For the Right to Disagree: APSI and Opposition Journalism under Pinochet

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Brad T. Eidahl
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This thesis titled
For the Right to Disagree: APSI and the Opposition Press under Pinochet

by

BRAD T. EIDAHL

has been approved for
the Department of History
and the College of Arts and Sciences by

Patrick Barr-Melej
Associate Professor of History

Howard Dewald
Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
ABSTRACT

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For the Right to Disagree: APSI and the Opposition Press under Pinochet

Director of Thesis: Patrick Barr-Melej

“For the Right to Disagree” examines the role opposition journalism played under the Pinochet dictatorship from 1973-1989. The thesis specifically focuses on the magazine APSI founded in 1976. Pinochet’s power experienced ebbs and flows dependent upon the successes of his neoliberal economic and legal-institutional projects. When the regime’s position was strong it allowed a greater opening in Chilean society, which opposition journalists exploited at great personal risk to publish stories criticizing the government. When Pinochet’s projects failed or encountered opposition, the regime then cracked down on society and the opposition press, often banning opposition publications completely. Despite the repression, APSI managed to become an important opposition magazine and played an important role in the “No” campaign leading up to the 1988 plebiscite on Pinochet’s rule.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Patrick Barr-Melej

Associate Professor of History
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INTRODUCTION

Less than twenty days before the 1988 plebiscite on his rule, a forlorn General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, military dictator of Chile, sat at a red table covered in tarot cards. The general wore a blue wizard robe and hat speckled with stars and moons. Imprinted with words like “no,” “stop,” and “goodbye” his fortune telling cards seemed to be predicting a grim result for him. His only company, a crystal ball showing a thumbs down and an owl perched menacingly over his left shoulder wearing a “No” campaign pin, also seemed to be predicting his loss in the upcoming plebiscite.1 Such was a cartoon on the front cover of a September, 1988 edition of the opposition magazine Information Agency on International Affairs, known to many only as APSI.2 Director Marcelo Contreras Nieto made a brave editorial decision to put the cartoon on the cover considering that, one year earlier, the government arrested him for defamation of Pinochet’s image. Since it began publishing in 1976, the magazine had been shut down by the government five times. A publication that started out as an eight-page newsletter, APSI became one of Chile’s most widely read magazines and provided both information and humor to those who opposed the Pinochet dictatorship. APSI utilized cartoon images like the one described above to make Pinochet appear foolish and show how ridiculous his policies were as part of a broader effort to oppose his regime and bring about a victory for “No.”

On October 5, 1988, when the government announced the “No” vote had won the plebiscite, APSI’s contributors and staff celebrated along with the masses of people in the

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2 APSI in Spanish abbreviates Agencia Publicaria Servicios Informativos.
streets. One U.S. State Department official described the celebrants in Santiago as “a
crowd of tens of thousands,” which was “noisy, but well behaved.”3 For its part, APSI
described people climbing onto statues and waving flags, as well as yelling, playing
trumpets, and jumping around in joy.4 These celebrations did not mark the end of
Pinochet’s time in power; as per the Constitution of 1980, he would remain as president
until elections could be held, and Pinochet did not officially leave office until 1990.
However, Pinochet’s use of violent coercion and press censorship to silence the
opposition had ended.

Seventeen years earlier, Pinochet and leaders of the other branches of Chile’s
military came to power in a coup that toppled the government of Socialist President
Salvador Allende Gossens.5 Pinochet became the first head of the governing junta, in
what was supposed to be a rotating position. He never relinquished his position;
eventually he used a new constitution to officially name himself President of Chile.

During his regime, Pinochet committed human rights violations on a scale unprecedented
in Chilean history, with the military killing nearly three thousand Chilean citizens and
subjecting thousands more to detention and torture in an effort to suppress opposition and
destroy parties and unions. Pinochet also used nonviolent means to silence its foes. The
regime immediately set up a censorship apparatus that would control the press for the

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5 For more information about Salvador Allende and his downfall see: Ricardo Israel Zipper, Politics and
Ideology in Allende’s Chile, (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1989) ; Nathaniel Davis, The Last Two
Years of Salvador Allende, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) ; Margaret Power, Right-wing Women
in Chile: Feminine Power and the Struggle Against Allende, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State
University Press, 2002) ; Peter Winn, Weavers of Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile’s Road to
Socialism, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) ;
remainder of Pinochet’s regime, breaking with Chile’s tradition of a free and pluralistic press under one of Latin America’s most stable democracies.

*APSI* and the Opposition Press Under Pinochet

This thesis examines opposition journalism under the Pinochet regime, with specific focus on the magazine *APSI* as a case study for how opposition journalism adapted to the junta’s restrictions and succeeded despite them. *APSI* was the first opposition magazine to begin publishing under the dictatorship. It had its roots in one of the first human rights based opposition groups to the military government, and its staff was for the most part young, intelligent, and represented all of the political parties that would eventually make up the Concertación, the coalition of left and center parties that won major electoral victories following the return to democracy.⁶ John Dinges, an American journalist and founding member of *APSI* recalled, “We weren’t your normal run of the mill journalists that you would have at other publications.”⁷ The quality of *APSI*’s staff made it exceptional even among opposition publications, and many former *APSI* employees have gone on to hold major positions within the Concertación governments.

*APSI* suffered the same restrictions as other opposition publications. Under Pinochet, journalists had their freedoms of speech and press restricted, and the regime


⁷ John Dinges, phone interview by author, May 4, 2011.
required all new publications to get permission to publish. Once approved, a publication would go through an initial stage where the regime employed a policy of prior censorship; a publication would have to submit a draft to the censorship office and have it approved before it could be published. Later, the regime relied on auto-censorship (or self-censorship) to control content. Under auto-censorship, editors censored their own papers because they risked fines and imprisonment for printing information the regime deemed slanderous or inflammatory. The regime itself decided what stories were slanderous and inflammatory and this could range from accusing the regime of human rights violations to printing unfavorable information about the military or Pinochet.

The regime did not stringently enforce its press laws at all times. For example, APSI illegally published national news stories for three years before the government shut it down in 1981. There was no appreciable difference in the content of their stories since 1980, but rather in the perceived security of the regime’s position in Chilean society. The economy, which had been booming in 1980, began to show signs of collapse in 1981 and a populace that had passed a new constitution making Pinochet the president was protesting him in the streets. 8 It appeared as if the regime no longer thought its position secure enough to allow an opposition press like APSI to operate and thus exercised censorship laws to shut it down.

Examining Pinochet’s repression of the opposition press, in addition to the well-studied coercive violent repression of the opposition, reveals that often the two experienced similar ebbs and flows in intensity. When the ebbs and flows in repression  

8 The results of the 1980 plebiscite were contested with stories of electoral fraud. Even members of the junta later agreed there was no way to know if they had been fair and honest.
are compared to the macroeconomic landscape and to the legal-institutional position of the regime, a clear pattern emerges. When the regime’s economic and legal-institutional position was weak, it maintained control through repressive measures. When its position was stronger, it allowed more open opposition. Even though the government allowed more open opposition in these periods, it still maintained mechanisms of control through enforcement of the law and the threat of penalties leading to self-censorship.

*APSI* navigated these ebbs and flows and played a critical role in the “No” campaign leading up to the 1988 plebiscite. During ebbs in repression, *APSI* pushed the boundaries of acceptable themes and challenged restrictions on the freedom of the press. When repression increased and the regime closed *APSI* it rarely lost ground. Upon reopening the magazine would continue from where it had left off and push the boundaries still further. Arturo Navarro, founding member and first director of *APSI*, described its strategy as working in the framework provided by the dictatorship, while simultaneously working outside of it to oppose the regime. The opposition needed to do everything it could, short of violence.\(^9\) *APSI* first worked within the framework of the regime by covering only international news, but used it to criticize Pinochet by covering stories that evoked the Chilean situation. It worked outside of the boundaries set for them by publishing national news without permission. Eventually, *APSI* began to use humor to make Pinochet seem ridiculous and unfit to lead. Opposition leaders used *APSI* to get their message out at a time when the regime restricted their ability to hold public gatherings and mainstream media outlets like *El Mercurio* would not cover them. As the

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plebiscite of 1988 approached, APSI staff used the magazine as a vehicle to remind people of the crimes of the Pinochet regime and advertise in favor of a “No” vote.

Much of the scholarship on the Pinochet dictatorship focuses on the regime’s violent repression of the opposition through disappearance, torture, and murder. Even more general studies of the dictatorship done by political scientists Carlos Huneeus and Genaro Arriagada spend only a small amount of time on the press and press censorship, and instead emphasize Pinochet’s violent repression. The regime’s violent actions made up a large part of its repressive policies. They were terrible and must be chronicled and explained, but by not including the mostly non-violent repression of the opposition press these studies overlook a key aspect of Pinochet’s control. This study will examine how press censorship contributed to Pinochet’s control. Meanwhile, studies that examine journalism under the regime often treat it in a vacuum, divorced from its historical context. Guillermo Sunkel’s work focuses primarily on Chile’s largest and oldest newspaper *El Mercurio*. Sunkel analyses the content of the articles both before and after the September 11, 1973 military coup. The conservative paper focused on opposition to Allende before the coup, but afterward became an educational mouthpiece for the regime by explaining the government’s economic and political policies. However, Sunkel’s

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discussion largely ignores the rest of the press and paints the two governments with very broad strokes.\textsuperscript{12} Luis Torres looks at the opposition press under the dictatorship, but his study focuses on the type of analyses offered by various publications and not how they fit into a broader context. He categorized APSI, for example, as “political with culture,” meaning that APSI’s stories focused primarily on politics and culture. Although not wrong this categorization does not delve into why that would make APSI an opposition publication.\textsuperscript{13} Francisca Araya Jofré’s work on APSI describes only what happened to the magazine during the dictatorship and does not connect it to its historical context until after the dictatorship had ended.\textsuperscript{14} One exception to these studies is a recent work by six young Chilean journalists, \textit{El Diario de Agustín: Cinco Estudios de Casos sobre El Mercurio y los Derechos Humanos (1973-1990)}, which shows \textit{El Mercurio} not as a newspaper just publishing stories, but as an active participant in Chilean political life. The study pays close attention to the effect of the Pinochet regime on the paper.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{The History of Chilean Press}

The history of the Chilean press closely follows the country’s political history. Chile’s first newspaper, \textit{La Aurora de Chile}, began printing shortly after Chile began its

\textsuperscript{12} Guillermo Sunkel, \textit{El Mercurio: 10 años de Educación Política.} (Mexico City: Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Transnacional, 1983).
\textsuperscript{14} Francisca Araya Jofré, \textit{Historia de la Revista APSI: El que se Ríe se Va al Cuartel (Pico Para Pinochet)}, (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2007).
struggle for independence from Spain. Throughout the nineteenth century, Chile’s elites governed in an oligarchic system, and were the readership of newspapers and print books, because they made up the majority of the literate population. The newspapers of that time period, such as *El Mercurio* and *El Ferrocarril*, understandably represented the viewpoints of their elite conservative readership. During the twentieth century, the growth of the Chilean middle class, the expansion of literacy, and increasingly organized groups of laborers led to a proliferation of newspapers and presses which represented the political Left and Center. Newspapers like the leftist *El Despertar* and the centrist *Ley* became popular as the middle class took over the profession of journalism. Likewise the expansion of politics to the masses created a large number of parties representing the spectrum of political sensibilities. Although *El Mercurio* continued to be the most widely read and respected example of Chilean journalism, the involvement of political parties from disparate social groups in the Chilean press ensured its heterogeneous nature. Every political party was either directly or ideologically linked to a news outlet. By the middle of the twentieth century, political parties played a large role in the daily life of Chileans. Political parties were important to one’s identity; Liberals went to Liberal beaches and vacation spots whereas Conservatives attended Conservative beaches and vacation spots. By extension, people mainly read newspapers and magazines that conformed to their political ideology. Chile’s history of a politically heterogeneous press ended on

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16 The printing press used to print *La Aurora de Chile* can now be found in the basement of Chile’s National Library next to a computer terminal in the microform room.
17 *El Mercurio* began publishing in the port city of Valparaiso in the 1820s, but opened up their more widely read Santiago branch in 1900.
September 11, 1973. The coup ended political polarization by ending the politics that had caused it. It also homogenized Chile’s press through intimidation and censorship. When they appeared, people opposed to the dictatorship turned to publications like APSI, which represented no specific political view point and had readership among the political left and center.

**Opposition Journalism in Pinochet’s Chile**

Pinochet’s treatment of the opposition press depended greatly on his government’s stability, which experienced three major stages in its economic and legal-institutional position between 1973 and 1988. The first of these began on September 11, 1973 with the military coup against the Allende government. Chapter One examines the first stage from the coup until the end of 1976. The regime’s most tenuous position coincided with its most repressive. During these three years, the Pinochet regime exercised near complete control over the press and society. Part of the motivation for the coup was the dire economic situation created by a combination of Allende’s economic policies and economic pressure from the United States. The military committed the coup without a clear plan to fix the economy, which continued to flounder during this period. It also needed to rely upon a constant state of siege for its legal-institutional ability to control the country as per the Constitution of 1925. The insecurity caused by its weak position led the regime to treat even ecclesiastical human rights organizations as dangerous subversives. Despite this pressure, APSI emerged at the end of 1976 due to
circumstances surrounding the closure of the most prominent human rights organization in Chile.

In 1977, a fundamental shift occurred in the regime’s treatment of the opposition. Its economic policies produced a four-year period of growth that became known as Chile’s first “economic miracle.” It also articulated a path for a return to civilian rule that Pinochet more clearly set out in the Constitution of 1980. Following the passing of the Constitution of 1980, the regime’s legal-institutional position stood on the firmest ground it had since the coup. From 1977 to 1982, both the violent repression of the opposition and censorship of opposition press decreased dramatically. The decrease in repression did not represent a decrease in actual opposition. Magazines like APSI, which existed to criticize the regime and were not cowed into self-censorship, began to criticize the government’s policies explicitly, and former President Eduardo Frei Montalva publicly spoke out against the regime. These circumstances are detailed in Chapter Two.

Chile’s economy collapsed in 1982, and protestors demonstrated in the streets against Pinochet’s rule. In response, Pinochet banned all opposition press and increased the use of violent repression. Chapter Three focuses on the years between 1983 and the 1988 plebiscite. After a change in economic policy, the regime relaxed its censorship and allowed greater space for opposition within Chilean society. However, it did not hesitate to crack down again and banned all opposition presses while increasing its levels of violence, whenever it perceived its position to be tenuous. The regime suppressed the

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opposition in times of instability as it had done previously, but the general trend of opening society led to the opposition’s ability to mount a successful campaign against Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite.

