

Marxist Leader Polarized Chile, Made No Apologies

By Lewis Pluiduid

Washington Post Staff Writer

Salvador Allende, who died at 65 in the besieged presidential palace of Santiago yesterday, led Chile through three years of tumult that polarized the electorate and threatened to provoke civil war.

The physician-turned-Marxist-politician made no apologies for the polarization—"It was inevitable, it had to come," he said in an interview last March—but he insisted to the last that he could bring to power, without violence, those around his pole of the divided society.

Violence, he said, would only come from the fascist right. "We can control that," he said. And if any extremists of the left took up arms he planned to quash them as well.

But the violence that he felt Chile could avoid, in the end engulfed him.

Mr. Allende was an unlikely fighter, though he displayed remarkable skills in the political infights that are rife in Santiago. He was short, and sensitive about it. At his first presidential press conference, in November 1970, he delayed proceedings by insisting that an aide produce a chair pillow so he could rise above the microphones.

But he had the bearing of a cocky fullback when he moved through a crowd. In Buenos Aires last year for the inauguration of Argentine President Hector Campora, Mr. Allende bulled his way through a violent crowd that overturned the limousines of other arriving dignitaries.

"I tried to dissuade him," said an accompanying Chilean Communist, "but he always said his bullet had his name on it, and he just wasn't going to duck."

Mr. Allende was also sensitive about his non-proletarian upbringing. His father was a notary who gave him a thorough education in Chile's better schools.

In the university, the future president took to politics and soon after graduation, in 1933, he helped found the Socialist Party, which he led for 40 years.

Because of his politics and his early championing of socialized medicine, Dr. Allende spent most of his practicing years doing autopsies. "That way you learn what kills the poor," he said once. He listed back-alley abortions, alcoholism, and malnutrition as prime killers and prime evils to fight against.

Mr. Allende served as minister of public health in a government in 1939, in 1945 was elected senator, and in 1956 he was nominated for the presidency—as he would be every six years thereafter.

"When I die they're going to put up a tombstone saying 'Here lies Salvador Allende, future president of Chile,'" he said at a low point in his last campaign.

Actually, the Marxist parties that elected him were convinced that Mr. Allende could not win, and at the outset of jousting for position, the Communists put up poet Pablo Neruda instead.

But early in 1970 the six parties in the coalition that eventually won concluded that no stronger candidate than Mr. Allende was at hand.

The contest was three-way and bitterly fought, and Mr. Allende came in first with 35 per cent of the vote, some 39,000 ballots more than the conservative candidate in a total turnout of 3 million.

The restless youth of the Marxist left had moved far beyond Mr. Allende ideologically, but his pugnacious style in office won them over.

He was never less than a devoted Marxist, which in Latin America has meant believing in guerrilla warfare against bourgeois governments. As president of the Senate in 1968, Mr. Allende personally received the survivors of Ernesto Che Guevara's Bolivian rebel army and escorted them to exile, to the fury of then President Eduardo Frei.

But for many in his party, Mr. Allende was too dedicated to Chile's traditions of parliamentary procedure and nonviolence.

Even in his anti-Americanism, Mr. Allende seemed reasoned in comparison with his peers. While taking over American copper interests without compensation, he stated often in public that he sought normal relations with Washington. And he was conciliatory when necessary to prevent escalation of slights into a full breakoff.

After columnist Jack Anderson last year revealed the efforts of International Telephone & Telegraph to prevent Mr. Allende from coming to power, the president described how earlier he had asked ITT's John W. Guilfoyle, chief of the corporation's Latin American operations, to negotiate personally on compensation for the ITT-owned Chile Telephone Co. "You know, he was a most pleasant fellow," said Mr. Allende.

Later conversations made clear that Mr. Allende saw the ITT affair in political terms, and not necessarily with rancor. He felt it benefited him politically, and most Chileans consulted agreed.

