

LATAM

NY Times May.  
Feb 19, 1967.

## Eduardo Frei Is Trying 'A Revolution Without The Execution Wall'

By BARNARD COLLIER

SANTIAGO, Chile.

**A** SKINNY dog from Chile and a fat dog from Argentina met in a mountain pass on the border between the two countries and, both having climbed nearly 12,000 feet straight up, stopped to rest.

"You seem to have suffered a rough trip," said the beautiful, sleek Argentine dog, noting that the Chilean dog's ribs were visible through his sad coat.

"Yes," snapped the Chilean dog, "I am not nearly so well nourished as you. But I am told that in Argentina there is more than enough for all and therefore I am headed that way."

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BARNARD COLLIER is a correspondent for The Times in Latin America.

"Ah, yes," said the Argentine dog proudly. "In Argentina we have filet mignon three times a day if we like. We have the great wines from Mendoza. And one can satisfy almost any craving in Buenos Aires. It is the Paris of South America. Lord, the girls in their Dior frocks and Dior shoes, their perfect coiffures, their delicious . . . I'm sorry, I get carried away."

"Well, I must be off," said the Chilean dog. "Adiós."

"Adiós," said the Argentine dog, and he trotted off toward Santiago.

"Wait a minute!" shouted the Chilean dog after he had gone a few strides. "Why on earth, after all you've told me about your country, are you going to *Chile*? Tell me, *hombre!*"

The Argentine dog turned around. "I'm going to Chile," he replied softly, "to bark."

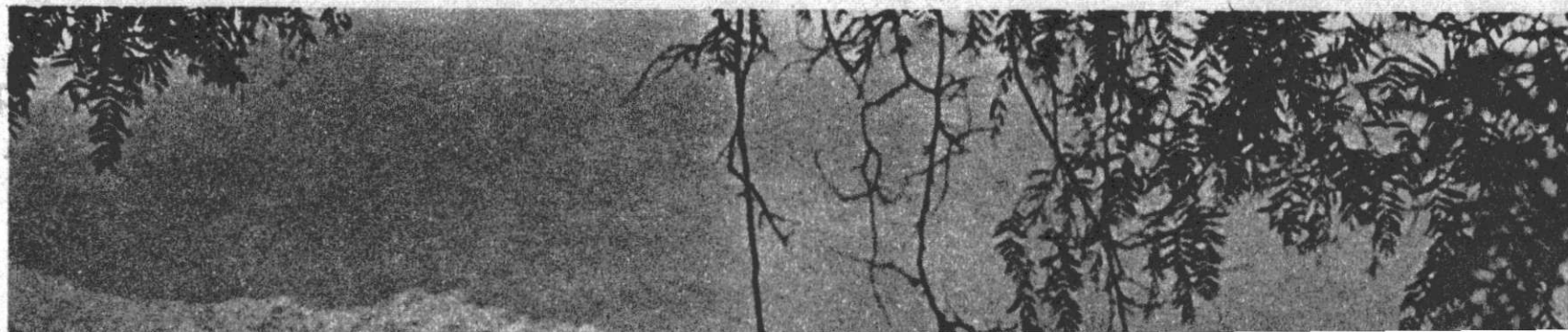
**I**T is an old European fable, adopted by both Chileans and Argentines for different effect. But it illustrates better than all their proud patriotic phrases just how special the Chileans feel in relation to some of their South American neighbors.

Take Argentina, for example, they say: it is now run by the military and the extreme right wing of the Catholic Church, and neither brooks much backtalk. Brazil is controlled by a once-docile military which now has a messiah complex. Paraguay is ruled by Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, who wears jackboots and stands for no

nonsense and never has. The military in Peru last tossed out an elected president five years ago, and though it now seems pleased with President Fernando Belaúnde Terry's economic miracle, it still lurks in the background.

Can countries like these hope to lead Latin America in the 20th century? ask the Chileans. Can Western nations without full political freedom presume to worldwide prestige? Can they avoid the inevitable bloodshed provoked by frustrated rights and abridged freedoms? Can they hope to achieve what Chile is going to achieve because of its uniqueness, its free political spirit?

Obviously not, answer the Chileans. So with the nth degree of conceit, Chileans are convinced that



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Chilean dog. "Adiós."