This thesis relies on secondary sources on the Pinochet regime to provide information on its functioning and actions. Interviews with two founding members of APSI, Arturo Navarro and John Dinges, who provided valuable inside information about APSI’s early days until 1983, and a thorough reading of APSI informs much of the second and third chapters. Archival research in both the Vicariate of Solidarity’s and Museum of Memory and Human Rights’ online archives provide more information about the regime’s actions and the situation in Chile. This study also draws on declassified U.S. government documents to understand the regime and the U.S. role in bringing it about. Chile’s journalists’ guild also released an invaluable list documenting most of Pinochet’s actions against the press, which this study uses.21

Once he gained power, Pinochet unleashed successive waves of repression against Chile’s population. The military government killed or expelled opposition political figures and aggressively censored the press to ensure that none of it was reported on. Pinochet’s harsh repression would not begin to ease until 1977. In 1973, the general who seized the opportunity of the coup to install himself as the leader of Chile seemed to be the complete opposite of APSI’s depiction of the superstitious general consulting a crystal ball. He had taken control of Chile and began to profoundly change its society.

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CHAPTER ONE: YEARS OF SILENCE, JOURNALISM IN CHILE 1973-1976

Every other Tuesday night, the staff of the Information Agency on International Affairs, better known as APSI, met to plan out the stories for the next edition. The fifteen to twenty people would gather at APSI’s office in the largest room and sit on tables, chairs, and beanbags. John Dinges described those meetings as having “the best and freest discussions that you could ever take part in.” They would have great conversations about human rights, the situation in Chile, and their lives. Dinges continued, “We were planning the issue, but we were also exercising freedom of expression. It was the only place where you could just let it all hang out and have a completely free discussion because we all trusted each other.” These planning meetings occurred in 1976, during the regime’s harshest period of repression. These meetings were the only moments the APSI staff “felt free.”

Chile’s worst repression took place between 1973 and 1976, as the regime endeavored to consolidate its power through legal-institutional and economic restructuring. In the absence of concrete successes in these areas, the junta relied on violent physical repression and censorship to control the opposition during this period. Despite the regime’s pressure on the opposition, APSI, the first opposition publication created under the dictatorship, appeared in 1976. In that year, as part of the government’s harsh treatment of the opposition, it forced an ecclesiastical human rights organization, the Committee for the Cooperation for Peace in Chile (COPACHI), to close down when some members assisted in the escape of some leftist guerillas. Journalists who had

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1 John Dinges, telephone interview with author, May 4, 2011.
worked for COPACHI formed *APSI* and began to use the freedom they found in their meetings to produce a magazine that cleverly criticized the regimes’ human-rights abuses and advocated a return to democracy. The regime’s strict control of the opposition, evident in its closure of COPACHI, resulted in the formation of *APSI*. Pinochet’s strict press policies were influenced by the strengths and weaknesses he perceived in the Allende government.

**Media under Allende**

From Allende’s election in 1970 until the end of the Pinochet dictatorship in 1990, the Chilean press suffered successive waves of repression. The Allende government and the Pinochet regime placed great value on controlling the press. Their policies toward the major publishers on both sides of the political spectrum broke away from the traditional acceptance of a wide variety of news sources. Allende’s press policies influenced Pinochet’s post-coup treatment of the press. The Allende government’s use of leftist presses, such as the national publishing company, Quimantú, provided Pinochet with a model to use for publications on the Right after the coup. On the other hand, right-wing political newspapers like *El Mercurio* published articles opposing almost all of Allende’s policies, a situation that Pinochet and the military junta wanted to avoid after the coup. Allende’s policies of withdrawing government advertising from right-wing papers failed to suppress them.

Allende benefited from a coalition of leftist parties, Popular Unity (UP), which gained increasing political power during the 1960s, culminating in his election to the
presidency in 1970. The left-wing press was critical in informing voters and rallying support to Popular Unity’s side. UP had at its disposal numerous newspapers, including the Communist Party’s *El Siglo*, the Socialist Party’s *Las Noticias de Ultima Hora*, and the unaffiliated paper *Clarín*. Despite the Left’s political success, at its zenith from 1960 until 1973, all of the left-wing papers combined only held at most a quarter of the market.\(^2\)

UP also utilized the socialist publisher Zig-Zag until 1970, when Allende nationalized it creating Quimantú. UP used Quimantú to try to affect a cultural change in support of Marxist-Leninist ideas as part of its “Chilean road to socialism”. Quimantú published six left-wing magazines, including the magazine *Onda*. It also published a collection of children’s stories in a series called CUNCUNA.\(^3\) Quimantú also created the series “Nosotros los chilenos” in an attempt to redefine culturally what it meant to be Chilean.\(^4\) “Nosotros los chilenos” focused on the concept of the people as critical to the nation and often included works written by authors strongly influenced by Marxist ideology. UP used it and other series to try to reach Chileans and expose them to UP ideology. In hopes of achieving this goal, Quimantú inundated the market with affordable books. During its run, the press published up to 800,000 copies of books and pamphlets per month, creating the need for completely revamped methods for

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\(^3\) The CUNCUNA collection contained classic and new Chilean children’s stories, which typically took place in the Chilean countryside and featured animals as their main characters.

\(^4\) Juan Cristóbal Marinello, “Quién es Chile: la visión de lo nacional en la colección “Nosotros los chilenos” de la Editora Nacional Quimantú,” in *Seminario Simon Collier 2007*, ed. Ana Maria Cruz Valdivieso (Santiago, Chile: LOM Ediciones, 2008), 10.
distribution, including the use of book buses and kiosks. The military coup on September 11, 1973 ended both the Popular Unity government and the Quimantú Press. The military regime forcibly closed or banned the remaining Leftist newspapers and magazines in short order.

After closing Quimantú, the Pinochet regime transformed it into its own publishing house, the National Publishing Company Gabriela Mistral. Following the example put forth by UP, Pinochet’s regime used the National Publishing Company to impose its cultural understanding of the Chilean nation. It began to publish a series called “La Nueva Serie de Nosotros los chilenos,” which ran from 1974 through 1975. “La Nueva Serie de Nosotros los chilenos” placed a greater emphasis on hard work and loyalty to one’s fatherland rather than one’s class. The continuation of “Nosostros los chilenos” and the closing of Leftist papers and presses demonstrated the importance the Pinochet regime placed on publications as a means to shape society.

The size of Quimantú made the hiring of a large number of workers. Arturo Navarro Ceardi, a journalism student at the Pontifical Catholic University and the future first director of APSI, worked as an editor for CUNCUNA. Navarro was born in the port city of Valparaiso and lived there until he entered the university in 1968. He graduated with his bachelor’s degree in sociology in 1972, and then decided to study journalism. Along with the other employees of Quimantú, he lost his job when the military closed it. Without a job, Navarro returned to his full-time studies in journalism.

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5 Ibid., 14.
6 Ibid., 18.
7 Arturo Navarro Ceardi, email interview by author, July 12, 2010.
The Right maintained a strong public presence and criticism of Allende during the UP government, by way of *La Segunda, Tribuna, Que Pasa,* and *El Mercurio,* among other outlets. These papers and magazines often printed inflammatory stories in an attempt to create fear that the UP government was destroying Chile. The respectable *El Mercurio* mentioned UP attacks on democracy 355 times during the parliamentary campaign of 1973. Another example from *Tribuna,* a far right paper run by Patria y Libertad, occurred during Fidel Castro’s 1971 visit to Chile. On November 4, *Tribuna’s* front cover featured a large picture of a man kneeling before a priest with a firing squad in the background. The subtitle read, “A priest gives the last rights to a Cuban sentenced to the firing squad by the sinister peoples’ tribunals created by Fidel Castro, guest of honor of the Popular Unity government. The Communists long for this system as a solution for Chile.” *Tribuna* used the connection to Castro to make the baseless claim that the UP government desired to create firing squads. These types of stories caused their readership to fear the government and heightened a sense of national crisis.

*El Mercurio* maintained its superficial disinterested tone while printing conservative criticism of UP and Allende’s policies. Guillermo Sunkel demonstrates, in his work *El Mercurio: 10 Años de Educacion Politico* that *El Mercurio*’s discourse centered on three themes during the UP government: government intervention in economics, stories important to the upper class, and assertions that only democratic

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economics resulted in a democratic political system.\textsuperscript{10} The newspaper and its subsidiaries had a daily circulation of over 300,000 throughout the UP years. The Allende government attempted to put financial pressure on *El Mercurio* by canceling all government advertisements on its pages. Its attempts failed in part due to the popularity and importance of *El Mercurio* in Chilean society and in part due to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency giving $1.5 million worth of aid to *El Mercurio* between 1971 and 1973.\textsuperscript{11} The CIA concluded that propaganda in *El Mercurio* and other rightist newspapers and magazines “played a significant role in setting the stage for the military coup of September 11, 1973.”\textsuperscript{12}

Pinochet reached the same conclusion as the CIA about the destabilizing effects of the opposition press. The junta’s actions toward the press immediately following the September 11 coup illuminated the importance they placed on controlling the media. On the day of the coup they restricted the freedom of the press. In the following years, decree laws strengthened the regime’s hold on the press and greatly limited any possibility for the development of an opposition press.

**The Height of Repression 1973-1976**

On September 11 1973, the armed forces of Chile issued two major edicts to control the press. The first, Edict 11, focused on restricting the leftist press and clarified


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
what the State of Siege meant for the press. It stipulated that only two papers, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, would be allowed to publish the following day, but promised to slowly authorize other publications. It also established the Office of Press Censorship and required the previously discussed papers to submit their editions prior to publication for censorship and approval. Edict 11 also cautioned all other publishers that if they printed without permission their papers would be requisitioned and destroyed.\textsuperscript{13} The second, Edict 12, warned that the publication of any information not approved by the military government would cause the military to immediately intervene in the offending company and would subject that company to criminal liability for its actions.\textsuperscript{14} With these two edicts, the junta established its control over the printed media in Chile.

Following the announcement of these edicts, the armed forces further cracked down on possible sources of opposition from within the press. On September 11 and 12 the regime closed four leftist newspapers including *Clarin, El Siglo*, and *Noticias de la Ultima Hora*. The armed forces and carabineros, Chile’s state police force, also raided and occupied the Quimantú building as well as the offices of *Clarin*.\textsuperscript{15} On September 15, as part of Decree Law 5, the junta made publishing subversive propaganda or attacks against the Supreme Government a crime tried by War Time Military Tribunals. The Tribunals would then apply corresponding penalties.\textsuperscript{16} The junta created Decree Law 5 using vague language to describe both the crimes and the punishment for those crimes.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[16] Ibid., 12.
\end{footnotes}
did this because it hoped that by not providing a concrete definition for crimes like publishing subversive propaganda attacks against the government, the press would censor itself for fear of crossing the ill-defined line. Many of the junta’s decree laws followed the same pattern. Before the end of 1973, the junta had shut down all major sources of possible opposition within the press. They also had a framework in place for future control of the press.

Journalists who had worked for leftist papers and presses found it difficult to obtain jobs with other papers during the early years of the dictatorship. Navarro was no exception. After a number of months, he obtained a position at a newspaper, but a classmate of his betrayed him as a former worker at Quimantú. He lost his job at that paper, but was able to find work with the Lord Cochrane Press. There he worked with the future author Isabel Allende publishing children’s stories until she left the country under pressure from the dictatorship. The government left him unemployed again. He would not find stable work again until he joined COPACHI in 1974.17

Throughout 1974 and 1975, the press remained subject to Decree Law 5. The military divided Chile into twelve occupation zones, each headed by a military governor. In 1975, those governors were given the power to suspend the printing and distribution of magazines, newspapers, or other publications for up to six editions or days if the information they were publishing would create alarm or disgust within the public.18 Later that year, Decree Law 1009 permitted the government to persecute journalists for political reasons. It also allowed them to suspend editions and confiscate printing

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17 Arturo Navarro Ceardi, email interview by author, July 12, 2010.
material preventatively and before trial.\(^{19}\) By 1974, the government had allowed most of the Chile’s non-leftist press to begin publishing again, but they were far from free.

**National Life under Pinochet**

A year after the coup, Pinochet commented to reporters that “freedom of the press in Chile has the same amplitude and the same limitations as other aspects of national life.”\(^{20}\) Although the major newspapers, like *El Mercurio*, no longer needed to submit to prior censorship, many still needed prior approval to publish. On top of restrictions on content, journalists, like other members of Chilean society, feared being taken captive and killed by the military. In 1974, the government detained and disappeared Diana Aron, former employee of Quimantú and the editor of the magazine *Onda*.\(^{21}\) The regime killed or disappeared a total of twenty-three journalists.\(^{22}\) According to the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, between the time of the coup on September 11 and December 31, 1973, government agents or persons working for them committed 493 “human rights violations that led to death or disappearance.”\(^{23}\) This number represents only those violations that took place in the Santiago metropolitan region. The total number of deaths or disappearances throughout Chile in the same time

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\(^{19}\) Ibid.


period was nearly 1,500. In the following years, between 1974 and 1976, 467 people disappeared or were killed throughout Chile. The regime did not kill everyone it arrested. It also tortured captives for information that could lead to a conviction or more arrests. During the dictatorship, the regime detained and tortured an estimated three hundred journalists.

In June 1974, Pinochet officially founded the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA), which carried out the majority of the detentions, disappearances, and torture. However, the organization had been secretly operating since 1973. When Pinochet created DINA, he gave it the task of accumulating intelligence to safeguard the national security of Chile. It also received the secret power to detain suspects and demand the collaboration of all public agencies. DINA set out to infiltrate leftist parties and eliminate Marxist leadership and thought from Chilean society. DINA spied, deceived, kidnapped, interrogated, and tortur ed.

DINA used fear to keep not only Chilean society, but other branches of the military in line as well. The junta granted it broad powers to request information from any other state organizations, to review government appointments, to establish a network of informants, and to control public records. The junta strategically placed DINA agents

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24 Genaro Arriagada, *Por La Razón o La Fuerza: Chile Bajo Pinochet*, (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Sudamericana Chilena, 1998), 23.
in the state rail and air agencies, the postal service, and the phone services. Their leader, Colonel Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, had been trained at Fort Benning, Georgia, as a counterinsurgency and security specialist. In theory, DINA was answerable to all branches of the military; in practice, however, it answered only to Pinochet and Contreras met with him daily over breakfast. DINA, whose symbol was an armored fist, provided the regime and Pinochet with control of possible sources of opposition. Its focus on leftist party members and their activities assured the junta that it had firm control of the nation.

