik" and constantly make compromises with the powerful, compromises that allow the maintenance of the status quo.

couple of days later, an ordinary worker knocked on the door of the Peace Committee. He walked in and said: "I read the articles in the newspapers about the report. What you say in this report is the truth. I am one of those who have been detained and tortured. I know coming here is very dangerous now but I have thought about it and am ready to go public on this. I am ready to face the consequences: the truth must be known."

In the shantytown where Maria Denise — a missionary nun from Quebec — lives, Violeta Para, garbage trucks used to go by once a week before the coup. They no longer come at all. Before the coup, twelve buses were available for commuting; now there are only eight, and traveling is a real nightmare.

Letter: June 9 (Third Degree Malnutrition, Neoliberal Economic Plan)

*Dear Jacques,*³³

I hope this letter finds you somewhere, if not in Hull at least somewhere in Latin America. Are you coming to see us in this neck of the woods? (...)

Wynanne is now pregnant! If our calculations are exact, it should be a Christmas baby. She is often sick these days but always very happy. She sleeps, sleeps and sleeps: some 12 to 13 hours per day. Besides taking care of her I am assuming full responsibility for all household chores: shopping, cooking, washing clothes — quite a task when all is done by hand! (...)

A friend who works in a medical clinic in Santiago told us three days ago that they are now treating some people who are suffering from third degree malnutrition. Prices of essential foodstuffs have skyrocketed: cooking oil, for example, has gone from 60 escudos per kilo (July 73) to 1,140.... And the harder winter months are only starting. It is clear that the military want to reinforce the role of private enterprise at all levels: in teaching — according to an official document of the Junta all universities will be totally self-financing by 1976 —, in health — presently some 90% of all hospitals are publicly owned: the plan is to make all of them private —, in industry — enterprises that the Popular Unity had nationalized are being returned to the private sector, tariffs and trade barriers are being removed to expose Chilean firms to the rigor of foreign competition,

³³ Jacques Meunier, a colleague in the Cégep de Rouyn-Noranda

foreign investment is more than welcome —. Even the affairs of the nation have been turned over to private initiative — the September 11th coup.

Today it was blooming cold and incredibly humid. Yesterday, heaps of rain.

As you may have noticed, my emotions in this letter have calmed down considerably since the last one. I believe that this change is less a reflection of a change in the situation itself but rather one in my own self: somehow, one just learns to cope.

I hope you have by now finished your thesis and are slowly heading our way.

Our greetings to Marie, Wynanne, Ovide and 1/3...

Diary: June 12 (Meaning of History, Difficulty of Interpreting Events)

This morning I attended a course in political science at ILADES. The teacher was Eduardo Palma. Initially announced as a political and socioeconomic analysis of Latin America, the course has suddenly been transformed, without explanation, to one single theme: the importance and influence of Diego Portales in the history of Chile. A very strange coincidence, since the great hero of the military Junta happens to be none other than Diego Portales!

At the beginning of his course, M. Palma briefly discussed various conceptions of history. Should one, he asked, give priority to what the social actors themselves say or should one dig deeper and attempt to uncover other hidden motives and interpretations? His own preference: the first method that relies primarily on the social actors' own awareness.

But what exactly is history? Is it the mere assembling of facts and events? Obviously not, for the mere juxtaposition of facts does not provide meaning, and history would then be reduced to mere tape-recording. An ideological framework is necessary if only to help one decide, among the ocean of existing facts and events, which ones to choose and which ones to set aside, which are important and which are not.

Is history the examination of great events as selected and interpreted by the social actors involved in these events? Should one give priority

to these events and interpretations or should one also consider other events and especially other possible interpretations?

If one emphasizes the unconscious motives, does this boil down to denying the existence of human freedom? Does it mean determinism pure and simple? I think not. In fact, I wonder if he who emphasizes the unconscious forces does not actually accord greater value to human freedom.

What do unconscious forces mean? Are they not a form of ignorance, some unknown? What does it mean to be aware? Does it not mean a form of knowledge? In day-to-day life, both ignorance and knowledge constantly evolve, they are not static phenomena. The very life of the human mind represents a history of never-ending discoveries: what is unknown becomes known, what is known superficially becomes known in depth.

