

PHILOSOPHY AND UNIVERSITY  
REFORM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF  
CHILE: 1842–1973\*

*Iván Jaksic*

*University of California, Berkeley*

During the 1960s, several academics from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chile became involved in a dispute concerning the aims of both the philosophical discipline and the university as a whole. Because this dispute turned into a conflict of national proportions and brought about the collapse of the administrative structure of the university in May of 1968, it raises a number of questions about the motivations of these academics and the extent to which the philosophical discipline, as cultivated in Chile, inspired their words and deeds in relation to university affairs.

To understand the involvement of these academics in the events leading to the university reform of 1968, one must examine the evolution of philosophical thought and studies in Chile. A significant feature that emerges from this evolution is that philosophy became progressively more academic and rigid as it became an established discipline within the curriculum of the University of Chile, also known as the National University. First used as a general guide to lay out the foundations of secular public education in Chile, philosophy underwent major changes once it became an academic discipline. Most importantly, philosophy became increasingly obscure and esoteric until the eruption of the 1968 university reform movement, when it again became the center of polemics concerning the aims of higher education in the country as well as the locus of critiques of Chilean society in general. This article seeks to assess the potential of philosophy for promoting educational and social change in Chile. Several comprehensive studies concerning the power of philosophy to precipitate social change in Latin America have appeared, but they have mainly concentrated on those Latin American philosophers who most explicitly called for social change or who became leaders of

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significant political movements.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, little attention has been paid to the less known, yet equally significant, philosophers who have made profound changes in the fabric of Chilean society simply by making philosophy—and other disciplines as well—a highly academic and apolitical pursuit. Political philosophy is here viewed not so much as the most distinctive feature of Latin American philosophy, but as a response to the more powerful and lasting interpretation of philosophy as an academic endeavor made by university professors of the discipline. Hence this article focuses on the rise of philosophy as an academic discipline and the repercussions of its emergence on the University of Chile in particular and on Chilean educational history in general.

Definitions of philosophy have varied broadly during the period 1842–1973, but a major distinction can be made between the initial view of philosophy as a general intellectual pursuit and a subsequent view of philosophy as a discipline. The transition from one view to the other was marked by intense intellectual confrontations and significant changes in university structure. Eventually, definitions of philosophy, its aims, and subjects came to be the exclusive domain of university professors; nevertheless, from the very ranks of those professors came important challenges to the predominant view of philosophy as an academic endeavor, challenges that have recurred throughout the history of the discipline in Chile. Basic to understanding these challenges and confrontations is the concept of professionalism because critics claimed that philosophy's lack of concern about issues affecting the life of the country was due to the professionalization of the discipline.

The notion of professionalism as applied to philosophical studies is necessarily complex, but its basic meaning can be captured by examining the gradual reduction of philosophy to its most esoteric aspects at the University of Chile. Also, the meaning of professionalism can be grasped by examining the three major phases in the evolution of philosophical studies, which coincide with major phases in the history of the university: first, the establishment of the institution and its division into faculties and disciplines mark the academic origins of professionalism (the period between 1842 and 1880); second, the period of positivistic influence, when professionalism meant focusing university studies on specific careers (between 1880 and 1931); third, the phase of professionalism that was characterized by the emergence of powerful groups of tenured faculty members who were concerned largely with the activities of their own profession as academics while remaining detached from larger social concerns (between 1931 and 1968).

All along, critics opposed the activities of professional philosophers and their positions of influence within the larger institution. Particularly during the last phase, such social science institutions as the Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL), the Instituto Latino-

americano de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES), and the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) represented alternative academic approaches to social and humanistic studies. But in the field of philosophy, professionals from the National University maintained complete control over definitions of the nature and aims of the discipline.

During each of these phases, there were certain conceptions of philosophy underlying the aims and character of the university as a whole. Although the distinction must be maintained between philosophy as a general guide that orients the university and philosophy as an academic discipline, a remarkable coincidence occurred in the way both were influenced by philosophical schools and movements. The ideals of the Enlightenment and the major principles of liberalism dominated the first of the three phases mentioned above. In the second, Comtean positivism held sway. Following its collapse as the prevailing philosophy, a variety of doctrines competed for dominance in philosophical and educational matters, but all sought to achieve independence from social pressures and concerns. It is not surprising, therefore, that the university reform movement of 1968, which tried to bring about a closer connection between the university and Chilean society, collided with certain philosophical views emanating from the Faculty of Philosophy and Education. It is with these views and their historical background that this article is concerned.

#### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY

Andrés Bello, the eminent Venezuelan-born educator who became the leading figure in Chilean education for several decades during the nineteenth century, once said that his age was above all "the age of association." He was referring to the emergence of many institutions that he regarded as having been established to accumulate knowledge for the service of society, particularly the universities and academies that he described as "some of the many centers where scientific knowledge tends to concentrate, and from which this knowledge most easily spreads to every class in society."<sup>2</sup> He believed this function to be the fundamental purpose of the institution of higher learning that he created in 1842, the National University.