The junta and DINA increased the pressure on the press in 1976. Although a group of journalists founded APSI in 1976, the junta did not enact any policies, which opened the press to its political opponents in that year. The government remained firmly in control of the media. Fredrick Willoughby, the Press Secretary, resigned his post in February of 1976, citing the 1975 Decree Law 1009 as the reason. Willoughby expressed his dissatisfaction with the law because it greatly restricted the freedom of the press in Chile and made it difficult for him to perform his duty as Press Secretary. In addition to Willoughby’s resignation, more journalists were arrested in 1976 than in any year since 1973. DINA detained Jaime Vargas, a journalist for La Tercera, without communication for three days. His crime was mentioning the word DINA in an evening edition dispatch. In July 1976, DINA targeted a number of Communist Party members

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29 Ibid., 78.  
involved in the printing trade. It detained Guillermo Galvez Rivadeneira, former president of the union at Quimantú, outside the offices of the Association of Journalists. The Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation found no further information about him.32

The Junta also created the National Social Communication Directorate (DINACOS). DINACOS took over the responsibilities of the Office of Press Censorship. All new papers needed to submit requests to DINACOS in order to begin publication. The military government also required all imported books and magazines to be approved by DINACOS first.33 This agency should have prevented the establishment of any opposition presses.

Political Repression

The regime used both violent and nonviolent repression of the opposition to maintain control of the population as it worked within a legal-institutional framework to establish itself as the legitimate government of Chile. Immediately following the coup, the junta declared a state of siege, because Chile’s constitution allowed the military to establish a legal dictatorship in a time of war.34 The state of siege lasted five years until the regime lifted it in 1978. Under the state of siege, the military limited the freedoms of the Chilean citizenry by restricting their access to government processes. The junta disbanded the National Congress with Edict 27. Later in September, the junta formed a

33 Baltra Montaner, Atentados a la Libertad de Información, 14.
constitutional committee to draft a new constitution for Chile. The new constitution would provide the regime with legal-institutional security and eliminate the need for a constant state of siege. On October 13, 1973, the military government dissolved and prohibited all political “parties, entities, groups, factions, or movements which uphold Marxist doctrine or which in their aims or the behavior of their adherents are substantially in agreement with the objectives of that doctrine.” The Junta also ordered that all property of those parties be transferred to the state. All of Chile’s leftist parties fell into this category, including the Radical Party, the Socialist Party, and the Communist Party. Four days later, the military government declared all political parties to be in recess and all their properties would be transferred to the state.

It quickly became evident the Left posed no threat to the regime or the nation. The regime needed to adjust its rhetoric in order to justify its continued control of the state. It found the answer in a far right critique of democracy. Some conservative groups decried the polarization and “politiqueria,” the word used by Chileans for political manipulation that went against the will of the majority. Jaime Guzman, one of Pinochet’s key civilian supporters, speech writers, and leader of the Gremialist movement, worked these themes into Pinochet’s speeches as early as October, 1973. A month after the coup, Pinochet delivered a speech in which he stated that the army had a responsibility to create a new constitution that would put an end to “the politiqueria, the sectarianism, and

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36 The Gremialistas were the main right-wing youth movement opposed to UP. After the coup they became the key civilian support group for Pinochet’s regime. For more information about the Gremialistas see: Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*; and Verónica Valdivia, Rolando Álvarez, and Julio Pinto, *Su Revolución Contra Nuestra Revolución: Izquierdas y Derechas en el Chile de Pinochet (1973-1981)*, (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2006).
the demagoguery of Chilean life.”

Although in this speech Pinochet expressed the need for a new political order, he did not define what that order would look like, but only that it would be achieved through a new constitution. Five months later on October 11, 1974 the junta announced that it would “set no endpoint for its government” and that the regime “had no intention of limiting itself to being a mere administration, a parenthesis between two similar, party based governments.” In neither of these speeches did Pinochet refer to the creation of a democracy. The only thing clear was that the regime wanted to create a new political system.

Pinochet’s anti-party rhetoric and laws also adversely affected the publishing industry in Chile and created the conditions which gave rise to APSI’s uncommon lack of affiliation. As previously noted, historically the press in Chile was linked ideologically with political parties. In fact, most parties ran their own newspaper or magazines. With all of their properties and funds confiscated, political parties could no longer financially support newspapers and magazines that represented their political viewpoints. In 1974, for example, the newspaper La Prensa, which represented the Christian Democratic point of view, folded due to “economic asphyxia.” The following year the National Party voluntarily closed its newspaper to support the regime’s ideology. Any new newspaper or magazine would have to overcome the problem of funding. Costs, including printing, distribution, and labor, effectively kept all but rich individuals or corporate entities from beginning a publication from scratch. These two groups generally supported the military government and were unlikely to create opposition publications.

37 Huneeus, The Pinochet Regime, 142.
38 Ibid.
39 Baltra Montaner, Atentados a la Libertad de información. 13.
Due to the conditions in Chile at its founding, **APSI** remained independent from any political party. The regime’s anti-party policies made **APSI** atypical in the history of Chilean press. There were no parties to financially back the magazine and influence its analysis. **APSI**’s director, Navarro, did not make one’s party affiliation a prerequisite for employment and so had employees who represented various parties on the left and center. **APSI** hoped to appeal to people on the left and the center to create an alliance against the authoritarian right.40 **APSI** received its financing initially from international human rights charities.

The junta’s early economic policies did little to provide the junta with security and largely failed. Although Allende’s policies as president of Chile caused grave economic problems including hyperinflation and product shortages, the regime did not have a concrete economic repair plan at the time of the coup. The junta attempted to fix the problem initially through monetary policy by freezing wages, lifting price ceilings, and reducing the supply of currency in circulation.41 The regime’s early attempts to fix the economic situation in Chile failed. Inflation stayed above 300 percent for the first three years after the coup.42 In 1975, Pinochet gave the Chicago Boys, a group of Chilean economists linked with the Chicago School of Economics and Milton Freidman’s neoliberal economic theories, full control over the economy. The Chicago Boys’ policies

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40 Arturo Navarro Ceardi, personal interview with author, December 14, 2011.
42 Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*, 165.
helped to spur economic growth, despite the persistence of high inflation numbers until 1976.  

Economic liberalization in 1975 did not immediately lead to social or political liberalization. Social scientist Carlos Huneeus argues that Chile became a “dual state” in the latter half of the 1970s. A “dual state” is one in which very liberal economics are aided by oppressive political and social regimes. Authoritarianism, within the regime’s rhetoric, became a precondition for economic growth and modernization. The Chicago Boys agreed with the regime’s assessment when they claimed that in a democracy they could not have accomplished one-fifth of what they did. Huneeus points out that in a democracy, the Chicago Boys would have had to have dealt with an opposition in the form of unions, parliament, and the media. However, once the Chicago Boys’ policies began to produce positive results, beginning in 1977, Chilean society also began to open up.

The military takeover of the Chilean government was violent from the beginning. The violence only increased as the junta worked to assert itself as Chile’s legitimate government. The regime’s tenuous legal-institutional position depended on a constant state of siege and its unsuccessful early economic policies made repression the only method for maintaining control. Through the use of torture and disappearances, agencies

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such as DINA controlled the population using fear. The government also eliminated many of the population’s political rights. Its closure of political parties and use of military tribunals limited the recourses Chileans had if they felt victimized by or disagreed with the military. Censorship of the press served to silence the opposition’s public voice.

The Committee for Peace

Due to the human rights violations committed by the regime, religious organizations formed the first opposition group COPACHI. APSI formed in part from the remnants of this group’s journalism division. On October 6, 1973, Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez, the Archbishop of Santiago, founded The Committee for the Cooperation for Peace in Chile (COPACHI) as an ecclesiastical effort to alleviate the suffering of the Chilean people. COPACHI included representatives from the Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, and Methodist churches in Chile. COPACHI’s founding document stated three main goals. The first was to find and provide material help for people or families affected by the “situation” in Chile. The second involved providing legal assistance to those affected by human rights violations. The third goal of COPACHI was to gather information about human rights violations.46

The Committee for Peace, as it was commonly called, opened up offices throughout Chile in nine of its major cities, including two in Santiago. In November,

COPACHI began posting advertisements in *El Mercurio* informing people about their services and warning people not to sign any waivers presented to them by the legal system.\(^{47}\) In 1974, Navarro got a job working in the journalism division with others documenting human rights abuses with the Committee for Peace.\(^{48}\) COPACHI achieved its goal of legal representation through the efforts of Jose Zalaquett Daher, the head of the legal department. Between October 1973 and December 1975, COPACHI provided legal advice to nearly nine thousand people in cases of political persecution including those heard by military tribunals. They also represented 6,511 people in cases of dismissal of employment due to political reasons. COPACHI also provided healthcare services to almost seventeen thousand Chileans.\(^{49}\) The Committee for Peace’s activities, although humanitarian in nature, put it at odds with the governing junta.

The junta pressured the Committee for Peace by taking actions against its members. The government of Chile denied the co-president of COPACHI, Lutheran Evangelical Bishop Helmut Frenz, entry into the country and revoked his permanent residence status in October 1974. In November 1975, Pinochet ordered the arrest of Jose Zalaquett and a lawyer who worked for the Committee. A few days later, Augusto Pinochet wrote to Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez to request the dissolution of COPACHI in response to reports that they had helped leftist guerillas escape capture by the military.\(^{50}\)


\(^{48}\) Arturo Navarro Ceardi, email interview by author, July 12, 2010.


\(^{50}\) Ibid.
In his letter, Pinochet cited the fact that COPACHI made it look like the Catholic Church had differences with the Government of Chile. He cited information that he had received about nefarious activities that would hurt Chile:

From the foregoing and after a calm analysis of the public events and their repercussions, both within the country and abroad, we are led to seek the roots of some of these events and we find them in the Comité Pro Paz. Consequently we have considered that the above-mentioned institution is a means that is made use of by Marxist-Leninists to create problems that disturb the peace of the public and the necessary calm, the maintenance of which is my principal duty as President.  

Pinochet thought that the Committee for Peace harbored Marxist-Leninists, which caused him to view the group as opposition to his government and he recommended to the Cardinal that COPACHI be dissolved. Pinochet chose his words carefully and did not openly accuse the Catholic Church of any wrongdoing. The governing junta needed to walk a careful line with the Catholic Church because the majority of the population in Chile practiced Catholicism. If Pinochet or other members of the government were seen as persecuting the Catholic Church, it would have caused them a loss in legitimacy with the population. It was safe for the regime to go after the Committee for Peace, as long as they did so carefully, because it wasn’t a strictly Catholic organization.

The junta did not fear angering other religious groups, because their membership was smaller. As stated earlier, Pinochet revoked the permanent resident status of Lutheran Evangelical Bishop Helmut Frenz as one of his first major moves against COPACHI. Although Bishop Frenz was the co-president of the Committee for Peace at the time, the regime felt safe preventing him from re-entering the country. An event

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earlier in 1974 showed how important the Catholic Church and Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez were to the government’s position. In April, the junta received intelligence that an armed leftist group may have been planning to assassinate Cardinal Silva. Despite Silva’s protest, the army assigned a group of men to guard the Cardinal during his public appearances throughout the holy week (April 8-13). A declassified CIA document about the incident revealed that members of the military, including Pinochet, also worried about the Cardinal being kidnapped. They feared that he would willingly participate in such a scheme. Pinochet noted that despite the regime’s policy of not dealing with kidnappers “in such a case the junta would have to accede to at least some of the kidnappers’ demands.”

Both Silva and Frenz held prominent positions in COPACCHI. The junta rejected the permanent citizen status of one of them and would have been willing to break regime policy and negotiate with kidnappers for the other. The fact that Frenz held his position in the Lutheran Church made him an acceptable target for the regime.

The Jewish community also played a prominent role in the Committee for Peace. Grand Rabi Angel Kreiman served as the community’s representative to the Committee. The regime, while never outwardly hostile to the Jewish community, showed anti-Semitism through some of its actions. In August of 1974, the military government banned the movie “Fiddler on the Roof.” Although they did so because Pinochet believed it to promote Marxist values, the press release announcing the ban contained language that the Jewish community interpreted as anti-Semitic. The regime described

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“Fiddler on the Roof” as “an American musical comedy, based on the story of the Jewish author Shalom Aleichem, in which the Jewish actor Topol stars, and which was directed by the Jew Norman Jewison.” Under the regime’s strict press censorship, one right wing paper, *La Vangardia de los Trabajadores*, published with a consistent anti-Semitic stance on the news. Including one article in which the author wrote a defense of Nazism in Germany. The regime’s phrasing of their ban of “Fiddler on the Roof” combined with their willingness to allow an anti-Semitic paper to publish show the regime allowed for minor persecution of Jews. The regime, however, remained careful in its treatment of the Jewish community so as not to cause comparisons with Nazism.

The Committee for Peace’s ecclesiastical makeup made it possible for the regime to accuse certain elements of it of wrongdoing without implicating the Catholic Church. Cardinal Silva agreed to Pinochet’s request rather than force the issue. He wrote back to Pinochet and told him that he thought that COPACHI had done nothing illegal and “provided in difficult circumstances assistance of a clearly evangelical nature.” He did, however, agree to dissolve the Committee. The COPACHI officially closed on December 31, 1975. He also cautioned:

> I must now express my conviction that the measure advocated by your Excellency, that we take steps to dissolve the Committee, will in all probability -- within and especially outside Chile-- cause appreciably greater damage than that which it is intended to prevent.

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54 Ibid.

The Cardinal’s warning proved true for the regime. In 1976, Arturo Navarro founded the first opposition as a direct result COPACHI’s closing.