Is it not possible to live as an individual or even as a community in a sort of false awareness? Is it not possible as an individual or a community to be mistaken about the causes of a situation? In other words, to experience a form of alienation?

Let us assume that great multitudes of people are living in considerable ignorance concerning many important issues in their lives. Let us further assume that a historian decides to study these people only from the angle of the interpretation that they themselves attribute to events. Would this not lead to a dead end? Would he really gain an understanding of these people?

It is quite possible for someone to develop a false interpretation, to live in a state of alienation. I may believe that I understand my behavior but in fact be dead wrong. I may be very convinced that I know why something is happening to me and yet be mistaken. If I am starving or malnourished or do not have a job, I may think that God is punishing me and that I am responsible for what is happening. I may have listened to a priest, a bishop or the Pope and I take their interpretation of what is happening as solid rock. I may think that my boss is a great guy even as he makes me toil 75 to 80 hours a week for peanuts. I may believe the Chilean bishop when he claims that Chileans all belong to one big, happy, united family and that the history of Chile is truly a reflection of love and deep humanism. I may even believe that he who is in the throes of smashing the smithereens out of me, of suddenly depriving me of popular organizations that required years of struggles to develop, of making my salary drop

drastically, is my brother and loves me and deserves my “total and disinterested collaboration”. (...)

Does not the military Junta have as much right to declare its infallibility as the Pope does? After all, it is hard to run an empire without some form of inquisition. Without torture and repression. Without excommunication. Without censorship and truth, a truth that is absolute and crystal clear. Without a deep faith in Divine Authority. Without celebrations emphasizing the real meaning of history.

Letter by Wynanne: June 17 (Chile Now Run by Fear...)³⁴:

Dear Léo,

(...) Living in a military state gives you a whole new pair of glasses. During curfew every night the air becomes pure in Santiago and there is a strange quietness that renders the sound of jeeps and gunshots even more frightening. The unknown is scary: in the daytime, one notices small details — secret police standing on the corner of some streets, a father who obviously lives underground meeting his son in a large downtown crowd — a quick hug, a few words of warmth — or meeting his wife and children in a public park after a long separation.

What can one do? At ILADES where we are attending courses we must swallow silently analyses that only reflect one single point of view. Ovide and I dare ask a few questions — perhaps at the risk of being thrown out of the country — but no one else dares say a word. Chile is now run by fear...something that is very powerful. In many Chileans now there is no longer any feeling of revolt, just pure resignation before a situation of brutal economic and military repression. A resignation that naturally leads to the loss of one’s human dignity. A real tragedy... (...)

Ovide finds your gray hair so attractive that he has decided to follow your example! Such is life... and it’s now your anniversary. Hope you’re all the wiser for it.

Happy Birthday! Love,... Us

Diary: July 6 (Is It Wrong to Incite People to Fight Against Others?)

Is it right or wrong to encourage one group or class of people to start struggling against another?

³⁴ Léo Dénommé, a very old friend of mine, was then an Oblate priest. He was the Pastor of the Oblate parish in Maniwaki, Quebec.

The great majority of Chilean bishops answer a clear no to this question. Why? Because we all have, they say, the same Divine Father who has sent us his Son who died on a cross so that the sins of all men and women shall be forgiven. It is not Christian, they say, to fight against your brother or sister.

It all depends. One must, I believe, distinguish two things. If Marxism means fighting against people, encouraging some to hate these people, then I agree with the bishops. It is not Christian to foster hatred. However, if Marxism means allowing men and women who are alienated in their mind and body, who have learned to accept as their own a way of life which maintains them in a servile and subordinate role; if it means teaching them to stand up, to develop awareness, to perceive the economic, political and social structures which maintain them in their sub-human state, and to undertake an organized struggle to alter this state of things, then I do not share the views of the Chilean bishops. Even though this struggle may be directed against those who try with all their might to maintain the status quo.