Although the National University was not the first attempt to establish an institution of secular higher education in the country, it ultimately did become the most powerful and successful. Such institutions as the Instituto Nacional, the Liceo de Chile, and the Colegio de Santiago had been founded earlier to provide higher education for Chilean citizens. Some did not last very long and eventually were absorbed by the National University, which also superseded the old Royal

University of San Felipe. Modeled after the Institut de France, the National University brought under its aegis all matters concerning public education, including the direct supervision of primary education. Like its model in France, the National University was characterized by a highly centralized national structure. Originally composed of five faculties (Law and Political Science, Medicine, Mathematics and Physical Sciences, Theology, and Philosophy and Humanities), the university was designed by Bello to meet the nation's needs in the areas of science, economic development, and education.<sup>3</sup> The Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities was given the specific functions of supervising public education and of supplying professionally trained administrators to the growing state bureaucracy.<sup>4</sup> Bello's overall intentions in establishing the National University represented a drastic departure from the concept of the colonial university, which had been dominated by the Church, insofar as the National University was to emphasize public service and scientific training.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the practical emphasis given to the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, philosophical ideas guided Bello's conceptions of higher education. A number of European sources have been cited as influences on his thinking, particularly the philosophy of Jeremy Bentham, but Bello's educational thinking perhaps may be better understood by placing it in the general context of the Enlightenment.<sup>6</sup> This movement has been characterized by its preference for science over religion as the best means of understanding social and human phenomena.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, some scholars view the significance of the Enlightenment in terms of its introduction of modern science into the curricula of European and Latin American academies.<sup>8</sup> At the National University, Andrés Bello gave a strong emphasis to science, not only establishing the proper faculties to teach it, but making it the guiding philosophy of the institution. Science and philosophy, in fact, are interchangeable in Bello's usage, where they constitute the general system from which all branches of human knowledge derive. In terms of the composition of the university, he saw the different faculties as the branches of human knowledge and science as the general philosophy that provided the very aim of the institution, an aim that was in keeping with the Enlightenment's ideal of cultivating knowledge to serve society better.

Teaching the basic sciences, however, proved less difficult than teaching philosophy because talking about philosophy as a general aim was much easier than breaking it down in terms of subjects, branches, and disciplines. Assigning the supervision of public education to the Faculty of Philosophy caused Bello few difficulties, but in its teaching function, philosophy became crowded with countless branches. In his quinquennial report to the university in 1859, Bello demonstrated that he was concerned about this sudden proliferation of philosophical con-

cerns. Moreover, he was alarmed that logic, the most important philosophical subject in his eyes, was almost totally absent from the curriculum, and he urged the faculty to fill this gap quickly. In an attempt to bring order to the teaching of philosophy, he somewhat reluctantly proposed to keep psychology, theodicy, and ethics in the curriculum, but to abbreviate "or eliminate altogether certain aspects of transcendental metaphysics (a sandstorm of short-lived systems that keep fighting and destroying each other, and which have no other practical consequence than to encourage a tendency to skepticism). After this, it will not be necessary to give philosophy a greater scope than it already has, and it will become more solidly instructive."<sup>9</sup>

As the passage suggests, Bello's major quarrel was with metaphysics. Its historical role as the most important branch of philosophy in the curriculum of the colonial university, which consequently recalled the evils of the Spanish colonial regime, apparently did not bother him much. What he disliked was the threat that he believed metaphysics posed to the practical purposes he had given to both the National University and its academic disciplines. To counter such damaging effects, Bello placed a great deal of emphasis on logic; indeed, he was relentless in criticizing contemporary philosophical texts, such as Ramón Briseño's *Curso de filosofía moderna*, for their alleged lack of emphasis on logical questions.<sup>10</sup>

Ironically, those who attacked him and his conception of what was important in philosophy were not metaphysicians, but members of his own liberal school who believed that his philosophical orientation did not attack strongly enough the persisting colonial institutions in contemporary Chilean society. The most outspoken of his critics was José Victorino Lastarria, Bello's own disciple, who held that philosophy and history should be combined and put to practical use against the remnants of the Spanish colonial heritage, particularly the Catholic Church.<sup>11</sup> Bello responded that such an endeavor was simply not within the boundaries of the charter of the National University, pointing out that proper historical pursuits should not be guided by erratic conceptions of philosophy. For Bello, both history and philosophy were sciences characterized by heavy emphasis on research and erudition.<sup>12</sup>

Lastarria fired back, calling Bello the "chorus leader of the intellectual counterrevolution."<sup>13</sup> Beyond personal animosity, however, was a deep schism between the views of these two thinkers on the political implications of the philosophical discipline. Lastarria wanted it to become a catalyst for social change, while Bello wanted it to become the basis of secular public education, his recipe for slower, yet equally radical, social change. Lastarria shared Bello's enthusiasm for public education, but wanted more immediate results. He became active in the creation of several liberal newspapers that appeared during the 1840s. Among these

was *El crepúsculo*, which first published Francisco Bilbao's notorious *Sociabilidad chilena*, one of the heaviest attacks against the Catholic Church in Chilean history. Lastarria also became a leader of the Liberal party and subsequently a member of congress.<sup>14</sup>

Lastarria's major target for political and philosophical attacks was the Catholic Church. To legitimize his views, Lastarria drew the basic tenets of his anticlerical position from European philosophers, particularly from Voltaire and Montesquieu. A francophile who encouraged his disciples to not only write like the French but to think like them, Lastarria abhorred the Catholic Church and the Spanish colonial era that introduced it. Calling this past a "dark winter three centuries long," he insisted that Spain's influence, which he believed to be very much alive thanks to the Catholic Church, should be entirely eliminated from Chilean society. He consequently called on philosophy to oppose them both on the grounds that they were largely responsible for the troubles facing the nation.<sup>15</sup>

The same understanding of philosophy as a guide for social change prompted Lastarria's disciple, Francisco Bilbao, to lead a lifelong struggle against the Catholic Church and to search continuously, although vainly, for models of political organization with which to counter Catholic influences on Chilean society. Initially a francophile like Lastarria, Bilbao became increasingly disillusioned about the fate of the republican ideal under Napoleon III. The French invasion of Mexico terminated his admiration for France and led him to admire instead the political system of the United States. His philosophical and political inspiration nevertheless came from such French mentors as Félicité-Robert Lammenais, Edgar Quinet, and Jules Michelet; but he understood these authors and their views only partially because his interest in them and philosophy in general resided largely in his desire to find arguments to embarrass the defenders of Catholicism in Latin America.<sup>16</sup>