**The Information Agency on International Affairs**

When the Committee for the Cooperation for Peace in Chile dissolved, it created a system by which employees could submit projects for funding. This ensured that money donated to COPACHI by international charities did not go to waste. It also helped to keep the COPACHI employees working. Navarro and Dinges, along with other journalists who had worked for the Committee, proposed the creation of the Information Agency on International Affairs (APSI). The project had not yet become a magazine. The Agency would write stories analyzing international issues related to human rights. It planned to sell their stories to newspapers and magazines within Chile. It would also work as fixers for foreign journalists.56 The Committee liked the idea, and Navarro obtained seven thousand dollars to found APSI.57

The founders of APSI quickly learned that there was no market for their stories. So, they decided to create their own media outlet in which to publish: an eight-page newsletter called *APSI: Actualidad Internacional*. The members of APSI chose Navarro as their director because he met the two requirements of the regime: he was both Chilean and a journalist. They applied to DINACOS for permission to publish their newsletter. After months of delay, DINACOS granted them permission to publish “international

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56 Arturo Navarro Ceardi, email interview by author, July 12, 2010.
57 Francisca Araya Jofré, *Historia de la Revista APSI: El que se ríe se va al cuartel (Pico para Pinochet)*, (Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones, 2007), 20.
news and foreign economic information.” Although APSI could only publish international news, its founders intended the newsletter that would later become a magazine to be in opposition to the regime from the beginning. They used the fact that DINACOS was not worried about international events to publish human rights stories that related directly to the situation in Chile. They criticized the Junta’s policies by reporting on similar policies of human rights violations in other countries.

APSI still needed to overcome the economic hurdles of starting a magazine. The majority of journalists, who wrote stories for Actualidad Internacional, worked for free in exchange for access to foreign newspapers like The Guardian, Le Monde, and the New York Times that were not widely available in Chile at the time. APSI workers obtained these papers by going to the airport every morning and getting copies as they arrived. They also kept their circulation small at first. In the first year, there were only five hundred subscribers, all within Santiago, and each issue was delivered via bicycle by a member of APSI’s staff. No businesses advertised in APSI early on, but it paid its costs with continued donations from international human rights organizations including the World Council of Churches. APSI: Actualidad Internacional, despite the control of the press by the military, became the first opposition magazine founded under the dictatorship in circulation.

58 Arturo Navarro Ceari, email interview by author, July 12, 2010.
60 Arturo Navarro Ceari, email interview by author, July 12, 2010.
62 Arturo Navarro Ceari, email interview by author, July 12, 2010.
Criticism through International News

Beginning in July 1976 with its first issue, *APSI* focused on international human rights and economic issues relevant to the Chilean situation. In September, *APSI* published one of its first articles examining abuses committed by other military dictatorships in Latin America. Entitled “Controlling Violence,” the article discussed the violent aftermath in Argentina of an opposition leader’s death. The article quoted the president of Argentina, Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla, stating that his goal was to return “monopoly of force” to the state’s control.63 The article continued by citing various examples of violence committed by both sides of the political spectrum. *APSI* pointed out that the challenge faced by the moderate Videla would be controlling the violence without giving the appearance of an opening to the political left. Hard-line members of the military would frown on an opening and Videla would likely lose power, much like his predecessor.64 Although the political situation in Argentina differed from Chile, Chile’s military government also used coercive force to control the population. Agencies, such as DINA, violently suppressed the opposition. The article pointed out the challenges faced by the Argentine dictatorship that could have just as easily been describing a situation in Chile.

Another example of *APSI*’s comparative criticism occurred in December 1976. In an article entitled “Elections in Brazil: Progress in the Democratization Process,” *APSI* examined the results of successful local level elections under the dictatorship in Brazil. The article treated the elections of local level officials as the beginning of a “defrost” and

64 Ibid.
liberalization of the Brazilian regime. It also praised the efforts of the military toward a general election of the president planned for 1979. The article ends with a discussion of the threat to the 1979 election that hard-liners may pose. The successes of the local level elections and the planned presidential election in 1979 made it look like a viable option for Chile. Both countries were military dictatorships and the article seemed to imply that a gradual return to democracy starting at the local level could be successful in Chile as well.

In its first four months, APSI published only one article that mentioned Chile. The article, “Andean Pact: Between Development and Regional Integration,” mentioned Chile twice: once only to state that it was a member of the Andean Pact, a free trade organization amongst Andean countries, the other to state that Chile supported one view of what the Andean Pact should accomplish. The content of the article was less important than the fact that APSI had managed to mention Chile, despite their restriction to international news. By discussing the international economics of the Andean Pact, APSI found a way to discuss Chile directly.

During 1976, APSI released ten issues publishing fortnightly. The regime did not seem to catch on to the extent of APSI’s critiques of the Chilean situation in these early days. The director Arturo Navarro remembers being called into the offices of DINACOS and being told that some of the wording in the articles needed to be changed because they sounded too much like Chile. He was also warned about criticizing the “royal family,” a

term used for the other military dictatorships in Latin America.\textsuperscript{67} Despite these warnings, \textit{APSI} continued to publish until the regime shut them down for the first time at the end of 1978.\textsuperscript{68}

\textbf{Conclusion}

The military junta led by Pinochet tried to assert total control over all aspects of Chilean society. It viewed control of the press as an integral part of that goal. The junta created laws like Decree Law 5 and Decree Law 1009 which greatly expanded the government’s power to control the press. Under these laws, the government could persecute journalists for political reasons and try anyone who published materials it deemed subversive in military tribunals. The junta created a climate of fear, banned all leftist political parties, and installed an elaborate censorship apparatus to ensure that their opposition would not be able to publish. On top of these restrictions, lack of economic backing of a political party or investor group rendered the creation of a regular publication prohibitively expensive. However, in 1976, the first opposition publication appeared in Chile.

\textit{APSI} formed not because the regime had loosened its control on media, but because of the unintended consequences of the junta’s actions. In 1975, Pinochet required the Committee for Peace to shut down due to supposed Marxist-Leninist influences. Before closing, the Committee used some of its money to fund the establishment of \textit{APSI}. DINACOS allowed \textit{APSI} to publish international news. \textit{APSI}

\textsuperscript{67} Arturo Navarro Cearli, personal interview by author, December 14, 2010.
\textsuperscript{68} Araya Jofré, \textit{Historia de la Revista APSI}, 21.
employed international news stories as an effective method to criticize the regime by publishing stories about human rights violations and political news comparable to the Chilean situation.

*APSI* would go on to be a major voice in the political opposition to Pinochet. By 1980, the majority of its articles focused on domestic issues, including interviews with opposition leaders. Opposition publications gave a voice to the opposition movement even when the regime shut them down. The success of opposition papers forced more conservative papers like *El Mercurio* to publish articles about the opposition so as not to lose readership to these newer publications. In advance of the 1988 plebiscite on Pinochet’s rule, opposition papers like *APSI* played a key role in both informing the public about the policies and people involved in the “No” campaign, but also gave the “No” campaign a sympathetic audience. *APSI* remained in publication until 1996 and published 511 issues, a longer run than any other opposition publication.
In many ways, the attitudes and policies of the military regime changed dramatically in 1977. On July 9, Pinochet delivered a speech in which he promised to create a new democracy. A month later in August, the junta dissolved DINA and created the National Information Center (CNI) to replace it. The neoliberal economic policies of the Chicago Boys began to show success when they produced the largest growth rate in gross economic product Chile had seen in decades. These changes helped to strengthen the military’s position within Chile. Due to these shifts, by the end of 1980 the regime’s legal-institutional and economic successes led it to allow public space for both opposition figures, like former president of Chile Eduardo Frei, and opposition publications like APSI, but this changed in the early 1980s when the economy began to slump and anti-Pinochet protestors took to the streets.

In February 1981, APSI published an article called “Law or Justice” written by Tomas Moulian. In it, Moulian questioned the legitimacy of the actions of Chile’s security forces. He wrote, Chileans “cannot live in peaceful society where the state jails, relegates, or exiles for no other reason than its will and without arguments other than its suspicions.” Even though the government always stated the security forces acted within the limits of Chile’s law, it made those laws and could change them and their interpretations to fit almost any situation. He went on to ask who should be held responsible for the deaths of numerous civilian and political figures killed under the

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1 Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, Camino Recorrido: Memorias de un Soldado, 145.
dictatorship. The article ended with Moulian asking whether the Chilean justice system was just or not, and if it were unjust whether people should quietly accept it. In July, APSI published an article titled “The Ghosts of Winter: Violence and Recession,” written by sub director Marcelo Contreras Nieto, it detailed Chile’s dual descent into economic recession and political violence. It then presented the plans for fixing the problem provided by right-wing opposition: “For the first time, in these years, some have bluntly proposed to dispense with all members of the government’s economic team.” APSI adapted rightist criticisms and took them further to directly criticize the Chicago Boys’ faith in the invisible hand of the market and support those members of the government that advocated reaching out to all of Chilean society to create a “new economic policy.” Both articles detailed human rights violations committed by the Pinochet regime, but they differed in one important way. The first article generated no backlash, whereas two weeks after the latter DINACOS banned APSI. The magazine would not publish again until May 1982.

According to DINACOS, it shut APSI down because APSI had not received permission to publish national news. However, APSI had been publishing national news stories since 1979, prominently featuring articles about opposition leaders and the opposition movement in general. The more likely reason for the regime’s sudden decision to enforce the law appears in “The Ghosts of Winter.” It discussed open protests against Pinochet and the failure of his economic project both of which had made the

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3 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Arturo Navarro Cearde, email interview by author, July 12, 2010.
regime’s position too tenuous to continue to allow space for an opposition. Pinochet acted and increased violent human rights violations and banned or heavily censored the opposition press. The repression that followed in 1982 resembled that of the dictatorship’s early years with one important difference: Pinochet had replaced DINA with the CNI. The creation of the CNI coincided with a relaxing of press censorship and by examining the two together provides a clearer understanding of why Pinochet replaced his secret police force.

The Creation of CNI

Between the 1973 coup and 1976, nearly 2,000 Chileans died or disappeared at the hands of the military. After the first three months of the military dictatorship, DINA carried out the majority of Pinochet’s violent actions against the opposition. DINA, under Army Coronel Manuel Contreras, had extraordinary powers and answered only to Pinochet. In 1978, the regime replaced DINA with the CNI and after its founding violent repression by the regime decreased dramatically. Between 1977 and the end of 1980, the military killed or caused the disappearance of 62 people, or 77 fewer victims than in 1976. Scholarship, focused on the Pinochet dictatorship, explains this transition and the subsequent decrease in violence three ways.

Political scientist Carlos Huneeus explains this shift in terms of pressure from the regime’s civilian supporters, such as Jaime Guzman. Guzman and the Gremialista

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movement pushed for a greater degree of institutionalization for the regime. DINA, a secret police agency, needed to be replaced by an agency with greater institutional control over it and not just the personal control of Pinochet. The regime decreed that the CNI was to gather information important to national security and necessary to the supreme government’s operation of the state. CNI acted under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior and provided the regime with a higher degree of control. Political scientist Genaro Arriagada provides another explanation for the creation of CNI: Pinochet created it as a reaction to international pressure amid the backlash generated by DINA’s assassination of Orlando Letelier. On the morning of September 21, 1978, DINA operatives carried out the assassination of the former Allende government minister and critic of the military regime. Although DINA had killed numerous other critics, both in Chile and internationally, the assassination of Letelier had greater political ramifications because it happened in Washington D.C. DINA remotely detonated a car bomb, killing Letelier and his American assistant, Ronni Moffit. Before long, U.S. suspicion focused on Chile and DINA. Even prior to Letelier’s assassination, the U.S. government had been ratcheting up its criticisms of Chile’s human rights violations. The election of Jimmy Carter to the U.S. presidency played a large role in this development, because Carter had made human rights a major component of his electoral platform and foreign policy. Once elected, Carter began urging Chile to improve its human rights record and

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9 Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*.  
11 Arriagada, *Por la Razón o Por la Fuerza*, 98.  
the Letelier assassination increased that pressure. One year after Letelier’s death, the military junta dissolved DINA and issued Decree Law 1878 to created the CNI.

Political scientist Pablo Policzer incorporated both of the previous arguments that pressure for increased institutionalization of the regime and international pressure for human rights played a role, but relegated them to a secondary position. Policzer argues, ultimately, Pinochet chose to replace DINA because it did not effectively provide him with a degree of internal control. DINA could not stop junta and civilian supporter opposition to his policies. The cost of continuing to tie his fortunes to DINA after 1978 could have been catastrophic for Pinochet, both the domestically and internationally. Policzer speculates that if DINA had been more effective in controlling internal opposition Pinochet may not have abandoned it.\textsuperscript{13}

Domestic criticism, international criticism, and inefficacy alone do not, however, explain the replacement of DINA with the CNI. Between 1977 and 1980, the regime also reduced its censorship of the opposition press, its nonviolent method for silencing the opposition. Its policy toward the press received little international criticism, and already operated through an institutional agency, DINACOS, and thus did not open due to a need for increased institutionalization. The reductions in censorship, combined with the creation of CNI, provide a different picture. With its legal-institutional and economic success, the regime needed to rely less on coercive repression. By the end of 1980, the regime’s legal-institutional and economic successes gave the regime its highest level of security since the coup. The Constitution of 1980 gave Pinochet both a legal justification and an institutional framework for his control of Chile, meanwhile, Chile’s “economic

\textsuperscript{13} Pablo Policzer, \textit{Rise and Fall of Repression}, 126.
“miracle” made it seem as if the dictatorship had tangible fiscal benefits for Chileans. In the climate of success, Pinochet no longer needed to maintain tight control of the opposition. The regime’s legal-institutional and economic success began in the same year as its relaxation of repression.

Legal-institutional and Economic Success

The regime’s legal-institutional success had its origins in a 1977 speech by Pinochet. In it, he provided a description of his vision of the new government and the process by which it would be obtained. On July 9, a large group of Chilean youths gathered on Charcarillas Hill, one hundred miles south of Santiago, in celebration of Youth Day. The National Unity Youth Front, a civilian-run organization carefully orchestrated to emphasize the link between the youth of Chile and its armed forces, held the event to honor new inductees. Pinochet arrived that night to present a speech to the torch-bearing crowd, which chanted his name. In his speech he laid out his plans for the future of Chile. For the first time, Pinochet provided a definitive plan for ending the military dictatorship. He later described his appearance at Charcarillas as “an opportunity to explain to the youth that the Military Government would not be permanent, but it would be necessary to follow a path that would permit the acquisition of a ‘full democracy.’”

The speech, however, did not describe a return to democracy but rather a creation of a “new” democracy. It described a democracy that would be “authoritarian, protective,

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14 Ibid., 251.
15 Pinochet Ugarte, *Camino Recorrido*, 145.
integrated, technocratic, and with authentic social participation.” The armed forces would lead Chile to this new democracy through a series of “constitutional acts,” which would eventually be compiled into a new constitution. Pinochet and his speech writer, Guzman, envisioned a three-step process. Pinochet cautioned that if the transition was not carried out slowly, it would fail; the country would return to the way it was with the same people, vices, and similar or worse chaos to that experienced under the Marxist government. A transition period would begin in 1980 with the new government and be fully implemented by 1985. Although the timetable and the plan for constitutional acts were abandoned in favor of writing a complete document, the Charcarillas speech showed the maturation of Pinochet’s ideology and his desire to create a more stable source of institutional legitimacy and many of the ideas he expressed at Chacarillas appeared in the Constitution of 1980. Commensurate with his anti-party ideology expressed at Charcarillas, Pinochet banned all remaining political parties in 1977.