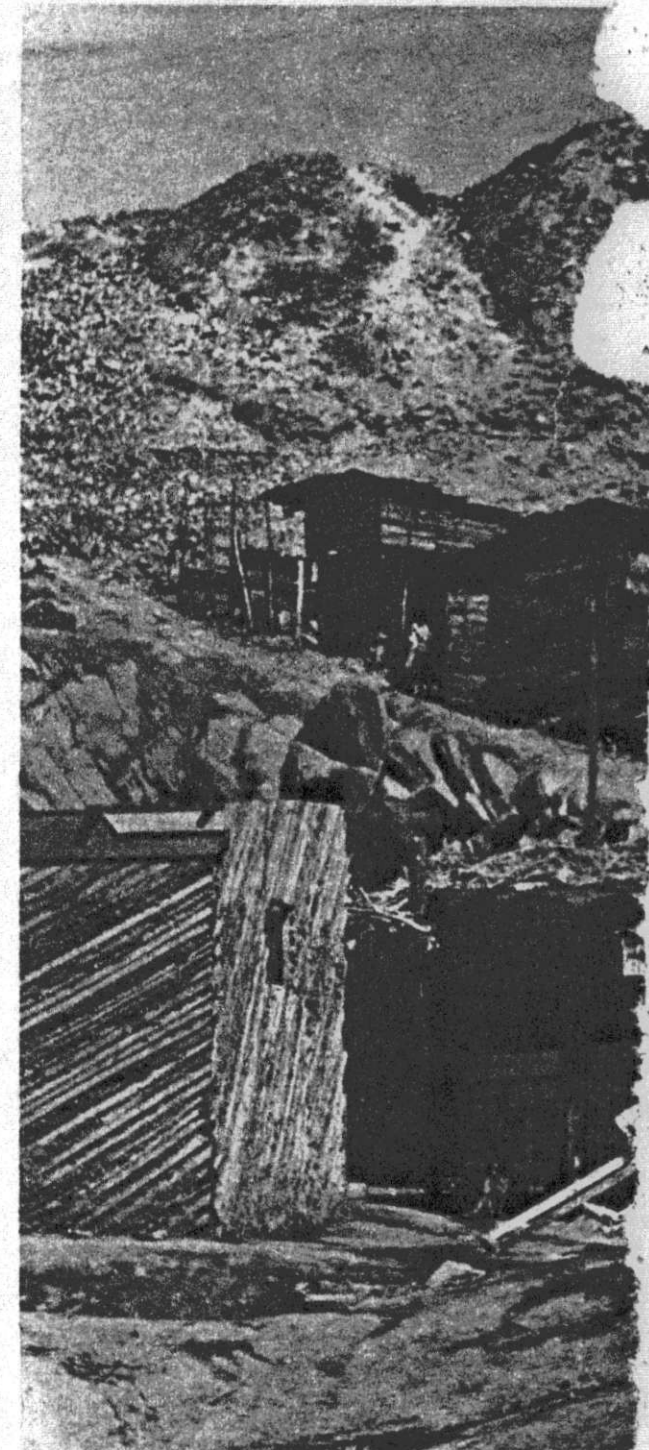
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the eyes of the world are focused on their peculiar-looking country for news of its social and economic experiment.

**T**HE man who is President of this self-preoccupied country of 8.5-million people is Eduardo Frei Montalva, 56, who sees himself—as, indeed, many others also see him—as perhaps the most accomplished “statesman” in all Latin America. Sometimes, it seems, President Frei (pronounced Fray) relishes more his picture of himself as Latin America’s voice and conscience than he does the irritating business of simply being the leader of a single country constantly in a state of hypertension.

Frei loves the international scene.

“The world in general recognizes the effort that is being made in Chile,” he told his people not long ago, “and the most outstanding figures in the world come here to express their warm interest and respect, and even their enthusiasm, for what is happening here.”

And when the world’s great cannot make it to Chile, the Chilean President and statesman is more than happy to go to the world’s great—to London to visit the Queen, to Rome for sessions with Aldo Moro, to Paris for talks with de Gaulle. Or to Washington to see President Johnson.

But this last he has not yet done, and when an invitation came recently for a state visit to Washington on

*(Continued on Page 80)*



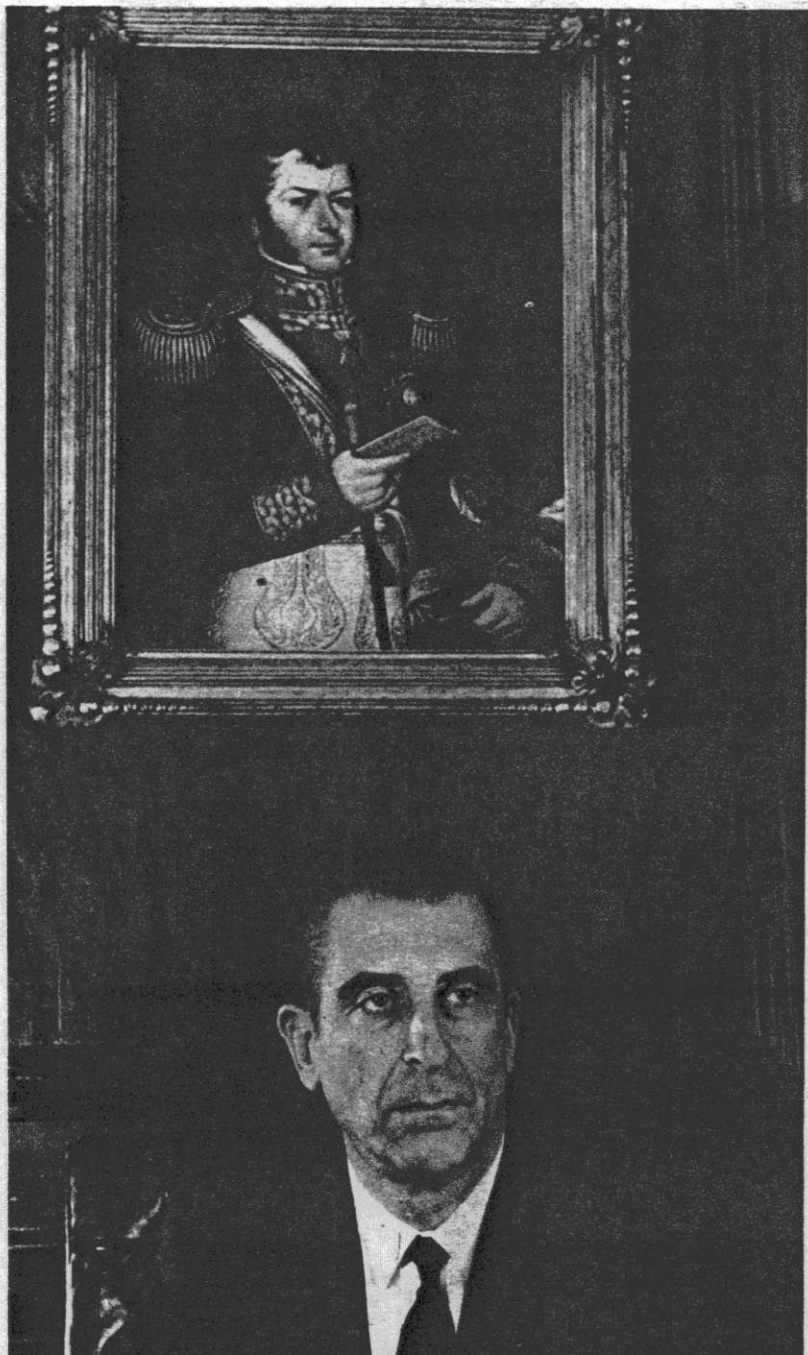
“President Frei projects an image of lean, quiet sternness like because it suits their conception of the country beneath a portrait of Chile’s Liberator, Bernardo O’Higgins.”