Bilbao's attacks on Catholicism, and Lastarria's as well, were more rhetorical than anything else, but their view of philosophy was the most powerful and articulate alternative to the type of philosophy emerging from Bello's National University. Nor were they alone. Argentinian exiles Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Juan Bautista Alberdi, both then residing in Chile, shared this belief that the basic role of philosophy was to guide political action in the region. Sarmiento and Lastarria were members of the National University who made significant academic contributions in the field of pedagogy. In this regard, they were different from Alberdi, a scholar much more inclined towards jurisprudence and international law. Yet all three helped give nineteenth-century Latin American philosophy the distinctive political character that has attracted much attention from foreign scholars. Alberdi particularly produced what may be the most explicit arguments for understanding phi-

losophy in political terms. He believed that philosophy must be given a political and social orientation that would closely match the specific needs of Latin America. He thought that metaphysics was too abstract and predicted that it would never find roots in the region.<sup>17</sup>

#### THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE ACADEMIC OVER THE POLITICAL VIEW OF PHILOSOPHY

Contrary to Alberdi's predictions, metaphysics thrived at the National University's Faculty of Philosophy between the 1850s and 1880s. A powerful force was emerging in higher education in Chile that valued academic philosophy over philosophy as defined beyond the walls of the university. A tension between academic and nonacademic orientations for philosophy developed, and the former was enhanced by the growth and importance of both the Faculty of Philosophy and the National University. The proponents of political philosophy dwindled when Alberdi and Sarmiento departed in the 1850s, Lastarria moved into the practical political arena, and Bilbao died in 1865. Even Bello's attacks against metaphysics proved ineffective, and this branch of philosophy came to characterize philosophical studies at the National University. The Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities as a whole was prospering and in 1879 it expanded to include a section of Fine Arts. Furthermore, by virtue of its authority over national education, this faculty extended its model of academic studies to the secondary school system.<sup>18</sup>

Among the first to emulate this model was Chile's most important secondary school, the Instituto Nacional. The vehicle for introducing academicism was philosophy, which became a required course for seniors. Students began to address a series of highly specialized philosophical problems and became familiar with the most elaborate metaphysical discussions. Not everyone was happy with this kind of studies, however. Fanor Velasco complained that the way philosophy was taught at the institute while he was a student in the early 1860s was specialized beyond comprehension. He charged that this kind of academic philosophy had nothing to say to the students who could hardly understand the purpose of such studies, much less the Latin phrases that dominated portions of the class. Referring to one of Leibniz's major metaphysical propositions, which students learned in Latin, Velasco indicated that, "we learned this syllogism by rote, *ad pedem litterae*, just as everything else in philosophy. We learned it from first word to last, entirely, and then we repeated it in lessons, explanations and exams; but we repeated it not having the slightest idea of what the meaning of the terms were."<sup>19</sup>

Velasco blamed the government for this state of affairs and complained that the current educational system was turning students into "reciting machines."<sup>20</sup> Beyond criticizing the content of the system, how-

ever, he condemned the conservative rule that he thought made it possible. His criticisms and reflections on educational issues in this sense represented a much wider movement favoring political change in the country, one that would establish the “liberal republic” of the 1861–1891 era.<sup>21</sup> It is significant that Velasco not only resorted to philosophy to condemn the educational system, but blamed the state for the design of the Faculty of Philosophy. This logic was to become a pattern in all subsequent critiques of educational policy because disenchanted intellectuals were quick to realize that all educational designs were ultimately sanctioned by the state. Even more significant, however, is the fact that philosophy became the standard vehicle for the defense or attack of different educational models.

#### THE IMPACT OF POSITIVISM ON THE ACADEMIC EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The predominant model of academic studies at the National University was challenged in the 1880s not by the proponents of political philosophy, but by those who wanted a stronger professional emphasis on the academic disciplines. The vehicle for this challenge was philosophy, this time influenced by one of Chile’s latest intellectual imports, positivism. Inspired by positivistic philosophical views, a generation of young intellectuals in the 1880s and 1890s concluded that the Faculty of Philosophy, Humanities, and Fine Arts was not doing enough in the field of education. They believed that “professionalism,” that is, the application of pure knowledge to concrete social and economic endeavors, would achieve a badly needed reform in Chilean education.<sup>22</sup> They went back to Bello’s initial designs for the National University and sought to make the cultivation and dissemination of “science” once again the aim of the institution. By science, however, they meant something different. Bello had understood this concept in broad philosophical terms, but the new generation understood it as a method for the resolution of society’s problems. Expressing their views, the eminent historian Diego Barros Arana suggested, during the commemoration of the National University’s fiftieth anniversary, that although Bello’s concept of science represented a helpful beginning, little had been done at the institution to help resolve society’s problems.<sup>23</sup>

Both the older and the younger generations of university professors could make equally legitimate claims that they were loyally following Bello’s ideas. The older generation could claim to be following Bello’s path by emphasizing his ideal of the cultivation of pure knowledge; and the younger generation could claim to be strictly following Bello’s emphasis on science. The younger generation’s ultimately prevailing had less to do with their having a superior interpretation of Bello’s ambigui-



ties regarding the aims of the university than with the encouragement they received from such administrations of the “liberal republic” as those of Domingo Santa María and José Manuel Balmaceda in the 1880s. At this time, major emphasis was given to revitalizing the educational system in order to counter what liberals claimed was a growing conservative influence on education. As Augusto Orrego Luco described the situation in 1880: “All matters concerning public education now have two solutions, just like every other political question: the liberal solution and the conservative solution. That is, the solution of those who want rational criteria to be the foundation of society, and derive all principles and interests from such criteria, versus the solution of those who want authority and tradition to be the basis of society, and subject the larger community to the principles and interests of some selfish social groups.”<sup>24</sup>

Orrego Luco may have been flogging a dead horse because the reforms introduced by the liberally-inclined educators of the day were numerous, while the ideas of the conservatives had far less influence in public education. More important than his liberal-conservative dichotomy was Orrego’s emphasis on how “science” must become the basis of public education, an idea that reflects heavy positivistic influence in its definition of science as a method whereby the entire social apparatus can be understood and reformed.