In this latter sense, I believe it is of utmost importance to encourage those Chileans who are treated as underdogs to stand up to those they have learned to consider as their superiors and masters and to say: Basta, enough! They must learn to despise a newspaper like El Mercurio which at the same time that it values so highly God and the Virgin Mary, sticks the dagger of torture, psychological, economic and physical, in their backs.

Back in Montreal (Publishing Book and Touring Quebec)

At the end of July 1974 I received a telegram from Dominique, my friend in Montreal, who had been sending my manuscript on the Chilean Church to different publishers. The telegram was short:

Come home immediately. Book will be published September 5th by Éditions du Jour. Refuse to use a pseudonym: consider your life would still be in danger.

My strategy to stay in Chile one more year was down the drain!

In a telephone conversation with Dominique the next day I learned that I would have to write another chapter explaining what happened between the Church and the military Junta from February, the time I finished the manuscript, until August. Since September represented the anniversary of the coup d'état, the date, it was felt, was very

important. But how could I get out of Chile so fast? The usual procedure requires at least three weeks...

When I found the appropriate place to go to ask permission to leave Chile immediately, I told the military officer who was sitting at the desk that my aging father had just passed away. He seemed to be moved and actually offered me his condolences. In the meantime, Wynanne was phoning the Canadian Ambassador, Andrew Ross, and asking for his collaboration. As Mr. Ross had tried to persuade us much earlier to leave Chile, we knew that he would be only too willing to help.

Thanks to Ambassador Ross's collaboration, the very next day, I was on the plane for Montreal. It was agreed that Wynanne would stay one week more to take care of our meager belongings, pack up, etc. I was only able to say good-bye to a couple of very close friends. I had to leave in a hurry, like so many thousands of Chileans had done in the preceding months, but in dramatic circumstances.

One week after I arrived in Canada, Wynanne also arrived, as planned, in the Montreal airport. When I greeted her, she was as white as a sheet. In fact, she fainted in my arms. She was in her fifth month of pregnancy and the stress had been unbearable.

The following days were very hectic. I had to concentrate on a project that I had abandoned for several months — writing on the Chilean Church — and there was only one week left for the final chapter to be handed in. The fact that I was also experiencing a deep culture shock did not help. Without the immense editorial help of Dominique, who worked long hours with me and actually sat up all night writing the final version of the chapter non-stop for twelve hours, I would not have been able to meet the deadline.

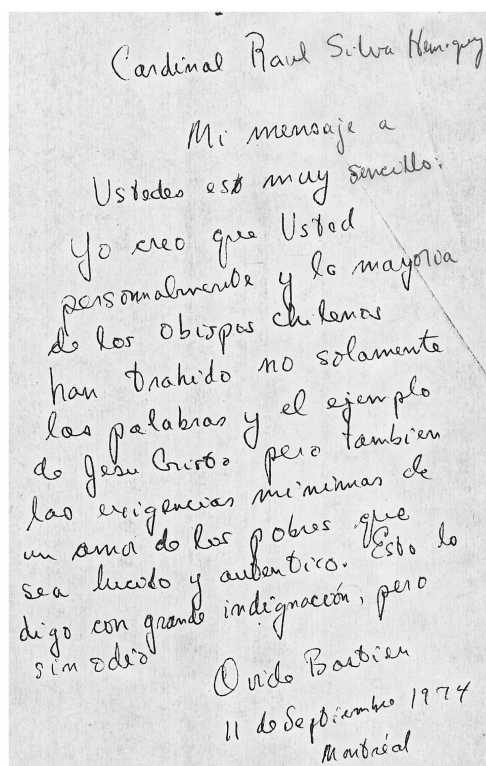
On September 4th, exactly one year after the very impressive demonstration in Chile commemorating the third anniversary of the electoral victory of the Popular Unity government, I wrote the following in my diary:

The Chilean resistance is starting to rebuild its morale and to organize. Carrying out actions of violence directed at those who are organizing the systematic and brutal repression of the Chilean masses is not the top priority at this moment. The urgent task is merely learning to live and to function in the underground. The second priority is slowly getting out of a state of shock and disarray. Developing an understanding of the meaning and origin of what is

happening, an understanding without which it is impossible to react, and, eventually to revolt. No one envisions a short struggle. The most probable time frame appears five, ten or even fifteen years.