*Left—*

“The rich of Chile, owning about 50 per cent of the land, are very, very rich—and very, very conservative. grinding poverty.” Far left, the Santiago skyline, beyond; left, shanty houses on a Santiago hillside.

**Chile’s audacious President has taken himself a tricky course: attempting to steer between the extremes to which his poor and still feudal country’s politics run.**





"President Frei projects an image of lean, quiet sternness that Chileans like because it suits their conception of the country." Above, Frei beneath a portrait of Chile's Liberator, Bernardo O'Higgins.

Left—

"The rich of Chile, owning about 50 per cent of the useful land, are very, very rich—and very, very conservative. The poor live in grinding poverty." Far left, the Santiago skyline, with the Andes beyond; left, shanty houses on a Santiago hillside.

**Chile's audacious President has set himself a tricky course: attempting to steer between the extremes to which his poor and still feudal country's politics run.**

## Eduardo Frei's 'Revolution' (Cont.)

(From Page 31)

Feb. 1 and 2 he very badly wanted to go. Junketing around Europe does no harm at home, but a trip to the United States is something else again: that is where the money and the power are.

To complete his personal portrait of the statesman, President Frei needed the ride in the bubble-top Lincoln down Pennsylvania Avenue, the lovely state dinners and the scores of Chilean reporters sending back to Santiago every trivial detail. Frei knew he was going to get these things, and he is vain enough, his friends and his enemies agree, to find it difficult to expect less.

**T**HEN, alas, on Jan. 17, two weeks before he was to leave, the Chilean Senate astonishingly voted against allowing Frei to leave the country. They acted under an anachronistic constitutional provision that requires the permission of the Congress before a Chilean chief of state can go abroad. The law dates back to 1833 and was written to protect against the possibility of the nation's leader hopping a ship to Europe and absenting himself from the country for months at a time. Ironically, it was one of several constitutional quirks that Frei was going to iron out when he put through a promised constitutional reform, but just hadn't gotten around to.

The vote marked the first time in Chilean history that the Congress had denied a President permission to go abroad to conduct international business. It was a calculated humiliation by Frei's opposition: the extreme-leftist Socialists (hewing to some kind of Peking line), the Moscow-lining Communists, the Ultra-Rightists and the more liberal Radicals. They demonstrated their scorn not so much for Frei personally—even his enemies respect him for his honesty and personal values—but for what they think he and his Christian Democratic Government are doing to them and to Chile, hand-in-hand with the United States.

Two days after the Senate vote Frei reacted in a way expected by almost no one. In a ringing speech from the balcony of the Moneda Presidential Palace in downtown Santiago, he called for the dissolution of the Congress and a new election. He claimed that he and his party faced a "conspiracy" of extremism and demanded a vote of confidence directly from the people. It appears now that he is going to get his new elections—perhaps by May or June—preceded by Congressional approval of a constitutional amendment that will make the extraordinary elections possible.

Frei is clearly taking a serious gamble. He is risking his party's present majority in the Chamber of Deputies (82 of 145 seats) for the opportunity of also getting a majority in the obstreperous Senate, where he now has only 13 out of 45 seats. No-

body is yet making any serious predictions that Frei will win this gamble, for if and when the election comes off the campaign before it is bound to be brutal. But there is no question that the Christian Democrats have some strong talking points—all the stronger considering what they have managed to accomplish in a country with such freakish geography and paucity of real riches.

**C**HILE is an incredible 2,600 miles long and stretches from the parched nitrate sands of the Atacama Desert bordering Peru in the north to the desolate little point of Cape Horn in the Antarctic. To the East, Chile is walled in by the highest and most rugged peaks of the Andean cordillera; to the west is the Pacific.