#### THE IMPACT OF POSITIVISM ON PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES

The scientific orientation proposed by Orrego was to become the basis for a full-fledged philosophical system with Valentín Letelier, a prominent educator who believed that the university could and should render a much needed service to society by reorganizing education along scientific lines and whose views were extremely influential between 1890 and 1910.<sup>25</sup> To reorganize education, he believed it necessary to “adopt a philosophy that can become the origin and mother of all types of knowledge, a principle that can relate them, for otherwise they penetrate the spirit in a disorderly fashion and provide no discipline for the mind.”<sup>26</sup> This “scientific philosophy” was one that he had derived from Auguste Comte’s positivism. Comte envisioned the progress of humanity in three stages—theological, metaphysical, and scientific—the last stage being the most advanced one that humanity should strive to attain. Letelier applied this three-stage paradigm to education and suggested that in Chile the theological stage had been superseded and the metaphysical was still dominant. Metaphysical education, which Letelier also called *eclectic*, was introducing chaos into the minds of Chileans because it dealt with contending schools of thought, many of which indulged in the study of irrelevant subjects. Letelier therefore urged his audience to adopt the Comtean version of philosophy, which he called *scientific* and

which he believed would bring harmony and unity first to education and then to society itself.

As in other Latin American countries, positivism in Chile provided a philosophical rationale for legitimizing changes desired on a broader political level. Valentín Letelier particularly found in positivism what he was looking for—a philosophically sound program with a seemingly objective character that condemned the very things he wanted to condemn in Chilean society in general and education in particular.<sup>27</sup> Positivism nonetheless inspired him to study, to a depth unprecedented in his country, the nature of education and its impact on society. Going further than Bello in his attacks on metaphysics, Letelier suggested that this subject was “more able to disperse than to unite the spirit, and less able to discipline than bring anarchy to it.”<sup>28</sup> He delivered these massive attacks against metaphysics not so much because it was such an influential subject, but because it could serve as a heuristic springboard to embrace enthusiastically logic and the philosophy of science. Letelier viewed these branches as the ideal basis for the harmonious educational philosophy that would bring order and harmony to Chilean society. For him, logic “turns diversity into unity, unconnectedness into an organic whole, heterogeneity into homogeneity, and provides man with the supreme serenity that characterizes he who possesses absolute truth.”<sup>29</sup> Only this organic and homogeneous spirit, which would be informed by logic and science, could provide the basis for a sound educational philosophy, which he believed should become national policy for Chile’s social well-being.

Letelier set out to create an institution where he could apply his ideas on scientific education. Early in the 1880s, he traveled to Germany to study that country’s educational system, which was popular at the time because of its success in separating church and state on educational matters and its encouragement of academic freedom and professional research. Because Letelier was impressed by the good organization and educational quality of this system, he hired six German professors and brought them back to Chile. He believed that these professors, with their impressive scientific training, would be able to instill a much needed scientific spirit into the Chilean educational system. Seemingly oblivious of the tremendous differences in the economic situations and degrees of industrialization in the two countries, Letelier was confident that the scientific spirit of these German academics would by itself encourage Chile to set out on the road to progress.<sup>30</sup> He hired them to teach at the Instituto Pedagógico (Pedagogical Institute), an institution that he had created in 1889 with the purpose of providing professional training for students in fields that previously had been taught under the influence of the older model of academic studies at the National University. The rationale for the institute was to provide a scientific basis for these fields

so that they could be employed to meet the specific needs of the nation. Foremost among them was pedagogy, on which Letelier rested his hopes for disseminating scientific values into Chilean society.<sup>31</sup>

The fact that Letelier was a Comtean positivist poses an important question about the possible contradiction between his philosophical inclinations and his interest in the German educational system. Actually, there was a natural connection between the two because Letelier thought that that country had made tremendous progress in the development of the pedagogical field. Even France, he pointed out, was a latecomer in the business of pedagogical institutes.<sup>32</sup> As a strong believer in the potential of a positivistic scientific education for bringing about order in society, Letelier naturally looked for pedagogical models where the teaching profession was most advanced, as they were in Germany.<sup>33</sup>

In Letelier's positivistic interest in educational issues, his career closely resembles that of Gabino Barreda in Mexico. Barreda also had envisioned positivism as a doctrine that could bring "order" to his society by first reorganizing the educational system. Such a reorganization implied the elimination of theological and metaphysical doctrines, which in his view had only brought anarchy to an educational system and a society scarcely in need of it. Two decades prior to the creation of Letelier's Pedagogical Institute, Barreda had implemented his educational ideas in the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, from which many prominent *científicos* would be later recruited by Porfirio Díaz's regime. Barreda's major significance lies in his educational activities.<sup>34</sup> The same can be said of Valentín Letelier, whose Pedagogical Institute probably represents his most important and enduring accomplishment.

Had he been alive, Andrés Bello probably would have criticized the positivists' rather narrow interpretation of his own concept of science; however, he surely would have been impressed with the institute. He would have been especially satisfied to see how his definition of the nineteenth century as an age of association really worked, especially in relation to academies that gathered scientific knowledge in order to disseminate it to the rest of society. He would have seen how effectively the Pedagogical Institute managed to develop knowledge of teaching techniques and obtain state support in applying them to the Chilean educational system.