Pinochet further solidified his legal-institutional position early in 1978 with a national referendum on his rule. Despite opposition from within the junta and strong opposition to the idea from the Catholic Church, Pinochet held the referendum on January 4. The regime conducted the vote under a state of siege, with no voter registry taken. The ballot read, “Faced with international aggression launched against our fatherland, I support President Pinochet in his defense of the dignity of Chile and reaffirm the legitimacy of the government.” The “international aggression” referred to on the ballot was a UN vote condemning Chile for human rights violations. A Chilean flag

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16 Ibid., 146.
17 Ibid.
18 Constable and Valenzuela, A Nation of Enemies, 68.
represented a “yes” answer and a black box represented a “no” vote. By that evening, enough ballots were counted for Pinochet and the government to claim victory. The government reported in the final tally that “yes” received 75% of the votes and “no” received only 23%, with the remainder null and blank.\textsuperscript{19} Bolstered by the results, Pinochet pushed forward with the creation of a new constitution based on the principles he expressed at Charcarillas.

A specially appointed constitutional committee finished its task soon after the Charcarillas speech, with a draft of a new constitution finished by October 30, 1978.\textsuperscript{20} Pinochet made changes to that draft to strengthen the position of the president and to clearly define the transition period. In its final form, the constitution sought to limit the power of political parties, while ensuring the military would continue to play a large role after the eight-year transition period. On August 12, 1980, Pinochet called for a plebiscite held on the seventh anniversary of the military coup to ratify the new constitution. Chileans had only one month to examine the constitution in full before the vote. The regime reported 6.2 million voters took part in the plebiscite, a suspect 91% participation rate of eligible voters. Although the regime made voting compulsory the lack of an electoral registry made it impossible to monitor. Many members of the opposition reported seeing the same people voting over and over again.\textsuperscript{21} The previous high points for participation rates of eligible voters occurred during the 1960 and 1970, elections drawing roughly 64% of all eligible voters.\textsuperscript{22} When the votes were tabulated,

\textsuperscript{19} The Americas Watch Committee, \textit{Chile: Human Rights and the Plebiscite}, 19.
\textsuperscript{20} Huneeus, \textit{The Pinochet Regime}, 157.
\textsuperscript{21} The Americas Watch Committee, \textit{Chile: Human Rights and the Plebiscite}. 23.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 24.
69% of voters had cast ballots in favor of the new constitution.\textsuperscript{23} The eight-year transition period began in March 1981, with Pinochet serving as president. With the Constitution of 1980, Pinochet achieved full legal-institutional control of Chile. His legal-institutional victories coincided with the success of his economic policies.

What became widely known as Chile’s first “economic miracle” began in 1977. On the macroeconomic level, the Chilean economy made great strides. The gross domestic product increased by 8.3% in 1977 and continued to rise, posting gains above 7% until 1980.\textsuperscript{24} Inflation, at 343% in 1975, shrunk to 9% by 1981. The Chicago Boys’ policies also completely eliminated the government’s deficit and created a surplus of 1.7% by 1979. Foreign capital began to pour in, reaching an average of $1.6 billion US dollars per year between 1978 and 1980.\textsuperscript{25} The widely publicized success of the Chicago Boys’ neoliberal economic strategies during this period strengthened the government’s position. Due to the failure of Allende’s economic policies, Pinochet was able to claim the military dictatorship was necessary for Chile’s economic survival and growth.

The Regime Relaxes Censorship

Just as the military government’s successes led to a decreased need for violent repression to control society, it also led to decreases in the severity of the regimes other methods of control. In the case of printed media, the regime did not reorganize its censorship apparatus, but relaxed its enforcement. In 1977, the number of opposition magazines doubled, and although the press was far from free, a clear shift occurred in the

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{24} Arriagada, \textit{Por la Razón o Por la Fuerza}, 75.
\textsuperscript{25} Silva, \textit{In the Name of Reason}, 153.
content of opposition magazines like *APSI*. By 1980, *APSI* published articles featuring opposition leaders such as former president Eduardo Frei of the banned Christian Democrat Party, and published stories about CNI -- topics it could not have safely touched two years earlier.

The story of Ercilla’s staff in 1976 demonstrated the difference in freedom of the press between the former and 1977. In March of 1976, the government closed the moderate *Ercilla*, one of the most respected magazines in Chile, for one week due to a story criticizing the regime’s economic policies. In September, its Christian Democratic ownership sold it to the conservative group Cruzat-Larrain. By 1976, the majority of Chilean printed media belonged to one of two large conglomerations, El Mercurio group and Cruzat-Larrain. Upon hearing news of the sale, *Ercilla’s* Director Emilio Filippi resigned along with the majority of its staff. In July 1977, Filippi and other former employees of *Ercilla* founded the opposition magazine *Hoy*.²⁶ *Hoy* became the first of two new opposition magazines founded in 1977. The second, *Análisis*, originated in the Academy of Christian Humanism under the auspices of Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez. *Análisis*’s editorial line provided reflections and information on the national reality.²⁷ Meanwhile, the first opposition magazine, *APSI*, celebrated its one year anniversary in July 1977.

Although two new opposition magazines formed in 1977, the press did not experience a full opening. The regime did not replace its violent repressive apparatus, DINA, until August of that year, and the Chicago Boys’ economic policies were just

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²⁷ Ibid., 16.
beginning to show signs of success. Politically, Pinochet had announced a plan for a “new democracy,” but his legal-institutional position had not yet been secured by the 1978 plebiscite and the Constitution of 1980. The regime, unsurprisingly, continued to subject the press to careful control. In March 1977, the regime issued Edict 107, which required journalists to solicit and receive permission from the Military Governor of their occupation zone, if they wanted to found new publications under a state of emergency.\(^{28}\)

\(APSI\)’s editorial choices and articles reflected the continued restrictive atmosphere the Chilean press experienced.

In 1977, \(APSI\) published only three articles that mentioned Chile directly. In one, titled “Latin America Increased Production and Importation of Armaments,” \(APSI\) reported that “in 1976 the military spending in Latin America surpassed U.S. $4 billion. 80% of that spending is concentrated in only six states: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Peru, and Venezuela.”\(^ {29}\) All of the countries listed had military dictatorships at the time allowing \(APSI\) to link an increase in arms imports and production to military governments in Latin America. \(APSI\) also pointed out Chile was one of the top importers of arms.\(^ {30}\) The article was the closest \(APSI\) came to direct criticism of the regime in 1977. More noteworthy, \(APSI\) failed to publish any articles relating to the Letelier assassination, indicating the cautious line it took during this time. However, it continued to employ comparative criticism as the main vehicle for their opposition message.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 15.

\(^{29}\) \(APSI\), “Latinoamérica Acrecienta producción e importación de Armamentos ,” \(APSI: Actualidad Internacional\), April 1-15, No. 17, 1976, 9-10.

\(^{30}\) Ibid.
John Dinges took over the duties of editor of *APSI* in February after its former editor returned to his native Spain. Dinges had worked for *APSI* from the beginning and since he was the only person on *APSI*’s staff with experience laying out a newspaper, it had been his job. He took editorship during a time of personal hardship. He had the *Washington Post* line on Chile. In response to his *Post* articles, the government of Chile rescinded his press pass and started the process of kicking him out of the country. Upon notification, Dinges immediately called the U.S. Embassy in Santiago. The ambassador then contacted DINACOS and convinced it to reconsider and allow Dinges to stay. Dinges left Chile of his own volition a year later in 1978.

In July, 1977, *APSI* devoted the first three pages of issue 23 to the possibility that Bolivia would have free elections in 1980. The article mentions the president of Bolivia, General Hugo Banzer, had stated the government had chosen 1980 as the year to relinquish political power. However, he did not want things to return to the way they were. He wished to create a new system in which political parties played a lesser role.

In the last paragraph of the article, *APSI* stated, “the return to civilian rule in Bolivia is still uncertain and risky, especially because of the persistent division between the military and the political parties.” Bolivian President General Hugo Banzer’s rhetoric contained some key similarities to Pinochet’s anti-party and “new democracy” ideals, expressed along with a promise for a return to a protective civilian government in Pinochet’s

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34 Ibid., 3.
Charcarillas Hill speech. The political situation in Bolivia was similar to that of Chile and would thus make any opening or transition for Chile risky and uncertain. APSI continued using comparative criticism like this in opposition to the regime throughout 1977 and 1978.

In 1978, APSI reached three important milestones. The first occurred in January of that year when Dinges received the first byline in APSI history on an article he wrote about the political situation in Bolivia. He became the first member of APSI’s staff to be credited in print for an article he or she had written. It should be noted that he had left Chile before APSI published the article.\(^\text{35}\) The second milestone occurred three months later, in April. Next to an article about France appeared a cartoon caricature of French President Valery Giscard d’Estaine by Guillermo Tejada (Tex). The cartoon depicted a thin pointy headed Giscard looking to the left with a huge forehead and a long skinny wrinkled neck.\(^\text{36}\) Although simple, it was the first appearance of an animation within the magazine. During the 1980s, APSI would become well known for its political cartoons. It also showed APSI had achieved a certain level of financial stability to be able to purchase artwork. The final milestone APSI obtained in 1978 deserved to be celebrated: APSI commemorated two years in publication.

In issue 47 in 1978, APSI invited its readers to a dinner in celebration of its two-year anniversary.\(^\text{37}\) APSI’s director Arturo Navarro invited former Rector of Chile’s Pontifical Catholic University, Fernando Castillo Velasco, who had recently returned


\(^{36}\) Tex, “Giscard mira hacia la izquierda,” in *APSI: Actualidad Internacional* April 1-16, No. 41. 1978, 3. 

from exile, to be the event’s main speaker. On the evening of the event, more than 200 people arrived, including diplomats, guild and union leaders, members of the clergy, directors of communications media, youth leaders, professionals, and university professors, to partake in the celebration.38 Castillo used his first public appearance to speak out against human rights violations committed by the dictatorship. The Director of APSI, Arturo Navarro Ceadri, later remembered that the event, “although intended only to be a celebration, was seen it as an oppositional political event.”39

APSI’s focus on international news did not appeal to as broad a readership as its director wished. Slowly, Navarro began to publish more and more stories about Chile. While doing so, he also petitioned DINACOS for authorization to publish national news. He never received it.40 Hoy started publishing almost exclusively about national events and news. The workers of APSI courage gained courage to increase their coverage of national events, The Pinochet regime did not shut down Hoy. When the magazine began publishing in 1979, its editorial line continued providing comparative criticism, but also provided greater coverage of domestic events including stories about opposition leaders, despite not having permission to do so. The magazine was renamed APSI: National and International News. In a July 1979 note from the director, Arturo Navarro referenced the shift saying, “Today, we begin a new stage…” He continued describing APSI’s national

40 Arturo Navarro Ceadri, email interview by author, July 12, 2010.
section as being presided over by one concern, “The concern of seeing Chile undergoing a process of creating new institutional structures that lack coherency.”

In line with its new focus, in August 1979, APSI devoted its cover and first three pages to a story about Frei. The story, titled “The Return of Frei,” focused on the former president’s opposition to the Pinochet regime. Featured in it was a list of seven fundamental things Frei wanted the government to do, including the creation of a more representative constitutional committee, the reinstatement of political parties, and the immediate reconstitution of the electoral registers, which had been destroyed at the time of the coup. In October, Navarro published an editorial entitled “Facing the Past,” which described human rights violations committed since 1973. These included disappearances, exiles, and assassinations. Navarro ended his analysis by stating, “it seems to us the most urgent problems we need to face as a country are topics related to human rights, because these rights should be a major topic of national agreement.” For Navarro, the regime needed to focus on improving its human rights record before Chile could move forward. By 1979, the regime’s position was secure enough to allow stories like this without repercussion.

41 Arturo Navarro, “Por Qué Actualidad Nacional,” APSI: Actualidad Nacional e Internacional July 16-31, No. 60. 1979, 3.
**APSI and the Constitution of 1980**

When the regime announced the 1980 plebiscite on the new constitution, many members of the opposition opposed it and campaigned for people to vote “No.” The government seriously hampered the opposition’s efforts by revealing the proposed constitution only a month before the vote. Many government officials and citizens admitted to not having time to read the constitution thoroughly before the vote. APSI offered in-depth coverage of the constitutional process. The week before Pinochet revealed the full text of the constitution and announced the date of the plebiscite, APSI published issue 78 titled “Plebiscite-Transition-Constitution What to Do?: The Opposition Speaks.” In an article called “Plebiscite-Transition-Constitution: What to Do?” APSI presented the opinions of five Chileans opposed to the constitution, one of whom was former Minister of State Orlando Cantaurias. Cantaurias stated his belief that the constitution was not an attempt to involve the population in the government. “Rather, I think what is intended is to maintain indefinitely the current situation. Meanwhile they intend to continue institutionalization.” In the following issue, APSI published a full interview with Cantaurias. In it, he said that the plebiscite “Did not offer a solution today” and urged Chileans to vote “No.” Pinochet only allowed one major public event to the opposition, a speech by Frei. In his untelevised speech two weeks before the vote, Frei called the constitution a work of science fiction and criticized its timetable.

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APSI was one of the few publications to prominently feature news about Frei’s speech. Two days before the plebiscite, Frei’s name appeared in giant block letters on APSI’s cover. Inside, it devoted six full pages to Frei’s speech and the “real alternative” to the constitution he offered in it. The article entitled “Frei’s Road” detailed the path Chile would take if the “No” vote prevailed, which included a return to civilian rule under a revised constitution of 1925. Even though the constitution passed, APSI’s coverage of it solidified its relationship to the political opposition led by Frei.