In the 300-mile-long Central Valley live 76 per cent of the nation's people on 40 per cent of the arable land. There the top soil is at best six feet deep and crossed by fast-flowing rivers that start in the sterile mountain snows and leave little in the way of mineral deposits to revive the land as they rush by. Nonetheless, the valley does produce, when prompted hard, marvelous fruits and vegetables, grains and cattle—but today not enough.

Nothing in Chile is easy to get to or easy to exploit. The huge deposits of copper and iron in the mountains are perversely located where even eagles might find it difficult to go. The Kennecott Copper Company's gigantic El Teniente mine (the largest underground copper mine in the world) perches at 9,200 feet on the western slopes of the Andes, 110 miles by a most courageous railroad from the main copper port of San Antonio. The cattle, wheat and sheep areas are tied to distant markets by weaving roads over washboard terrain, and the fine timberlands of the far south are 1,000 or more miles from a good market (which means that almost everything Chile has to sell is expensive because of the cost of transportation).

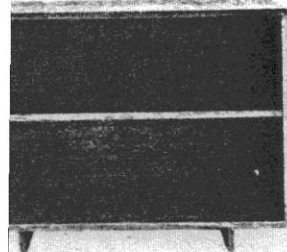
In this strange and lovely land—broiled by the sun on one end, bitten by frost on the other, corrugated in-between—live a people almost as unusual as they think they are.

Chileans are probably the least militaristic people in South America, though they have in fact won hands down almost every war they have fought. They have a fierce independence, perhaps in part due to their isolation, yet for a century they have been the most intensive seekers and users of foreign capital in Latin America. And they are, by and large, the most honest of Latins in their governmental dealing. Bribery, while certainly not unknown, is not a way of life as in most Latin countries, and when it is discovered, people actually go to jail.

Chile is one of the most politically sophisticated and mature nations in

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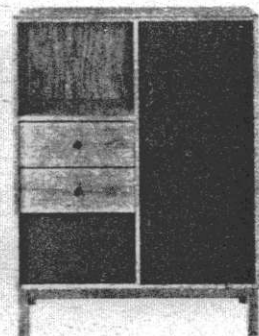
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the world, and Chileans know it. Chile is also woefully underdeveloped, and Chileans know that, too. Today, on the shoulders of Eduardo Frei, the paradox of Chile's sophistication and its simultaneous underdevelopment is carried like a personal cross.

**T**ALL and gaunt with straight graying hair and a nose to rival his friend de Gaulle's, President Frei projects an image of lean, quiet sternness that Chileans like because it suits their conception of the country. Frei is also a master politician and the ideologist-in-chief of his Christian Democratic party—a combination that further endears him to Chileans, who love politics and are highly proud of the nation's intellectual reputation.

Frei was born in Santiago on Jan. 16, 1911, the son of young Swiss parents just arrived from Europe. His father soon moved the family to the village of Lontué to the south, where he became the administrator of the wine cellars. There young Frei attended a one-room schoolhouse where he was, as he would be throughout his academic career, the best pupil; he ultimately was graduated from the Catholic University of Chile in Santiago as a lawyer, first in his class.

During Frei's university days many of the leaders of today's Christian Democrats got to know each other, and to respect Frei as a kind of born leader. He was president of the Catholic Youth of Chile and founder and ramrod of a lot of things. In 1935, Frei, then 24, and the present Interior Minister, Bernardo Leighton,

founded the National Movement of the Youth of the Conservative party, which four years later became the National Falange party and 20 years after that, in 1959, became the Christian Democratic party of Chile.

The steel in Frei's political backbone was tempered during years of excellent government experience: as Minister of Public Works in 1945, Senator from the far-away Coquimbo and Atacama provinces in 1949, and Senator for Santiago, his major victory, in 1957. There are old photographs of Frei during these years, in shirtsleeves, in swimming pools, in large groups. His face always stands out, his deep-set eyes are always looking hard into the lens, he is almost always in the center. Frei was never lost in the crowd. Nor is he now.

**T**HE rich of Chile are very, very rich—and very, very conservative. The poor are dreadfully poor. The rich, who owned about 50 per cent of the useful land when Chile was a Spanish colony, own about that much today. The poor, the *mestizos* and the factory workers, live today in grinding poverty (the slum-covered mountainsides in Valparaíso are no better, and perhaps worse, than the *javela*-covered mountains in Rio) and they outnumber the rich and the middle class by a good sum. Bernardo O'Higgins, Chile's great "Liberator," recognized and even then tried to come to grips with these social problems following independence 149 years ago. He was overthrown by an oligarchy-led coup for his efforts. And the battle between the rich and the poor goes on today in much the same fashion.

From the nineteen-twenties onward the growth and organization of the Socialist and Communist parties was rapid, and sometimes frightening. Both are now the best-organized (though financially not very sound) Marxist parties in the hemisphere. For 13 years their coalition, the *Frente Popular*, ran Chile—from 1938 to 1951. It finally faded when the Communist coalition partners made a naked, though abortive, grab for power.