The growth of the institute was indeed rapid, thanks mainly to substantial government funding and to the university status it soon acquired. The institute could then offer all its graduates, irrespective of discipline, the title of Profesor de Estado (State Professor), which was the equivalent of a certification for secondary schoolteaching. Being a government-sponsored educational enterprise, the institute's graduates were rapidly placed in the national system of education.<sup>35</sup> The Pedagogical Institute became an experimental ground for the training of stu-

dents who were educated largely in the values of science rather than in those of the religion and metaphysics that Letelier detested. Teachers and curriculum alike encouraged a professional attitude, one influenced by the German model of secular education. This attitude encouraged graduates to challenge the assumptions of religion by making science a higher ideal for both knowledge and education. The developing Chilean school system rapidly absorbed these graduates, who spread the values of scientism and the secularization of education throughout the country.

The Chilean educational system had a successful, albeit slow and sometimes difficult, history. Closely linked to the consolidation of the republic, the national educational system acquired an increasingly lay character that led to repeated conflicts with the Catholic Church, formerly the exclusive patron of education in the country. Sanctioned as a prime obligation of the state by the Constitution of 1833, the educational system still faced great economic and administrative difficulties. Major steps were taken to facilitate its growth by concentrating educational matters under the aegis of the National University in 1842 and under the Council of Public Instruction in 1879. Elementary education was made tuition-free in 1860 to encourage enrollment. Despite organizational problems, the system and elementary and secondary enrollment expanded significantly during the last quarter of the century.<sup>36</sup> This growth required the state to meet the increasing demand for teachers with concomitant support for the Pedagogical Institute.

Growing from a handful of students in 1889 to the one thousand and ninety-eight students enrolled in 1921 (many from other Latin American countries), the institute's rate of increase was staggering. With growth came prestige, and even the Faculty of Philosophy, Humanities, and Fine Arts, which initially had been antagonistic to the institute, gradually recognized its sweeping success. In fact, the two eventually merged into a single Faculty of Philosophy and Education in 1931.<sup>37</sup>

This success story might have been complete had Letelier kept in mind the potentially troublesome character of the philosophical discipline. In his scientific designs, philosophy had no place for metaphysics. He wanted philosophy to be a useful profession that would not only teach logic and philosophy of science at secondary schools, but would study and reveal the fundamentally scientific basis of the mind's functions. Letelier found the right man to implement his concept of philosophy in Jorge Enrique Schneider, one of the six Germans who became professor of Pedagogy and Philosophy at the Pedagogical Institute. A former student of biologist Ernest Haeckel and psychologist Wilhelm Wundt in Germany, Schneider provided a rigorously scientific basis for the study of philosophy. One of his students, Julio Monteburno, reported: "In the philosophy class, Mr. Schneider displayed the impressive knowledge he derived from his observations and experiences. The

theories and doctrines of Darwin and Haeckel, the methods of Wundt informed his lectures. Evolution was for him the key for understanding the universe, and he also believed it to be the norm for human activity. Hence, he indicated that progress and perfection were the objects of life. And to guide us through the philosophical labyrinth, he used experimental psychology as a lantern."<sup>38</sup> Montebruno obviously agreed with Schneider's educational and philosophical orientation, which had received official blessing and encouragement from both the National University and the state. Even when Schneider died after fifteen years of teaching in the institute, others perpetuated his brand of philosophy. Dr. Wilhelm Mann, another German professor hired by Letelier, occupied Schneider's chair of Philosophy and Pedagogy and continued his work.<sup>39</sup>

#### THE REVOLT AGAINST POSITIVISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW PROFESSIONALISM AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, 1910–1931

The climate of scientism in philosophical studies contributed to a major intellectual rebellion at the National University, one that ultimately triggered yet another redefinition of what the aims of the university should be. This time, however, the rebellion was continental in scale and was manifested throughout Latin America in attacks on the dominant positivistic school of thought. Echoing the metaphysical doctrines of Henri Bergson in France, a new generation of Latin American intellectuals launched a major attack against positivism, accusing it of being too rigid and unresponsive to the new philosophical currents originating in Europe.<sup>40</sup> When appealing European metaphysical doctrines began to hit Chile, some intellectuals wondered what had become of the country's spirit that it was unable to incorporate these doctrines into the university curricula. As they set out to correct this failing, they brought metaphysics back into the philosophical arena, this time to fight scientism to the end.

The return of metaphysics in Chile must be seen in the context of a continentwide revolt against positivism, but peculiar conditions existed that fostered its return at the time of Valentín Letelier's greatest influence over national education. As indicated by historian Luis Galdames, Chile's foremost biographer of Letelier, a basic dilemma existed at the root of this thinker's educational philosophy, one that inevitably became embodied in the aims of the National University: how to promote specialization and professionalism in educational matters without deemphasizing the overall humanistic orientation of the curriculum.<sup>41</sup> Galdames points out that because the aims of professionalization and secularization were more immediately relevant to society, Letelier could not manage to balance them with a similar emphasis on the latter. Galdames's view implies that Letelier's educational philosophy was vulner-

able to attacks from those who believed that positivism turned education into a narrowly specialized endeavor. But however enlightening this implication may be about the problems confronting positivism at the National University, it still does not explain why, even during Letelier's rectorship (1906–11), the number of degrees granted by the Faculty of Philosophy was consistently the highest in the institution. In 1910, for instance, out of a total of 629 degrees granted, 267 went to graduates of the philosophy faculty, a proportion far exceeding the faculty's role as one faculty among five.<sup>42</sup> It is indeed ironic that critics would complain of excessive emphasis being given to science while in reality the humanities were consistently faring better unless the dispute concerned the aims of education rather than who exactly was the major beneficiary of the positivistic thrust of the National University under Letelier.