Despite the efforts of the opposition, the Constitution of 1980 passed. In it, Pinochet established a new set of laws to govern the press. Article 19(12) established “the freedom to express opinions and to disseminate information without prior censorship in any form and by any means.” Any individual or legal entity had the right to “establish and maintain newspapers, magazines, and periodicals.” They did not have the right to form television or radio stations. Although Article 19 seemed to allow freedom of the press, the press remained subject to strict content control under Article 8, which made it illegal for any group or individual “to propagate doctrines which are antagonistic to the family or which advocate violence or a concept of society, state, or judicial order of a totalitarian character or based on class warfare.” Any organization or political movement with Marxist-Leninist ideology was deemed unconstitutional. Moreover, Article 8 made it dangerous for the press to cover stories or conduct interviews with political figures on the Left. The constitution also included 29 transitory articles to govern the

49 The Americas Watch Committee, Chile: Human Rights and the Plebiscite. 207.
50 Ibid., 205.
transition period between 1981 and 1989. Under Transitory Article 24, the president had the power to restrict the freedom of information. Pinochet could only do this if he had declared a national state of exception.

A little over a month after the government announced the successful passing of the Constitution of 1980, APSI published a special edition examining it from various sides. The issue had 72 pages and was the longest issue APSI had ever published. In it, APSI published numerous photographs of the voting as well as both “Yes” and “No” campaign propaganda. Included also in the special issue was a section that interviewed one hundred Chileans about their thoughts on the new constitution. As part of this section they interviewed Christian Democrat and ex-senator Patricio Alwyn. Alwyn explained the “Yes” victory by stating that many people were “not properly informed.”

Miguel Vega, president of National Confederation of Textile and Clothing workers, explained why his organization voted “No” writing, “We do not endorse a constitution enacted behind the backs of the working class.” Many others expressed opinions similar to “Yes” supporter Miguel Jacob Helo president of El Colegio de Technicos. Jacob said a “No” vote “means forgetting the present peace” and economic stability.

52 Miguel Vega in “Cien Chilenos opinan sobre el contenido del plebiscito.” APSI: Actualidad Nacional e Internacional, October 21, 1980, No. 84, 14.
53 Miguel Jacob Helo in “Cien Chilenos opinan sobre el contenido del plebiscito.” APSI: Actualidad Nacional e Internacional, October 21, 1980, No. 84, 15.
Economic and Political Instability

The tranquil environment and economic success that had led many to vote “Yes” did not last long after the plebiscite. In March 1981, Pinochet declared a “state of danger” in response to increasing protests against the regime’s human rights violations. By August 1981, Chile’s economy was in trouble. A global economic downturn combined with a decrease in internal demand to create a 30% decrease in demand for Chilean raw and manufactured goods in that month alone. Pinochet had worked hard to personalize Chile’s stability and economic success. Jacob’s Comments showed that many Chilean did associate Pinochet with those things. Pinochet also suffered the consequences when things began to go poorly; he became the person to blame. Publicly, the regime blamed the problems on an international communist conspiracy originating in Moscow. Some government ministers began to argue for the state to play a greater role in controlling the economy. Pinochet reacted to the economic and political situation by increasing the repression of the opposition.

In 1981, the military killed or disappeared 36 people, a figure higher than the totals for the previous three years combined. DINACOS banned APSI for publishing information about national news without permission. The timing of the closure corresponded directly with the beginning of the economic downturn that would intensify the following year. APSI remained closed until May 1982. While APSI remained closed,
the economic situation in the country continued to worsen. GDP fell by 14.5% in 1982. Manufacturing fell by 21.1% while construction dropped by 23.4%. Unemployment reached 26.1% of the population due to the drop offs in other sectors.\(^{58}\) The worsening economic condition combined with high unemployment created a large amount of popular unrest.

Chile’s judiciary allowed \(APS\) to publish again pending the results of their legal appeal. \(APS\) received permission to publish as long as they only published international news. Navarro did not agree to the stipulation and stepped down as \(APS\)’s director and left the magazine. Marcelo Contreras Nieto, former sub director and \(APS\)’s legal representation, stepped up to fill the void. A month later, \(APS\) conducted an interview with economist René Cortázar about the economic crisis in Chile.\(^{59}\) From that point on the magazine slowly published more stories about Chile until their last issue in July 1982. Issue 111 had 32 pages only six of which were not devoted to news about Chile. The following issue was prominently titled “Chile Today: Crisis, Rumor, and Fantasy.” The first humor section appeared in this issue featuring political cartoons from Francisco Franco’s Spain.\(^{60}\) \(APS\), under Contreras, continued to push the boundaries by covering opposition movements and party members for the next two months. In September, it published an article called “Who is Victor Jara?” in it which recounted the story of the Chilean folk singer and Leftist murdered by the military shortly after the coup.\(^{61}\) The following week, the court of appeals rejected \(APS\)’s appeal and prohibited its

\(^{58}\) Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*, 365.

\(^{59}\) María Ester Aliaga, “Las Alternativas Del Momento Económico,” \(APS\), June 8-21, 1988, No. 108, 4-5.

\(^{60}\) \(APS\), “Seccion Alegre,” \(APS\), August 8-16, 1982, No 112, 32.

publication. Over the next three months APSI took its case to the Supreme Court and won the right to publish once more, however, it would not resume publication until 1983.

Conclusion

"Not a leaf moves in Chile if I don't know about it," General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte asserted in 1981. Pinochet assertion of absolute control only served to weaken his position when it became clear that he did not possess it. The success of his neoliberal economic and legal-institutional projects created a sense of security and control for Pinochet. So much so that he felt comfortable allowing a greater space for opposition to his regime. Press freedom reached its greatest point following the passing of the Constitution of 1980. However, the opening was not to last. Beginning in 1981, Chile’s economy entered a period of crisis the levels of which had not been seen since the great depression. The failure of Pinochet’s economic system created widespread unrest. DINACOS banned APSI in 1981 because it had just begun publishing national news; it had been doing so since 1979. It did so because the situation in the country was such that Pinochet believed it dangerous to allow APSI to continue to publish.

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On January 5, 1983, Chile’s Supreme Court ruled the magazine APSI could publish again, but it would be restricted to reporting on international news. Needless to say, the staff at APSI, which had worked hard to regain the right to publish, was not satisfied with this ruling. DINACOS banned APSI in 1982 for publishing national news stories without authorization. When APSI began to publish regularly again in May 1983, Marcelo Contreras editorialized that being restricted to international news “represented a grave limitation” to APSI’s ability to engage in the debate about what Chilean society should be. However, APSI had used international news stories to make observations about the situation in Chile since 1976. Later in the same editorial, Contreras laid the strategy out explicitly when he explained APSI’s goal this way: “We hope that this APSI international constitutes a real contribution to its readers, who may find, in each of the articles some opinion about Chile.”

The magazine kept its national news section, but used it to explain the court’s ruling limiting APSI to publish only international news. It also informed the reader that APSI had again requested permission to publish national news in accordance with the laws under a “state of emergency.”

Chile’s political climate had changed dramatically since APSI last published in September, 1982. The government had changed its economic policies and started to see an improvement in the nation’s economy, but the damage to Pinochet’s position had been done. Large protests rocked the capital; yet, the regime maintained firm control of the country during 1983 and 1984, and Pinochet used military force to control public protest.

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as well as censorship of the press to silence the opposition’s voice. In November 1984, the government banned all opposition magazines indefinitely. By 1985, the economic situation had stabilized and it had become clear that despite the efforts of opposition groups Pinochet maintained his position. DINACOS allowed APSI and other opposition magazines to publish once more, but the stability of 1985 did not last. In September 1986, a group of far-Left revolutionaries, the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front, attempted to assassinate Pinochet, and he responded with a violent crackdown and again indefinitely banned the opposition press, only lifting it in January 1987. Although the regime and its supporters continued to bully the opposition press, it never shut them down again. After 1987, opposition publication such as APSI began to publish stories related to the upcoming 1988 plebiscite covering the opposition political movement The Concertación and the Communist Party. APSI became an important tool for keeping the public informed about and advocating for the “No” campaign. The successful “No” campaign and Pinochet’s acceptance of the plebiscite results began the Chile’s re-democratization process. The victory of the “No” campaign was not foreordained and opposition forces, including APSI, worked tirelessly to achieve it.

**Economic Adjustment and Political Instability**

In early 1983, it appeared as if the military government may not make it to the scheduled 1988 plebiscite. Although the government had begun to make adjustments to its neoliberal economic system, the first major protest movement against the government
took hold in 1983. In response to wage controls meant to help alleviate the financial crisis, the Confederation of Copper Workers called for a general strike to occur on May 11. On the day of the strike, workers in the copper mines and mainly middle- and upper-middle-class sectors in the cities demonstrated by banging together pots and pans and honking car horns. Though the protest was carried out peacefully, the military occupied two of Chile’s copper mines with tanks and killed two protestors. The middle classes organized a second strike for June 14. The second protest occurred in the poor neighborhoods of Santiago, and a third major protest took place a month later in July responding to the arrest of several Christian Democrat Party leaders. The fourth major protest took place in August. The regime responded violently and occupied Santiago with 18,000 soldiers. Twenty-three people were killed. On the back of these strikes, leaders from the rightist Republican Party, the centrist Christian Democrat and Christian Socialist parties, and the leftist Socialist and Popular Socialist Union came together to form the Democratic Alliance. (AD) The group represented the united nonviolent opposition to the Pinochet regime and was the precursor to the Concertación coalition.

Opposition groups on the far Left also gained confidence from the success of the protests. Left out of the Democratic Alliance due to its embrace of violence, the Communist Party formed the Popular Democratic Movement (MDP) with a small faction of the Socialist Party and the Movement for the Revolutionary Left. (MIR) The MDP

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3 Pinochet attempted to improve the economy by reducing government spending and decoupled government employee wages from the inflation rate. He also raised import tariffs to make Chilean products more competitive domestically.
4 Arriagada, *Por la Razon o La Fuerza*, 171.
5 Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*, 373.
6 The MIR was initially a university based far left movement that promoted the violent seizure of land in Chile’s countryside.
also used protests as a tool to put pressure on the regime, but for it protests represented
the first step toward mobilizing the population into a violent uprising. The parties in
MDP would be left out of The Concertación due to their embrace of violence and
continue to be marginalized in Chilean politics today.

Initially, Pinochet decided to hold dialogues with the AD. He sent his Minister of
the Interior, Sergio Onofre Jarpa, to hold meetings with AD mediated by Cardinal Juan
Francisco Fresno, the Archbishop of Santiago. The two groups met three times, but made
no real progress. After the third meeting Pinochet broke off the negotiations and insisted
that the path laid out by the Constitution of 1980 would be followed to the letter. From
this point on, AD tried to use the protest movement to force Pinochet back to the
bargaining table.

Pinochet abandoned talks with the opposition because his economic strategies
started to produce positive effects. Along with austerity measures, Pinochet raised the
import tariff from 10% to 35% between 1982 and 1984. He also bailed out the banking
system and created a central bank, which suggested appropriate interest rates. By 1986,
the government had devalued the peso by 80%. These actions combined with a more
rigorous enforcement of tax law largely stabilized the economy by 1985. As the
economy improved and the government began negotiations with the opposition, the press
experienced a temporary opening.

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7 Arriagada, *Por la Razon o La Fuerza*, 175.
8 Ibid., 173.
**APSI and the Opening of Chilean Society**

On top of beginning negotiations with the opposition, Jarpa loosened censorship of the media.\(^{10}\) However, the military government had placed Chile under perpetual declarations of “states of emergency” and “states of danger” in 1978. It left those in place even after the Constitution of 1980 passed, because under the transitory articles these “states” gave the executive, Pinochet, extraordinary powers. Under a “state of emergency,” Pinochet could restrict freedom of movement, suspend or restrict freedom of assembly, and restrict freedom of information and opinion. Under a “state of danger,” Pinochet could arrest someone and hold them without communication for twenty days without pressing charges, expel Chileans from the country, prohibit people from entering Chile, and restrict “freedom of expression with regard to the establishment of new publications.”\(^{11}\) These powers remained in place throughout 1983 and 1984.

Due to the Supreme Court ruling in 1983, *APSI* could only cover international news. This restriction lasted from May, when *APSI* began publishing again fulltime, until September. During these months its staff used international news stories to speak to Chile’s situation. In issue 118, Jorge Edwards wrote an article titled “Parallel Censorship.” The article discussed the censorship faced by Irish author James Joyce and Uruguayan author Carlos Martínez Moreno.\(^{12}\) In the beginning of his article, Edwards noted that since he could only talk about censorship in the international context he, too, was the victim of censorship. He went on to say, “I do not completely dislike the idea of

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\(^{10}\) Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*, 373.

\(^{11}\) The Americas Watch Committee, *Chile: Human Rights and the Plebiscite*, 55.

joining this club.” Edwards’s article was clearly meant to be a commentary on the censorship of the media and literature in his own country. Two issues later, in June, APSI published an article called “Mexico-Brazil the Failure of Civic Military Movements.” Which stated, “In all cases, the fate of civil military movements tend toward two alternatives: to prioritize economic models that enable social movement or to favor economic models diametrically opposed to any participation.” Chile, at the time, fell into the second group. In an article about Uruguay from the same issue, APSI prominently displayed a vote “No” plebiscite advertisement from Uruguay 1980 plebiscite on the continuation of military rule.

Following months of waiting for a response to their request to publish national news, APSI’s editors met with Jarpa on August 18, 1983. Jarpa promised to consider it and give them an answer in a timely fashion. One month later, Jarpa granted APSI permission to publish national news. APSI immediately began to focus the majority of their coverage on the opposition movement led by AD. In the first issue after securing permission to cover national news, APSI only devoted nine out of 49 pages to international news. The rest focused on Chile and the AD. One such article, “Subercaseaux, Abeliuk, Aylwin, Alvarado, Ramirez, Correa, Insunza: The Unity of the Opposition,” presented the view points of the leaders of the parties that came together to form AD. APSI showed the leaders agreeing on a wide array of topics. When asked

16 Patricio Aylwin was leader of the Christian Democrat party. René Abeliuk was leader of the Christian Socialist Party, and Luis Alvarado was leader of one branch of the Socialist Party.
about possible collaboration between disparate political groups in the future René Abeliuk, head of the Christian Socialist Party stated, “Now, there is an enormous and vast opening because of common action.” Pedro Felipe Ramírez agreed arguing that he had “No doubt that unity and consultation was essential in social mobilization.” Luis Alvarado also concurred, noting that the political movements showed “true significance” of the unified opposition. At the same time as the opposition to Pinochet unified the right seemed to be fragmenting. APSI focused several articles on the opposition to Pinochet on the right. In it, Ximena Ortúzar interviewed Engelberto Frias, a former supporter of Pinochet and then leader of the democratic Right. In the interview, Frias referred to the government as “the worst in all our history.” He went on to say it was also worse than any “earthquakes, wars, or floods.” Over a series of nine issues, APSI showed a united Left and Center in favor of democracy and a divided Right, unsure which way to proceed. The dichotomy APSI showed in early 1984 existed for the rest of the dictatorship and hurt the “Yes” campaign’s chances of winning the 1988 plebiscite.