In 1952, Gen. Carlos Ibáñez was elected, and with his weird Peasants Workers party proceeded to emulate Argentina's Juan Perón and to promote a kind of Socialism-Fascism that only served to get the cauldron of social restlessness boiling faster. In 1958, with the election of Jorge Alessandri as President, the conservative Old Guard finally got back into power. It was clear, however, that in Chile the days of oligarchic presidents were numbered.

For one thing, the Socialists and the Communists had formed a new coalition called *Frente de Acción Popular*, the Popular Action Front, better known as the FRAP. It was led by Dr. Salvador Allende, a well-to-do Santiago physician with a deep belief in Marxism, who was also the leader of the Socialist party. Allende yearned to be President of Chile and in the 1958 elections was beaten by only 33,000 votes.

The radicalized Chilean left grew

## Black Humor

Only on rare occasions—mostly in the privacy of his comfortable two-story house in one of Santiago's manicured suburbs—does Frei seem to relax. There life ceases for a while to revolve only around him. Instead, he and his seven children, ranging in age from 30 to 17, orbit around his wife, Maria Ruiz Tagle de Frei, a woman who makes up in swift intelligence and graciousness what she lacks in physical beauty. It is a tight-knit family, their friends say, and when they all get together the President is often taken down a notch or two for the sheer fun of it.

Before the 1964 presidential elections, for example, Frei's family set to work thinking up a slogan for his campaign. Finally, the children and Mrs. Frei happily confronted Papa with what they told him was a sure winner. It went:

*La gente quiere Eduardo.  
¿Para que?  
Para matarlo.*

Which translates: "The people want Eduardo. For what? To kill him."

Frei, it is said, got a great kick out of it.

—B. C.

**66By mysterious ways, not talked about and officially denied, Frei's campaign was bolstered by an estimated \$1-million a month, for many months, from American sources, and some \$20-million more from Christian Democrats in Europe.99**

enormously during the next three years. It was clear that Allende was heading toward his dream of the Presidency. His slogans were working, his opposition was split and bankrupt of ideas and ideology. The State Department was rattled; Western Europe was jittery; businessmen were all but panic-stricken. Chile seemed destined to become the first country in the Americas to elect freely a Communist-controlled government.

Enter, not at all inconspicuously, Eduardo Frei and his Christian Democrats. In 1961, the Christian Democrats won for the first time a small but useful number of seats in the Chilean Congress: 23 out of 147 deputies, 3 out of 45 Senators. But this was enough to give Frei a platform (while tiny, the party was suddenly the third largest in the country), and he used it with great skill and no lack of demagoguery.

Frei grabbed the banner of reformism from the FRAP. He proposed massive social reforms, harangued about the crying need of agrarian reform and promised labor unions more bargaining freedom. He sounded, to many unhappy conservatives, more outrageous than the Communists. In fact, Frei and his fledgling party were proposing real revolution in Chile, albeit a peaceful one. As their slogan put it, "Revolution in Liberty."

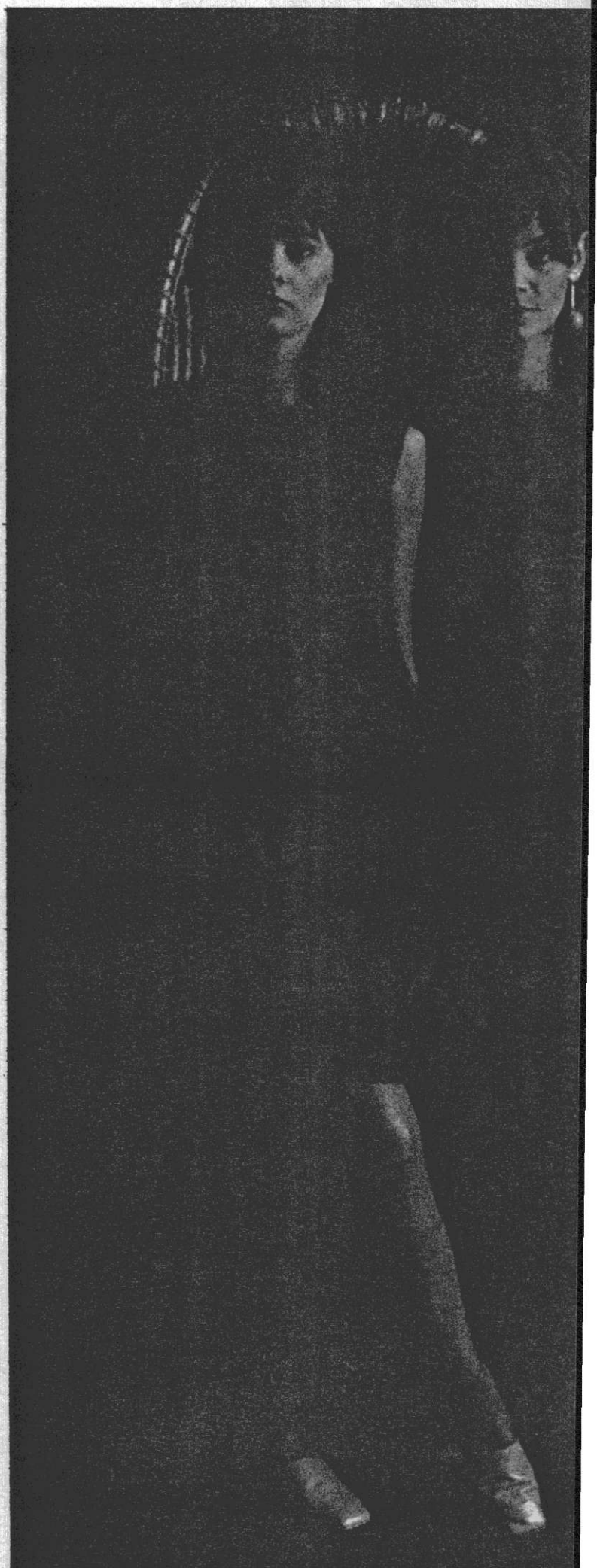
To this day nobody can really say, although Christian Democrats write about it *ad infinitum*, what Christian Democracy really is. But it does seem to be an exceedingly flexible middle road between classical Marxism and progressive capitalism—a leftist Catholicism that spurns Communism but does not mind toying around with Communist and Socialist economic theories if they suit the occasion. Or, as some of the Christian Democrats express it: a Third Force alternative to Communism, and the only one.