Indeed, those rebelling against positivism questioned this school's view of the academic disciplines as professions less than they questioned the general philosophy that they believed guided the institution. At this point, they did not make a distinction between philosophy as an educational guide for the university and philosophy as an academic discipline. They assumed, perhaps accurately, that both were influenced by positivism and that as long as this philosophical school was prevalent in the university, every academic discipline would reflect its alleged narrowness. Consequently, they sought to eradicate positivistic influences from the university. This trend was not restricted to Chile. Argentinean philosopher Alejandro Korn, for instance, epitomized a continentwide discontent with positivism and its educational tenets when he described the situation leading to the 1918 university reform movement in Córdoba: "A crisis of culture has descended on the university. On the one hand, the persistence of the past and the grip of corruption, rampant mediocrity, the routine and torpor of teaching techniques, and on the other hand, the mildly utilitarian and professional orientation of teaching, the lack of transcendent interests, the neglect of the educational ideal, and finally, the cruel authoritarianism and the absence of moral authority gave rise to this reaction that was born with the new generation."<sup>43</sup>

This type of reaction against positivism was best represented in Chile by Enrique Molina, a member of the first class to graduate from the Pedagogical Institute who initially shared many of the values inherent in the institution. When in 1908 he asked for permission to hold a conference on William James's philosophy at the National University, he was apparently humiliated by the rector's reaction. "I can't believe there are still people talking about these things," the stern rector said, referring to philosophies of a nonpositivistic character. Molina walked out the door grumbling, "He ignores, of course, the existence of James, Bergson, and Eucken and has no idea that metaphysics, condemned by positivism to perpetual oblivion, is springing anew in the concerns of the spirit."<sup>44</sup>

From that point, Molina set out to introduce the metaphysical doctrines of these authors into the Chilean philosophical arena and to lead the reaction against the remaining defenders of positivism in academe.

In his rebellion against positivism, Molina followed trends similar to those that inspired other intellectuals in the region. But because the social context in which these intellectuals functioned differed, so did the impact of their work. Antonio Caso and José Vasconcelos, two prominent Mexican critics of positivism, were as imbued with European metaphysical doctrines as Molina, but their role in the Mexican Revolution and their subsequent participation in politics necessarily differentiates them from Molina, whose activities took place in a basically academic context.<sup>45</sup> They all may have been inspired by similar intellectual sources, but their courses of action as thinkers were as different as their societies.

Particularly influential in Molina's thought was the German phenomenologist Nicolai Hartmann, from whom Molina borrowed the notion that values were arranged hierarchically in ascending levels from the material to the spiritual at the highest level.<sup>46</sup> With this hierarchy, Molina intended to make spirituality the ultimate goal of philosophical queries, a step that would reinstate metaphysics as the most important vehicle for the study and advancement of spiritual values and strip political philosophy of any claims to philosophy *per se*. Molina went so far as to deny Bello, Lastarria, and Letelier a place in the pantheon of Chilean philosophers on the grounds that their work was too influenced by politics.<sup>47</sup> Molina defined philosophy as follows: "The essence of philosophy is to be found in the disciplines that help us obtain an intuition of the notion of being, interpret it, and then define our attitude in relation to it. The first part is the object of ontology, or science of being, and the second part introduces us to the realm of values, that is, to axiology."<sup>48</sup>

Molina had few quarrels with some of his predecessors' predilection for logic and philosophy of science, but he emphasized that such branches were mere "instruments" subordinated to the subjects he believed most essential to philosophy. Molina's thought here reveals a fundamental shift from social to spiritual concerns in philosophy. Andrés Bello and Valentín Letelier, to mention just two of his predecessors, were not exactly militant in their attitudes toward social change, but they did try more to relate philosophy to social concerns than did Molina. By establishing a hierarchy that confined social concerns to the lower echelons of his pyramid of values and by placing much greater emphasis on metaphysics, Molina succeeded in producing a major turn in the nature of philosophical studies, one that lasted until the decade of the 1960s.

Molina's philosophical innovations were intimately connected with the new forms of university structure and governance emerging from the National University, where both developed from the ideals of

academic freedom and professionalism introduced by positivism. Molina and those who followed his philosophical views tended to understand academic freedom as the liberty to study and teach the subjects they preferred. For positivists, academic freedom had meant only freedom from the censorship of the church. Positivists had understood professionalism as specialized training in certain branches of knowledge, which could be applied to specific careers. For Molina and his followers, professionalism meant exclusive dedication to one's profession, irrespective of external demands and pressures.

In terms of university structure and governance, similar developments took place at the University of Chile. University professors, propounding the ideals of academic freedom and professionalism, believed that they should take control over designing their academic programs and also redefine the aims of the university. Between 1931 and 1938, major reforms gave unprecedented power to particular faculties and tenured professors and also brought a new character to the National University, one that contrasted with the orientation toward social concerns that had characterized the previous model of the institution. Until this period, the structure of the University of Chile had closely resembled the Napoleonic model, particularly in being dependent on the rector and the state's decisions on budget, administration, and academic matters. The ideal of academic freedom, which derived from the German additions to the Napoleonic system, ultimately produced the emergence of strong faculties, powerful deans, and influential groups of tenured professors who now were in a much stronger position to pursue the kind of studies and knowledge they preferred.<sup>49</sup>