On September 5th, Jacques Hébert, who was then the Director of Éditions du Jour — he later became Senator and founded Canada World Youth —, organized the book launching. Even though I was disappointed that my book, *Chili: le coup divin*, had not been published several months before when it could have made more of a difference, I experienced a deep satisfaction. The very deep internal revolt that had been building up for several months in Chile was finding an outlet...

On the first anniversary of the coup my book, “Chili: le coup divin” (Chile: the Divine Coup) was published. On the same day, I mailed my book to Cardinal Raul Silva Henríquez, the leader of the Catholic Church in Chile. Inside the front cover, I wrote the following letter to him:



Cardinal Raul Silva Henríquez

Mr. message a
Ustedes es muy sencillo:
Yo creo que Usted
personalmente y la mayoría
de los obispos chilenos
han trahido no solamente
las palabras y el ejemplo
de Jesu Cristo pero tambien
las exigencias minimas de
un ama de los pobres que
sea lucido y autentico. Esto lo
digo con grande indignación, pero
sin odio

Ovidio Barbieri
11 de Septiembre 1974
Montreal

English version of my letter: *My message to you is very simple. I believe that you and the majority of Chilean Bishops have betrayed not only the words and example of Jesus Christ but also the minimal requirements of a love of the poor that is lucid and authentic. I am saying this with great indignation but without hate.*³⁵

Thanks to SUCO and Éditions du Jour, I spent several weeks—from September 3rd until October 30th—touring Quebec, New Brunswick and the Ottawa region. The idea was to promote my book and to talk about the situation in Chile. I gave talks on a nearly daily basis, met with reporters from ten different newspapers, spoke on radio and TV shows and attended solidarity meetings. Several articles appeared in the newspapers on my book and on my testimonials. To experience first-hand the intense ongoing mobilization concerning Chile was very moving and comforting.

Some time before Christmas I received the visit of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). They knocked on our Montreal apartment door, identified themselves, and said they were looking for an Antoine Bastien who, according to their knowledge, wanted to join the RCMP. Somewhat taken aback, we told them there was no one of that name living at our place, nor, for that matter, in the entire apartment building. They excused themselves and left.

In the coming days, we discovered that some of our friends who had been in Chile with us had also received strange visits from the RCMP. We did not know exactly what to make of all this. Most likely, we felt, they merely wanted to intimidate us and to make sure we knew they were on our trail.

For several years I maintained very close links with the Chilean resistance. Every month, a small meeting was held at our place; we discussed the ongoing situation in Chile with a dozen or so friends, and funneled money to the resistance.³⁶ This continued until the late 1970s, at which time we started concentrating more on the ongoing

³⁵ It is important to note that Cardinal Henriquez did eventually distance himself from the Pinochet dictatorship and demonstrated such courage in defending the voiceless and persecuted that he is considered a national hero. On 11 December 1978 he received the United Nations Human Rights Award and on 19 October 1979 the Bruno-Kreisky Human Rights Award.

³⁶ In his book, “Les Chiliens au Québec. Immigrants et réfugiés de 1955 à nos jours” (Montréal, Boréal, 2009), José Del Pozo notes that the Chilean ambassador in Canada at the time made a formal complaint to the government of Canada about the fact that in my book launching press conference I stated that all profits from the sales would be sent to the Chilean resistance.

struggle in El Salvador that seemed strategically more important. With the outbreak of the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979, we started collaborating with the Nicaragua Solidarity Committee.

As revolutionary changes were taking hold of Central America, the United States developed a strategy very similar to the one it had successfully implemented in Chile in the early 1960s and early 1970s. On the one hand it backed political forces promising to reform capitalism, on the other it collaborated with those sectors, primarily the military, most capable of actively repressing the revolutionary forces. At once reform and counterinsurgency...



Photo SQAL

**One of the many demonstrations in Montreal
following the military takeover in Chile**