**W**HEN the 1964 Presidential elections came, the choice for Chileans was highly complex and frustrating. They could cast their ballots for FRAP and Allende and hope for the best, even if the United States and the West in general would be sick and furious. They could vote for the con-

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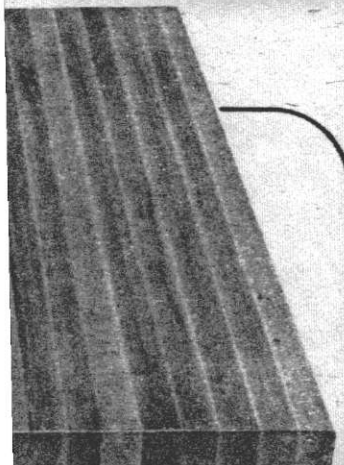
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servative - rightist - liberal coalition, which was certain to lose—a wasted ballot in a country that does not like political wastefulness. Or they could vote for Frei and the Christian Democrats, the Third Force, which would mean putting a new, untested, unknown team with who-knew-what-kind of philosophy in the Moneda Palace.

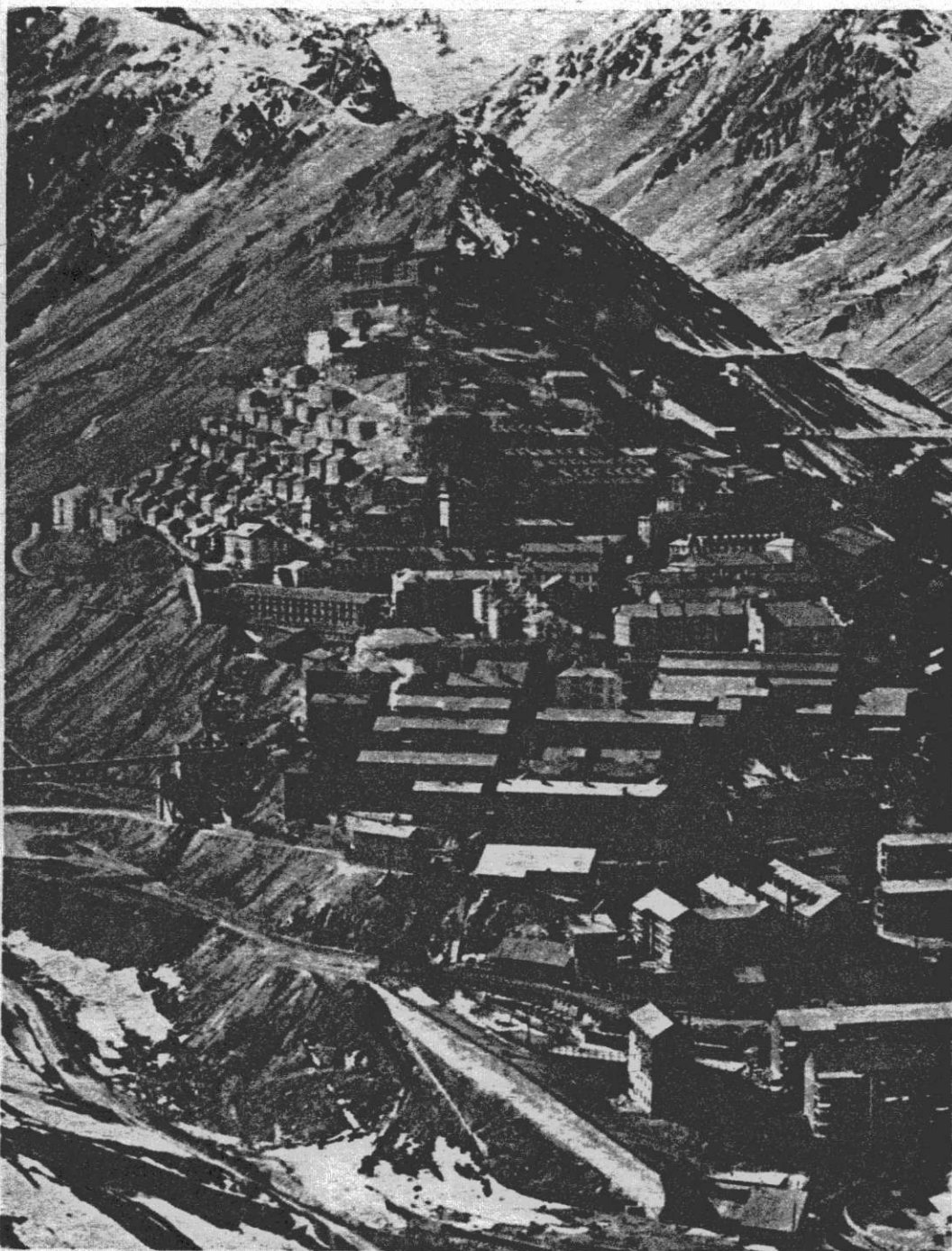
Frei played his hand with the skill and cunning of a professional Latin gambler. He played his best card—the one that said "The Only Alternative"—both inside and outside the country. And with equal success.