APSI continued to use the space provided to it by the dictatorship to publish stories critical of Pinochet’s actions. Beginning in issue 135 and continuing for the next four issues, APSI serialized John Dinges’ and Saul Landau’s book about the Orlando Letelier assassination, Assassination on Embassy Row: The Shocking Stories of the

Letelier-Moffit Murders.\textsuperscript{21} Dinges’ and Landau’s book heavily implicated DINA in the assassination and would not have been publishable as a book in Chile.\textsuperscript{22} In February 1984, \textit{APSI}’s front cover depicted a person being tortured and in large letters “They Torture Like this in Chile.” The article, by the same name, presented the story of several Chileans who had been tortured. It also contained graphic illustrations of the torture methods.\textsuperscript{23}

The opening for the opposition press ended on March 26, 1984, when the government began to enforce the “state of emergency” and required the opposition magazines \textit{APSI}, \textit{Hoy}, \textit{Análisis}, and \textit{Cauce} to submit all issues to DINACOS for prior censorship. Four days later, DINACOS restricted \textit{APSI} to international news once more. \textit{APSI} did not immediately comply with the order, citing its permission to publish national news from the Ministry of the Interior; however, on April 12, the Ministry issued Decree Exemption 4559 ordering \textit{APSI} to comply with DINACOS.\textsuperscript{24} \textit{APSI} ignored the order and began publishing national news once more in July. The Ministry of the Interior brought charges against \textit{APSI} and other opposition publications for violating the laws and confiscated the magazines from newsstands and removed material from presses and newsrooms.\textsuperscript{25} On September 8, Pinochet issued Decree 19, which restricted \textit{APSI}, \textit{Análisis}, \textit{Cauce}, and \textit{Fortín Mapuche} from publishing “images of any kind” and only

\textsuperscript{23} María Isabel Valdés and Angélica Beas, “Testimonios Directos: Así se Tortura en Chile,” \textit{APSI: La Nueva Alternativa Periodística}, February 7-20, No. 136, 1984, 8-12.  
\textsuperscript{24} Baltra Montaner, \textit{Atentados a la Libertad de Información}, 32.  
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 35.
publishing information about protests on interior pages.\textsuperscript{26} \textit{APSI} used the space that it would have published images to instead publish boxes filled with dots or stripes. In November, Pinochet declared a “state of siege” and closed \textit{APSI} and other opposition publications indefinitely.\textsuperscript{27} \textit{APSI} would not publish again until after June, 1985. Many of the workers at \textit{APSI} did not worry about repression. Dinges recalled, “We didn’t sit around a lot and worry about our personal safety. I don’t remember that being a big deal. Almost everybody had been arrested. It was just kind of part of the environment.”\textsuperscript{28}

Pinochet’s decision to return to strict press censorship coincided with the appearance of the violent revolutionary terrorist group the Manuel Rodríquez Patriotic Front (FPMR). The FPMR formed in 1980 as the paramilitary branch of the Communist Party, but remained inactive until 1984 when they began murdering Carabineros, planting bombs on Santiago’s subway, sabotaging busses, and causing large blackouts by blowing up power lines.\textsuperscript{29} A debate within Pinochet’s cabinet ensued as to the best strategy to deal with the mounting opposition, with the hardliners wanting to violently repress the opposition. Jarpa, however, wanted to continue to reach out to the opposition and placate them. The hardliners won out by proposing a “return to September 11, 1973.”\textsuperscript{30} Pinochet declared a “state of siege” and although the regime did not kill as many people as it had in 1973, it killed or disappeared 74 people in 1984 and 50 the following year.\textsuperscript{31}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 36.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 38.
\item \textsuperscript{28} John Dinges, Phone interview with author, May 4, 2011.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Arriagada, \textit{Por la Razon o La Fuerza}, 178.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 179.
\end{itemize}
Although political-party activity was banned during the “state of siege,” the Democratic Alliance continued to operate and emerged in June 1985 with a new strategy. The AD accepted the legitimacy of the Constitution of 1980 and began advocating for an early plebiscite to allow the opposition to run a candidate against the government in 1988. It again denounced the Communist Party and the FPMR and became active supporters of the government’s plan for transition. They hoped that by fully participating they could achieve a victory for the “no” vote and end the dictatorship.\textsuperscript{32} For Pinochet, the economy had stabilized and a large portion of the opposition had accepted the constitution of 1988 and by extension his presidency. Although protests still occurred, by June 1985 Pinochet deemed his position secure enough to lift the “state of siege.”

\textit{APSI} began to publish again in July 1985, focusing the majority of its articles on the upcoming plebiscite. In issue 158, \textit{APSI}’s staff wrote an article speculating about the candidate the military would put forth for the presidency as part of the “Yes” vote. The article offered three possibilities with the most likely option being Pinochet. \textit{APSI} wrote that “Pinochet intended to continue his government until 1997” and that he had “already commenced his campaign.”\textsuperscript{33} Once \textit{APSI} settled on Pinochet as the government’s most likely candidate, it immediately began to discredit his leadership. In September, Elizabeth Subercaseaux interviewed Christian Democrat International President Andrés Zaldívar, who expressed his opinion that Pinochet had proven he was unfit to govern Chile. Zaldívar said “Pinochet has demonstrated an absolute lack of capacity to govern.”

\textsuperscript{32} Arriagada, \textit{Por la Razon o La Fuerza}, 184.
He had increased the foreign debt and “today Chile produces 15% less than it did in 1970.” As early as December 1985, APSI began running pictures that advocated a “No” vote. One such ad featured a woman wearing a black shirt with a piece of paper pinned on it. The paper read “For never again.”

Although the regime allowed APSI and other opposition magazines freedom to publish information, the press was still subject to bullying by both the regime and the Right. On August 16, 1985, APSI’s management received a threatening phone call from an unknown individual. A month later, unknown assailants in civilian clothing assaulted APSI’s Elizabeth Subercaseaux in her home. The following day, APSI offices received a threat of violence against its employees and a death threat against Subercaseaux. In December, the regime detained APSI photographic reporter Oscar Navarro as he covered a demonstration for human rights. In July of 1986, Carabineros killed APSI photographer Rodrigo Rojas Denegri.

In 1986, Rojas Denegri, the nineteen-year-old son of an exile returned to Chile, was a freelance photographer hired by APSI to take pictures of the national protests set to take place on July 2 and 3. While Rojas covered the protest, Carabineros attacked the group he was covering. They captured Rojas and another protestor, Carmen Gloria Quintana. Their captors beat them while interrogating them about the intentions of the

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36 Baltra Montaner, Atentados a la Libertad de Información. 44.
37 Ibid., 45.
38 Ibid., 47.
group. The Carabineros then set them on fire.\textsuperscript{39} Once they had been burned to the point of disfigurement Carabineros wrapped them in blankets and loaded them into the back of a truck. They dumped the two in the middle of a “fallow site” seventeen kilometers outside Santiago.\textsuperscript{40} Only Gloria survived the incident with Rojas succumbing to his injuries and dying July 6 in a Santiago hospital.

\textit{APSI} condemned the Pinochet government for the killing and mourned the loss of Rojas. In issue 183, Heraldo Muñoz wrote an opinion piece titled, “Returning to Chile to Die.” In it, Muñoz stated the Chilean people deserved justice and hoped “the tragic experience of the youth who returned to Chile to die will not be in vain and serve, at least, to move the conscience of those who can act to put an end to the arbitrariness, torture, humiliation and misery that affect the vast majority of the population.”\textsuperscript{41} In the editorial of the same issue, Contreras blamed the climate created by Pinochet as the reason for Rojas’s death. It linked the problems in Chilean society to Pinochet’s lust for power and his intent to step forward as the presidential candidate for the 1988 plebiscite. The reason the opposition wanted control of Chile was what separated it from Pinochet. They wanted control of Chile “Not for power, for government, or control of the state.” They fought “for life, for peace, for justice, and for liberty. And in this fight all Chileans


who really share these values take part.” APSI’s staff hoped that the tragedy of Rojas’s death would show Chileans once and for all why the dictatorship needed to end.

Some groups on the Left, including the MDP and FPMR, did not need the death of a youth to convince them that Pinochet had to go. In August 1986, the regime announced its discovery of a huge cache of weapons in the northern desert. It found over three thousand M-16 rifles, almost 300 rocket launchers, around two thousand grenades, and a large supply of ammunition. The regime immediately blamed the Communist Party and the FPMR. To prove it, Pinochet invited a group of U.S. experts to Chile to verify that the weapons stash belonged to FPMR. Before the owner of the weapons could be officially verified, the FPMR removed the doubt that they belonged to it. Less than a month after the discovery of the arsenal in the North on September 7, the FPMR ambushed Pinochet as his caravan returned from his rest home El Melocotón. The attack occurred in a narrow portion of the mountain road leading back into Santiago, with FPMR members assaulting the caravan using automatic weapons and rocket launchers killing five soldiers and injuring twelve others. Pinochet managed to escape due to the skill of his driver and the failure of a rocket to explode when it hit his vehicle.

Pinochet responded violently to the attempt on his life. Pinochet immediately declared a “state of siege,” and DINACOS revoked permission to publish for the opposition press. Members of the opposition in no way connected to the Communist Party or the FPMR became the targets of Pinochet’s wrath. The regime arrested many

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43 Stern, Battling for Hearts and Minds, 324.
44 Arriagada, Por la Razon o la Fuerza, 194.
45 Stern, Battling for Hearts and Minds, 325.
opposition leaders including Ricardo Lagos, the socialist leader of the nonviolent AD. It also killed numerous Chileans who had nothing to do with the attempt on his life, among them the international news editor for the opposition magazine *Análisis*, José Carrasco Tapia. Pinochet did not lift the “state of siege” until January 1987.

**APSI, Humor, and the Assassination of Pinochet’s Character**

By the end of 1986, Pinochet had asserted his control of the country. The FPMR’s violent attack on Pinochet united the Right behind him. The economy also began to grow again after the downturn of the early 1980s. He felt secure enough to allow more space for the opposition. On December 10, 1986, the regime granted *APSI* permission to publish weekly under the “state of siege.” It did not lift the ban on other opposition magazines until the third of January 1987. At that time, he also lifted the ban on political parties. Both the military government and the opposition turned their attentions to the impending 1988 plebiscite.

*APSI* received numerous letters congratulating it on being allowed to publish again. These letters show how important *APSI* was to the opposition movement. Among numerous others, acting president of the Radical Party Carlos González Márquez wrote, “With profound satisfaction we have learned of the reappearance of your prestigious magazine.” Gabriel Valdés Subercaseaux, president of the Christian Democrat Party wrote, “I want to offer my sincere congratulations on the reappearance of *APSI*. Your magazine has been necessary. You give life to news media, free, serious, and very

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interesting.” President of the right-wing Republican Party, Armando Jarmillo concurred with the others noting, “the fact that the newspaper in your worthy direction has been liberated from the injustice of its closure is a large triumph for democracy.”

With the support of numerous opposition parties, APSI continued to play a key role in the preparations for the 1988 plebiscite. In its first issue back, APSI published a “Call for Dialogue for Democratic Coalition,” written by the leaders of the parties belonging to MDP. In it, they proposed cooperation between all parties on the Left, Center, and Right that sought a return to democracy. They would form a coalition for democracy “without altering the autonomy of those parties or political alliances.”

Although the Democratic Alliance did not agree to form a coalition with MDP, due to their support of violence, the ideas laid out in this call would influence the “No” movement. APSI’s decision to publish a document written by Marxist-Leninists in their first issue back was bold. Article 8 of the Constitution of 1980 made it a crime. The fact that the regime did not pursue legal action against APSI demonstrated that they believed their position to be strong enough not to worry about this.

APSI continued to inform readers about both the opposition and the government. The Constitution of 1980 set up the plebiscite so the military could choose a candidate, but that person would run against a “no” vote. If the “no” vote won, congressional and presidential elections would be held the following year. In May 1987, APSI published an

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article about Pinochet on the campaign trail, even though the military had not officially named him as the candidate. The article claimed there was a plan to run a political campaign to continue the dictatorship and that “a political campaign needs an electoral program and a candidate. And that candidate is no other than General Augusto Pinochet.” Pinochet would not officially announce himself as the candidate until August 1988.

In 1987, the government began to reconstruct the electoral registers it had destroyed in 1974, which needed to be reconstructed for the plebiscite to meet international standards for legitimacy, and all Chileans needed to be registered to participate in the 1988 plebiscite. However, many Chileans expressed skepticism about registering and the fairness of the plebiscite. APSI encouraged its readers to register and participate in the plebiscite. One full-page ad asked readers if they “wanted to have Marcos as President of Chile.” It described how Ferdinand Marcos, dictator of the Philippines, was defeated in 1986. According to APSI, the important factor was the “millions of Filipinos that registered in time to vote against him.” It cautioned, “In Chile, if only Pinochet’s supporters register, Pinochet will win.”

During 1987, the regime allowed opposition magazines to publish stories about human rights violations and the opposition movement, but absolutely restricted the freedom of press on one topic: Pinochet. In August 1987, APSI published an extra edition called APSI-Humor. The issue, called “The Thousand Faces of Pinochet,”

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52 The Americas Watch Committee, Chile: Human Rights and the Plebiscite, 105.
53 APSI, “Querría Usted a Marcos como Presidente de Chile?,” APSI: Por El Derecho a No Estar De Acuerdo, July 6-12, No. 208, 1987, 19.
satirized Pinochet as having multiple personalities. The regime confiscated 15,000 copies, arrested, and held APSI’s director, Marcelo Contreras, and its sub director, Sergio Marras, without bail. APSI’s staff changed the cover picture of APSI-Humor by obscuring Pinochet’s face with a mask, and used it as the cover of the next issue of APSI. The cover depicted Pinochet as Louis the XIV of France, complete with makeup and wig. In an article titled “Military Prosecutor Bans Laughing,” APSI explained its use of humor this way, “Humor is not simply a line and a laugh, but it communicates a wide range of ideas, sentiments, and opinions.” Despite the name of the article, APSI continued to use humor as a tool to express its message. The regime released Contreras and Marras almost two months later.