#### THE GOLDEN AGE OF PHILOSOPHICAL PROFESSIONALISM

The Faculty of Philosophy and Education that emerged from the Organic Statute of 1931 clearly exemplifies the type of professionalism that came to dominate the entire university. Under the auspices of this new faculty, the pursuit of purely academic studies was strongly emphasized. Molina's view on philosophy, for instance, received full institutional support. In effect, the first full-fledged Department of Philosophy, which included many of the previously neglected topics of study and especially metaphysics, was created in 1938. Engineered by Pedro León Loyola, this department gave philosophy an unmistakably academic character that contrasted with the more pragmatic educational emphasis acquired during the influence of positivism. The enthusiasm for the new orientation of philosophical studies was immense. León Loyola educated a generation of students who consolidated the professional character of philosophy in the succeeding decades, including Jorge Millas, Luis Oyarzún, and José Echeverría, who subsequently became outstanding



members of the Chilean philosophical community and achieved international reputations.<sup>50</sup> A new professional ethos for philosophy professors thus emerged with the institutional support provided by the Department of Philosophy. Although the rise of this ethos coincided with the decline of positivism, the separation of social from philosophical concerns derived from two sources: on the one hand, from the notion of academic freedom that encouraged university professors to commit themselves exclusively to their disciplines; on the other, from the new philosophical doctrines arriving in Chile and the motivations of the intellectuals who followed them. Phenomenology, in particular, arranged hierarchically the proper subjects of philosophical concern, thus making it easier for philosophy professors to confine social concerns to the lower echelons of this hierarchy. These new professionals found it much more attractive to deal with values and higher spiritual interests than with touchy social and political issues. Consequently, they placed stronger emphasis on the activities that could support and strengthen their philosophical preferences. Among such activities were publications, conferences, and the formation of professional societies.<sup>51</sup>

Thanks to this new orientation of philosophical endeavors, scholars and students became acquainted with the latest developments in European philosophy, especially phenomenology and existentialism and, to a lesser degree, neo-Thomism. Jorge Millas, Agustín Martínez, and Clarence Finlayson, among others, introduced and popularized such trends. Millas, one of the most active scholars in this regard, introduced the work of the Spaniard José Ortega y Gasset, who became influential in the Chilean philosophical community.<sup>52</sup> New disciplines were added, and prestigious academics from Europe were hired by the National University to strengthen the professional character of philosophical studies in Chile. In 1948 the Sociedad Chilena de Filosofía was founded, composed largely of faculty members from the department. The next year, the first issue of the *Revista de Filosofía* appeared.

The themes of philosophical study in Chile were similar to those in other areas of Latin America. Risieri Frondizi, the editor of "Philosophy" for the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* during the 1930s and 1940s, reported that German phenomenological thought, especially as presented by Ortega y Gasset, had become the most important philosophical current in Latin America.<sup>53</sup> In addition to providing a common subject of concern, this convergence of philosophical interests provided each national philosophical community with a sense of professional identity that transcended geographical boundaries. These communities could look upon their peers elsewhere as participants and potential audiences for the increasingly esoteric nature of their philosophical concerns. A series of international conferences followed, and in 1944, the First Inter-American Conference on Philosophy was held in Haiti and was

attended by delegates from almost every country in Latin America. Every three years, similar conferences took place in the region and in the United States.

In Chile, the Department of Philosophy at the National University had achieved a solid reputation by 1956. Prestigious academicians from Poland, Italy, and Spain were teaching in the department. Its *Revista de Filosofía* published papers by scholars from institutions throughout Latin America and Europe.<sup>54</sup> The department also sponsored major conferences, the most important of which was the Fourth Inter-American Congress of Philosophy. This meeting constituted perhaps the most significant challenge encountered up to that point by the Chilean philosophical community as a whole. The gathering received the endorsement of prestigious international institutions and unprecedented national attention. Delegates from Europe, the United States, and most Latin American countries came to discuss various topics by then characteristic of the new orientation of philosophical studies.<sup>55</sup>

#### THE CRITIQUE AGAINST PHILOSOPHICAL PROFESSIONALISM

At the height of its success in 1956, the Department of Philosophy suffered the first attacks against its professionalistic thrust and against its major philosophical schools of phenomenology and existentialism. Such attacks came from a junior faculty member, Juan Rivano, who had received degrees in philosophy and mathematics from the Faculty of Philosophy and Education. His emphasis on logic, which constituted the core of his work, led him to question the predominant philosophical views espoused by the majority of the members of the department.<sup>56</sup>

At first Rivano's critiques fell within the boundaries of academic philosophy. For instance, he criticized the concepts of self, knowledge, and reality that phenomenology and existentialism defended. Just as Bello and Letelier had used logic against metaphysics, Rivano used the same branch of philosophy to attack the prevalent philosophical schools of his department. This time, however, logic was not nearly as explosive as it had been before because it now occupied a subordinate place within a rich curriculum of studies. Rivano's employment of logic was nonetheless regarded with distrust, especially when he charged that the separation of subject and object in the phenomenological conception of knowledge was an arbitrary one and expressed his discontent with existentialist views that understood individuals as separate, self-contained units. Rivano's charges, however, were limited by the same professionalism that he was criticizing. For instance, he suggested that the Chilean versions of phenomenology and existentialism lacked logical rigor in their formulations. If taken literally, such charges could only strengthen professionalism by inviting it to meet logical criteria. Furthermore, in the

process of confronting the dominant philosophical schools of the department, he introduced such highly specialized philosophical doctrines as those of neo-Hegelians Harold Joachim and Francis Bradley. Nevertheless, the consequences of these seemingly mild criticisms and activities were to prove far-reaching.

Rivano's discontent with phenomenology and existentialism soon included academic philosophy in general. This time, he did not merely pit some schools against others, but bluntly suggested that academic philosophy was alien to the reality of human experience. He indicated that however sophisticated the concepts of academic philosophy might become, they still would fall far short of their supposed objective of guiding experience. This assertion led him to conclude that "a philosophy that does not provide an integral orientation to our lives is worth nothing."<sup>57</sup> Rivano's demands for an "integral philosophy," one more responsive to human and social needs than to the esoteric subjects of the academic discipline, arose as a result of the contradiction he noted between the reality of everyday human experience and reality as understood by metaphysical doctrines.