In Washington he convinced the White House and the State Department that the United States must back him; on Wall Street he convinced the businessmen. No, he kept arguing, we will not nationalize the copper mines (almost all American-owned), but we do want them turned into partnerships. No, we will not expropriate all the land, but we are going to take and redistribute what is

being left fallow and we will damned well see to it that what we don't take produces food. Yes, we are going to increase taxes, but you of course realize that taxes are now ridiculously low; so no right-thinking man can mind that.

Backing he finally got. By mysterious ways, not talked about and always officially denied, Frei's campaign was bolstered by Yankee dollars and piles of Chilean pesos. A reasonable estimate is that the Christian Democrats got about \$1-million a month, for many months, from American sources, and an estimated \$18- to \$20-million more from the Christian Democrats in West Germany, Italy and Belgium. At the same time, of course, Allende and the FRAP were known to be getting cash from sources of their own, including Cuba and the Soviet Union.

If the campaign financing favored Frei, so did the Christian Democrats' ability to grab and hold votes. Frei hammered away at Allende's association with the Communists, blaming



**KING COPPER**—The Kennecott Copper Company's gigantic El Teniente mine, largest underground copper mine in the world, is perched 9,200 feet up in the Andes, 110 miles from the coast. The mineral is Chile's major export.

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**Frei is best judged, says an American economist, by the 'shrieks and moans of Chileans who are finding out for the first time what it is to have a government serious about deep changes in the old feudal order.'**

Allende personally for the Berlin Wall, the Hungarian bloodshed, the missile crisis, and any other Eastern bloc sin he could think of.

Frei won in a landslide, and the Christian Democrats became the first party in 124 years to have an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies. (It fared less well in the Senate because only half that chamber is elected every eight years, but even there it won more than half of the seats contested.)

Washington turned handsprings. Not that there still weren't reservations about Frei in the State Department, but he had preserved the keystone of United States cold-war diplomacy: no Communist ever gets elected head of a nation in free elections in the free world. President Johnson named Ralph Anthony Dungan, a former White House Latin America adviser to President Kennedy and a practicing Catholic, as U.S. Ambassador to Chile.

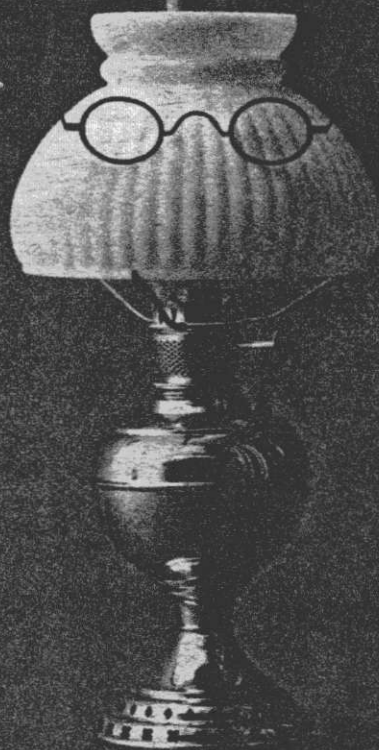
**T**HE accomplishments of Frei and the Christian Democrats in the two and a half years since the election do not knock one's eye out. The Frei Government has built its share of roads (1,500 miles) and bridges (25) and dams and ditches. But the real progress made by Frei is best-measured, as an American economist put it, by the "shrieks and moans of Chileans who are finding out for the first time what it is to have a government that is serious about deep changes in the old feudal order."

What Chileans are screaming loudest about today is, not surprisingly, taxation. The last nationwide assessment survey in Chile was in 1932, when the Chilean peso was worth about 4,000 times more than it is now. On that tax base levies were absurdly low. Since a new assessment survey, two years ago, property taxes have risen two or three times what they were before Frei (though by modern-nation standards they are still laughably low). The Government has rigidly applied a "wealth tax" on automobiles, stocks and assets held abroad, and real tax income to the Government has risen by 25 per cent a year. The treasury expects to reap a higher percentage in the years to come.