As president, Mr. Allende proved to be a devastating tactician, often coming out of traps laid by the opposition with their bait in his pocket.

But the economic and political crises that developed after his first euphoric year on the job began to wear down even those who came to believe he was too quick to be caught.

In retrospect, his mistake seems to have been not to call a plebiscite during the first-year economic boom that the Communist planners fueled with unbacked paper money.

Distributing more to the poor, and more to everyone else, too, Mr. Allende saw the economy take off when spare plant capacity was brought into production to meet demands.

When nationwide municipal elections were held in 1971, Mr. Allende's coalition fell short of 50 per cent by a fraction of a point.

His government, however, juggled the blank and null ballots to come up with a doctored figure that his extensive propaganda machinery announced to the public as showing an absolute majority for Mr. Allende. It was a dangerous precedent in a nation that often suffers wild political rhetoric but will abide no hyperbole in election data.

Mr. Allende's more audacious advisers—including his press secretary Agosto Olivares, who died at the president's side in the Moneda Palace—wanted to go then for a plebiscite that, if victorious would mean dissolution of the opposition-dominated Congress.

But Mr. Allende doubted that he still had half of the electorate with him. Subsequent by-elections confirmed his belief. And by last year, the valueless paper money provoked a runaway inflation remarkable even for Chile's chronically inflationary economy. It now runs over 300 per cent.

In the election to renew the Congress last March, the Popular Unit coalition's vote had fallen to 44 per cent.

Mr. Allende was scathing in his denunciation of critics who said he would destroy Chile's democracy, as the military junta is now saying.

"They said that if I were president there would be no more elections," he said in an interview in February. "See for yourself if there are elections. They said there would be no more churches. Look at the ecumenical 'te deums' we have had at the cathedrals."

Mr. Allende, who was a free Mason as well as a Marxist, maintained fairly warm relations with the Catholic Church for almost as long as he managed them with the military.

But the Church began to pull away when Allende fol-

lowers pressed for state control of the private school curriculum. The military lost its enthusiasm when its leaders felt Mr. Allende was using them in his Cabinets for his own gain and their detriment.

Even when crisis was crushing Mr. Allende at home, he remained a major figure throughout the hemisphere. His visit to Argentina for the Campora inaugural was a personal triumph. Wherever he walked, crowds cheered Mr. Allende.

While in Buenos Aires, he agreed to meet U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers at the Chilean embassy. A witness to the meeting has quoted Rogers as greeting Allende with the remark, "From what I've seen here, I would have thought it was you being inaugurated."

Young Argentines looked to Mr. Allende as a guide for their own future. But Juan D. Peron, who was himself once ousted by the military, told the left wing of his movement last week that he was tired of hearing calls for the Allende way. "Look first at what is happening in Chile," he was reported as saying.

While in Buenos Aires, Mr. Allende also went out of his way to tell reporters of his respect for the outgoing Argentine president, Gen. Alejandro A. Lanusse.

Lanusse was being excoriated at the time for repression of the masses, but Mr. Allende, who had met twice with Lanusse, said the general had earned his place in history.

Mr. Allende was also known as a ladies' man. He would pick the prettiest girl in a crowd and directing his speech or attentions to her.

His wife and three daughters bore this with good humor and worked among the women to turn out the voters for him.

Mr. Allende never achieved support from women equal to that from Chilean men, but he never gave up trying. "They say the ladies are voting against us," he once said with a twinkle. "And every day we're paying more attention to the ladies."

Texan Gets Life For N.J. Slaying

TRENTON, N.J., Sept. 11 (AP)—Istvan Kele, 33, of Houston, Tex., was sentenced to life imprisonment today for murder and bank robbery in the holdup of a South Brunswick bank.

Kele was convicted by a jury of shooting to death Harry Jackson, 64, a bank maintenance man, during the \$66,000 robbery of the South Brunswick branch of the National Bank of New Jersey on Nov. 14, 1972.