At the end of 1987, the opposition had made major strides in preparation for 1988. Most of the political parties that made up the AD had successfully met the government’s requirements for legal representation as such. At the end of 1987, over 3 million people had registered to vote with the number continuing to rise. On the government’s side, it had yet to name a candidate for the plebiscite. The regime’s harsh enforcement of anti-slander laws against the opposition press when they published unfavorably about Pinochet seemed to point to him being the candidate. The stage was set for the year of the plebiscite.

APSI, the Concertación, and the 1988 Plebiscite

54 Baltra Montaner, Atentados a la Libertad de Información. 54.
On February 2, 1988, thirteen opposition parties met at Tupahue Hotel and formed the Coalition of Parties for “No” (The Concertación). These parties pledged to work together to advance the cause of the “No” vote without sacrificing any individual party’s sovereignty. What emerged from the Tupahue resembled the proposal made by the MDP a year earlier; however, the PC and MIR were not included because they continued to advocate violent change. The Concertación abandoned hopes of running a candidate against the government’s candidate and resolved to fully participate in the 1988 plebiscite as per the Constitution of 1980. APSI’s coverage of the event served two purposes: to inform the public about the opposition’s move and to make Pinochet look poor in comparison. It accomplished both in an article titled “Political Moment: The Opposition Takes the Lead,” in which Fabrizio argued that the value of the coalition aside from its broad spectrum of political support, had two main features. The first was that “no is not chaos, but it represents a constructive, ordered, and peaceful path for rebuilding democracy.”57 The Second was “to vote no, the people would break Pinochet, his regime, and his institutional project.”58 The article accomplished the objective of lampooning Pinochet by discussing what he had been doing when the coalition was created. On February 4, “Pinochet had already returned from his vacation to La Moneda but he had yet to make any comments to the press.”59 However, he took questions from the press later that day until he became angered by one of the journalists, called him

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., 4.
names, and stormed off. APSI showed a well organized unified opposition with a clear goal juxtaposed against a self-centered childish opponent.

For the Concertación, opposition magazines became one of the most important ways to reach a wide audience with their message. Although the Constitution of 1980 guaranteed both the government and the opposition equality in televised campaign spots, news coverage often heavily favored the regime. The national television channel covered the “Yes” campaign almost exclusively and the Catholic University Channel 13 covered the “Yes” campaign in over 80% of its news reporting. APSI covered the Concertación and the opposition for the majority of pages in every issue leading up to the plebiscite. It also began publishing advertisements for the “No” campaign before the end of February.

On June 20, APSI reported that the PC had resolved to participate in the 1988 plebiscite and vote “No.” The change in policies was widely reported on by both opposition publications and mainstream media. The following week, the government took legal action against the editors of APSI, Análisis, Cauce, and Fortín Mapocho for violating the law against publishing Marxist-Leninist material. Each of these publications if convicted would have to pay large fines to the government. The regime’s enforcement of the law eight years after its creation showed both a new strategy to control the opposition and that the regime perceived its position to be less secure.

In 1988, the regime abandoned its policy of harassing or detaining individual journalists or editors in favor of levying large fines against the publications themselves.

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60 Ibid.
61 Huneeus, The Pinochet Regime, 419.
63 The Americas Watch Committee, Chile: Human Rights and the Plebiscite, 142.
At the first violation of a law the government could fine a magazine up to U.S. $19,800, with a second infraction doubling the fine.\(^64\) Getting fined could be devastating for an opposition magazine, most barely made enough money to cover their expenses. One editor told An Americas Watch delegation his magazine would not survive three fines and another editor doubted that his could survive even one.\(^65\) The journalists who worked for opposition magazines were strong willed and brave individuals, but the regime had found a weak spot, the wallet.

Pinochet increased pressure on the opposition press because his position seemed to be weakening. While his opposition seemed to be uniting behind “No,” key groups of his supporters on the Right were breaking away from him. Jaime Guzmán and his gremailistas had begun to break with Pinochet in an effort to position Guzmán to be the Right’s presidential candidate if “No” succeeded. “Yes” also consistently polled behind “No.” In July 1988, “No” polled at 42% whereas “Yes” only received 36.6% with the rest of the respondents unsure or not replying. In August, 40.6% of people polled responded “No,” but only 30.8% responded “yes.”\(^66\) The regime seemed to be losing ground right before the beginning of the official campaign period for the plebiscite.

The Constitution of 1980 limited the official campaign period for a plebiscite to twenty-eight days, beginning thirty days before the vote and ending two days prior. During this time period, the constitution prohibited posters in public places, sound trucks, and wall painting. The constitution did allow groups to hold assemblies and pass out
Opposition magazines, like *APSI*, helped the “No” campaign get around the restriction on public signs. By publishing very overt anti-Pinochet or pro-“No” pictures or slogans on their covers, opposition publication essentially served as smaller posters in public at any kiosk or stand that sold them. An excellent example of this strategy is the “superstitious general” discussed in the introduction. The cover of issue 268 from September 1988 also served this purpose. It prominently featured a picture of the bombing of La Moneda and a celebratory Pinochet. The title read, “The Nomination of Pinochet: Trip to the Past.” The cover served to remind people of the violent illegal nature of the overthrow of Allende and Pinochet’s seemingly glee filled role in it. By October, the opposition had done everything in its power to achieve a “No” victory.

On October 5 1988, Chileans went to the polls. As both the opposition and the government tabulated the results, many Chileans intently listened to their radios or watched their televisions. At 6:00 pm, the Catholic University’s Channel 13 announced early tabulations in which it appeared “Yes” had a significant lead. By 7:00 pm, numerous opposition radio stations were reporting a clear victory for “No.” Meanwhile, Channel 13 broadcasted Looney Toons. At 7:35, the polls had all closed and the government issued its first official count, with “Yes” in the lead throughout all of Chile. At 9:30, the government again announced that the “Yes” vote continued to be in the lead. However, at “No” headquarters the Concertación had carried out their own count and had

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69 “La Nominación de Pinochet de Vuelta al Pasado,” *APSI*, September 5-11, 1988, cover.
71 Ibid., 41.
72 Ibid., 42.
“No” winning with 58% of the vote. Early morning on the October 6, after some internal debate within La Moneda, the government announced the victory of the “No” vote. The semi empty streets of Santiago filled with hundreds of celebrants.

Conclusion

Pinochet remained president until a transition the government transitioned to civilian rule in 1990 as dictated by the Constitution of 1980. APSI and other opposition publications played an important role disseminating the message of the AD and later the Concertación. APSI achieved its success by taking advantages of the reduction of repression brought about by Pinochet’s economic and legal-institutional success. APSI used these openings to push the limit on what was acceptable to be published and at time received violent pushback for it. In the end, all the risks were rewarded by the shared victory of “No.”

73 Ibid., 44.
74 Ibid., 46.
CONCLUSION

On September 11, 1973, the military coup that toppled Salvador Allende began seventeen years of dictatorship. The political violence and repression under the dictatorship was worse than anything experienced in the history of Chile as the Pinochet regime murdered over 3,000 people, and detained and tortured tens of thousands more. Pinochet also restricted the freedoms of speech and suppressed the opposition press, but despite the harsh repression, opposition journalists took great risks and exploited openings in the regime’s censorship policies to oppose the regime.

*APSI* played a critical role in the opposition movement. In its first years of publication, it overcame strict censorship to provide the opposition with a voice in the public sphere. By 1979, APSI regularly covered national news, despite not having permission to do so, and printed interviews with numerous opposition leaders including former ministers in the Allende government and former president Frei. Although the regime closed the magazine five times during the dictatorship, APSI’s staff refused to be bullied and continued to press forward running advertisements for the opposition and using humor to reach an audience discontent with the government. As the 1988 plebiscite approached APSI stepped up its efforts to discredit Pinochet’s government and remind people of the human rights violations he had committed.

Between September, 1973 and December 1976, the military government suppressed all forms of opposition, because its legal-institutional status depended on the “state of siege” and it had no clear economic plans. During these years, the military even
treated ecclesiastic human rights organizations, such as the Committee for Peace (COPACHI), as dangerous sources of opposition. COPACHI provided assistance to known Marxist-Leninists and Pinochet forced it to close. In 1976, the COPACHI used its money to fund the first opposition magazine, APSI, to which DINACOS granted permission to publish international news. The staff at APSI took extraordinary risks to oppose the Pinochet regime. When it began publishing in 1976, it was the only legal public voice for the opposition that the regime allowed. Since the regime had only given APSI permission to publish international news, its staff cleverly used international human rights stories to make comparative criticisms of the regime. A strategy that the magazine would continue to use any time the military government restricted its content to international news.

When Pinochet announced the 1980 constitutional plebiscite, APSI covered former president Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei’s harsh critiques of it, while papers like El Mercurio and television stations largely ignored him. APSI urged its readers to vote against the plebiscite, taking the line of the opposition at the time. Despite the opposition’s efforts, the 1980 Constitution passed granting Pinochet a greater degree of institutional stability. It also created a clear timetable for a return to democracy, one that APSI and the opposition used to their advantage in the coming years.

Despite waves of repression throughout the 1980s, APSI’s readership continued to grow and its editorial choices became focused on achieving a “No” victory in 1988. APSI utilized humor to make their criticisms of the regime more compelling and relatable. They also used it to discredit Pinochet’s leadership, making him appear
foolish, inept, and insane. As Pinochet publicized his economic and political successes, *APSI* continued to remind people of his human rights violations, utilizing both dramatic cover images and articles. The clear timeline set up by the Constitution of 1980 allowed *APSI* not just to report on events, but also to influence them. As the plebiscite approached, *APSI* encouraged its readers to register communicating that if people who opposed the dictatorship were too afraid to vote then Pinochet would win. By reporting on successful rallies, *APSI* gave readers courage to participate in opposition political events. *APSI*, eventually, ran advertisements for political rallies.

Though others founded opposition magazines throughout the dictatorship, *APSI* received the support of a broad spectrum of opposition forces because it did not restrict itself to hiring people of only one political viewpoint. This work demonstrates that by appealing to the Left and Center in order to create an alliance against the authoritarian Right, *APSI* from its first issue, anticipated the path a successful opposition movement would need to take and reflected the later formation of the Concertación. When political parties began to play a larger role in opposition politics during the 1980s, they quickly realized they would have more strength as a unified coalition and created a cooperative “No” movement and then the Concertación. *APSI*, whose readership already matched the make-up of these movements, provided them with a well established media outlet by which they could reach a sympathetic audience with their message. Just as many television, radio, and newspapers covered Pinochet, *APSI* and other opposition publications focused the majority of their coverage on the opposition, strengthening its public presence. They did not focus on the role of any one political party or leader, but
ran interviews with many opposition leaders and published articles speculating about possible presidential candidates thus personalizing the impersonal “No” and giving it a recognizable face. The Concertación succeeded in 1988 with the triumph of the “No” vote in the plebiscite. In accordance with the Constitution of 1980, the government held elections the following year and Chileans elected Patricio Aylwin as President, with Pinochet stepping down in 1990.
APSI continued to publish after the plebiscite until 1995. It gained the distinction as the last opposition magazine to close following the return to democracy, but its readership began to dwindle as early as 1990. Along with the return to democracy, Chile’s pluralism in publications also returned. Political parties once more on both the Left and the Right began printing papers and APSI lost its market niche. It also lost the aid of international human rights organization as a source of funding, since government was no longer a dictatorship. The magazine stopped making enough money to pay its bills and Contreras was forced to close it in 1995, unable to pay its staff’s wages. APSI had fought hard to exist under Pinochet but amid new political conditions it lost its niche and was unable to survive in a democracy.

After its closing, APSI’s staff moved on, with many of its members becoming very successful. APSI’s first director, Arturo Navarro, left APSI in 1981, but continued to work in the opposition press, eventually taking up a position with Fortin Mapocho, the only opposition daily newspaper. After the dictatorship, he served as a member of President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle’s Cultural and Artistic Advisory Commission and later served President Ricardo Lagos as the Executive Secretary of the Committee on Cultural Infrastructure. Following his time in government, Navarro became Executive Director of the private Mapocho Station Cultural Center, a position he retains today. APSI’s second and last director, Marcelo Contreras, created a rift between himself and other APSI employees by not paying his staff before he closed the magazine in 1995.

75 Araya Jofré, Historia de la Revista APSI, 87.
Contreras was so committed to *APSI* he willingly ran it at a loss in order to continue to publish, eventually it could no longer be sustained and Contreras was forced to close the magazine. *APSI* contributor Francisco Mouat described the difference between Contreras’s view and the rest of *APSI*’s staff this way: “For us *APSI* was a magazine; for Maras, Villagrán, and Contreras it was a political task.”

Contreras now directs the media watchdog Fucatel. John Dinges left Chile in 1979, but continued to publish articles in *APSI* until the end of the dictatorship, sometimes under pseudonyms. He left his typewriter and file cabinet in the *APSI* offices and continued to visit them eager to learn which staff member was currently using his equipment. He also worked out of the *APSI* offices whenever he was in Chile until the magazine closed in 1995.

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76 Francisco Mouat in Araya Jofré, *Historia de la Revista APSI*, 93.
77 John Dinges, phone interview with author, May 4, 2011.
Image 1 APSI’s First Drawing.¹

¹ Guillermo Tejada, “Giscard mira hacia la izquierda,” in *APSI: Actualidad Internacional* April 1-16, No. 41. 1978, 3.
Image 2 Early “No” advertisement from 1985.²

² APSI, “Para Que Nunca Mas,” APSI: La Nueva Alternativa Periodística, December 16-29, No. 168, 51.
Image 3 The cover of issue 214; originally published without the mask.³

³ APSI, “El Que Se Ríe Se Va al Cuartel,” APSI: Por El Derecho a No Estar De Acuerdo, August 24-30, No. 214. Cover.
Image 4 Marcelo Contreras and Sergio Marras being transported to trial in 1987.4

4 APSI, “Fiscal Militar Prohíbe la Risa,” APSI: Por El Derecho a No Estar De Acuerdo, August 31-September 6, No. 215. 10.
Image 5  “No” campaign cover from August 1988. 

5 APSI, “No,” APSI: Por el Derecho a No Estar De Acuerdo, August 29- September 4, No. 267, cover.
Image 6 The cover of *APSI* 268. An anti-Pinochet cover during the Campaign period.\(^6\)

\(^6\)“La Nominación de Pinochet de Vuelta al Pasado,” *APSI*, September 5-11, 1988, cover.
Image 7 The Superstitious General predicts a loss.\footnote{“Un General Supersticioso,” in APSI, September 19-25, No. 270. 1988, cover.}
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