In the meantime, Frei has launched a full-scale attack on inflation. With price controls and firm import regulations, he has managed to bring

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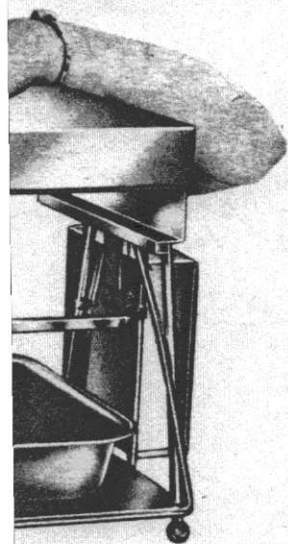
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(Continued)

down the increase in the cost-of-living  
index from 38.9 per cent in 1964, to  
25.6 per cent in 1965, to somewhere  
around 20 to 25 per cent last year.

At the same time the world price  
of Chile's major export, copper, has  
risen to record heights and is now  
about 50-55 cents a pound. And with-  
in the last month the Government has  
signed agreements with all of the  
major copper companies that give  
Chile, for the first time, a major in-  
terest in its largest industry and  
still keep American know-how. The  
pacts provide for a 100 per cent  
increase in the production of copper  
(from 600,000 metric tons annually to  
1.2-million metric tons by the early  
nineteen-seventies), and also the  
"Chileanization" of the mines. Chile,  
for example, will take over 51 per  
cent of the Kennecott mine, and for  
its share the country will put up 51  
per cent of the new expansion capital  
—an amount close to \$200-million.  
The Government will also become a  
25-per-cent partner in a new Ana-  
conda mine, while Anaconda will  
invest about \$300-million for expand-  
ed production over the next five  
years. The American copper com-  
panies, it should be noted, are well  
pleased with the agreements: with  
tax-bracket advantages and other  
complicated legal largess, they may  
well profit more than when they  
owned the mines outright.

**T**HE Frei Government is investing  
vast sums in the nation's impover-  
ished majority. In the past two  
years 87,000 permanent houses and  
48,000 "emergency" dwellings were  
built as part of a slum-clearance pro-  
gram. An eighth year of free and com-  
pulsory education was approved, and  
teachers were hired to man 2,000 new  
schools. Dozens of new hospitals and  
clinics were built, and free medical  
care was increased.

The Chilean poor are getting the  
idea that the Christian Democrats  
are at least trying. But serious social  
reform in Chile has always run up  
against the same problem: the right  
insists that almost any reform is too  
leftist, and the left cries that all the  
reforms are not leftist enough. Frei's  
attempts at agrarian reform have  
bogged down in the face of precisely  
that age-old problem.

Agrarian reform is his most press-  
ing problem, just now. Chile's large  
farmers, with the threat of possi-  
ble expropriation over their heads,  
have all but given up worrying about  
producing. Once a net exporter of  
food, Chile now spends nearly \$200-  
million yearly importing milk, meat,  
wheat and potatoes—all of which  
could be grown in surplus were it not  
for this to-hell-with-it attitude.

Government proposals still have  
not taken final shape and much of  
the legislation to make a full reform  
possible is bottled up in the Con-

gress. But in rough outline they  
would allow the Government to decide  
if a landowner were producing  
enough, and if not, his property would  
be confiscated and the land collec-  
tivized, to be worked from three to  
five years by the landowner's former  
employees. At the end of that time  
title to the land would be granted to  
the peasants, in return for some nomi-  
nal payment.

In all, somewhere in the neighbor-  
hood of 3,000 big landowners are ex-  
pected to lose their property, accord-  
ing to some Government estimates.  
But both the right and the left have  
so far successfully helped to delay  
agrarian-reform bills in the Congress.

The left—Socialists, Communists  
and even the militant young left wing  
of Frei's own party—has argued that  
Frei's reform approaches a fraud be-  
cause it does not allow for the collec-  
tivization of every farm in the nation.  
The right points out with horror that  
the Government will have to spend  
at least \$55-million a year on its pro-  
gram, in compensation, resettlement  
grants and food import payments, to  
cover the inevitable decline in farm  
production; and that is more than  
double what the country invested in  
profitable mining and industry in  
1965. Meanwhile, as the debate rages  
on, the *campesinos* are again grow-  
ing restive, and therefore more re-  
sponsive to the Communists' new  
campaigns in the rural areas.

**T**HE rising Chilean discontent, only  
part of which can be attributed to  
mid-term doldrums, is now deeply  
disturbing for Frei and his friends.  
He is spending a great deal of time  
trying to rein in the noisy left wing  
in his own party, fighting "secret  
cartel" charges leveled against him  
by the right, and running hard to  
out-think and outmaneuver the FRAP  
on the other extreme.

His political fortunes suffered a  
nasty blow last December when Al-  
lende, in a deal with the Radicals  
that can only be described as ultra-  
cynical, was voted president of the  
Senate. Already he has given Frei  
headaches because of his expert  
manipulation of the Senate's rules  
and regulations, and Allende will give  
Frei many sleepless nights to come.

The Christian Democrats and Frei  
may finally fail in Chile. Yet, some-  
how, one gets the feeling that they  
are going to succeed, against the  
odds, in changing the political and  
social character of the country. "How  
difficult it is to criticize when finally,  
after so many years of so little prog-  
ress, there come a man and a party  
that look so promising," wrote an  
American political scientist recently.

But it cannot be forgotten that  
Frei and his party are attempting to  
work a bona fide revolution—"a revo-  
lution without the execution wall,"  
Frei said in a speech last September  
—and revolution is not an easy busi-  
ness. ■

**Chile's impoverished are getting the  
idea someone is at least trying**

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