A major conflict followed because other professional philosophers were not willing to consider Rivano's allegations legitimate. What originated as a dispute among colleagues in the Department of Philosophy turned into a universitywide conflict involving questions about the relevance of academic philosophy in Chile, the aims of the discipline, and its place in the context of the National University. This dispute's impact was augmented by major changes occurring in other areas of society. In effect, Chile had entered the decade of the 1960s with a significantly higher degree of political mobilization. Leftist parties that had been outlawed or politically restricted under the administration of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1952–58) not only survived the period but swiftly regained their strength. The center-oriented Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC) also made significant political gains and competed with the left demanding sweeping reforms during the Jorge Alessandri administration (1958–64). The Cuban Revolution also inspired demands for reforms and commanded enthusiastic responses from student organizations and intellectuals throughout Latin America. It also brought increased attention to Marxism as both a political and a humanistic philosophy.<sup>58</sup> In Chile, both international and local events made social change and reform the watchwords of the time, affecting every area of the country's political and cultural life.

In the Department of Philosophy, the pressures for change took the form of debates on the relevance of philosophy in society. A conflict eventually exploded when Juan Rivano charged in 1962 that the department had been "domesticated by phenomenological mentors" who had trapped consciousness in a "professionalism that threatens to take it to

the skies." In view of changes on both hemispheric and national levels, Rivano expected the discipline and its practitioners to enlighten students about the nature and direction of such changes. When the department did not fulfill this expectation, he proceeded to attack the tenets of its dominant philosophical schools. He charged them with turning the students into "prisoners in a cave even worse than that described by Plato" and concluded that "the philosophy taught at our academic centers has done nothing to contribute to the enhancement of consciousness."<sup>59</sup> He also charged academic philosophy with being totally blind in not recognizing the pressing needs of an economically and culturally impoverished country. In his view, philosophy as taught in Chile stimulated neither interest nor commitment in the students to understand and help change the conditions in the country. Thus Rivano no longer attacked the tenets of academic philosophy solely on the basis of logical flaws, but on the basis of what he believed to be their lack of social, political, and pedagogical consequence.

Several faculty members reacted strongly to these attacks by underscoring the role they believed to be legitimate for philosophy in the context of higher education. Their larger body of philosophical work was not concerned with this kind of educational issues, but the current situation of the university and the growing demand for reforms made them react by defending both their role as academicians and their understanding of the role of the university. Jorge Millas, for instance, declared the basic mission of the university to be "the transmission of superior knowledge," a mission that he believed could only be realized through a community of scholars and disciples working together and guided by similar objectives. For Millas, this mission precluded participation in social and political events, which, to his dismay, were threatening to invade the university.<sup>60</sup> Félix Martínez Bonati was even more vehement in his refusal to mix philosophy and social concerns. Philosophy was for him the discipline best suited to achieving the mission of the university, and Martínez therefore suggested that what philosophy and the university owed to a "corrupt society" such as the Chilean, was "contempt." He stressed that the only commitment that both philosophy and the university had, and should have, was to "truth" and that their basic functions could be best accomplished in isolation and seclusion. Thus, Martínez suggested, the university should become an "ivory tower."<sup>61</sup> Juan de Dios Vial, another faculty member at the department, similarly suggested that the mission of the university was the "discovery and communication of truth." Philosophy, the very foundation of such an endeavor, constituted a "fundamentally personal activity" whose aim was the attainment of "universal truth." Vial thus concluded that philosophy, as a discipline whose objective was the unfettered pursuit of truth, provided

a useful model for the university. By freeing themselves from external social influences, both philosophy and the university could offer orientation and the opportunity for spiritual growth to society's members.<sup>62</sup>

The ideas of these authors were heavily influenced by José Ortega y Gasset's well-known "Misión de la universidad," which first had been published in Spain in 1930. These Chileans borrowed from Ortega the idea that the primary function of the university, which he described as "the intellect of society," was the formation of professionals with a strong cultural background. According to Ortega, every discipline, either scientific or humanistic, should provide the students with not only the means to become efficient professionals but with a larger understanding of their culture.<sup>63</sup> Ortega was mainly reacting against what he thought to be an excessive emphasis on scientific research at the contemporary university and he outlined ways of turning science into a useful activity within the institution, but Chilean intellectuals took from his ideas what best suited their own purposes. They particularly responded to the suggestion that the university should become one of the spiritual powers in society.<sup>64</sup> To this idea they added their own conviction that philosophers should lead society from within a university free of disturbing external factors.

Such conclusions resulted directly from these intellectuals' philosophical professionalism, which led them to defend a view of the university that precluded interaction with society. Chile's social and political mobilization of the early 1960s forced them to speak out in defense of a model of higher education that supported their philosophical professionalism. In this process, they defended professionalism not just because it was at the center of their model of the university, but because the very assumptions of this professionalism were under heavy attack in their own Faculty of Philosophy and Education.

Juan Rivano not only challenged the philosophical assumptions of these professionals, but argued in favor of a radical change in the direction of philosophical studies in Chile. He wanted specifically to make philosophy responsive to what he believed to be the most urgent needs of the country. This sense of urgency reflected both internal changes in his philosophical thought and the general mobilization of the country in a time of rapid social change. In order to make philosophical activity a meaningful concern in this context, he suggested, humanism, by which he meant a concern for the social as well as individual needs of man, should become the center of a new conception of philosophy in Chile. Professionalism, he charged, opened an abyss between man and philosophy, making the latter have little to do with the former. Rivano argued that a humanistic philosophy could directly help Latin Americans by showing them the way to achieve such basic goals as the elimination of poverty and the attainment of a critical consciousness. Between

1962 and 1969, Rivano worked to define new aims for philosophy in Latin America and themes that he thought would be meaningful to pursue.<sup>65</sup>

#### THE PROCESS OF UNIVERSITY REFORM

The role of the intellectual in Latin American university reform movements has always been significant, as exemplified by the 1918 university reform process at Córdoba.<sup>66</sup> Like their Argentinean counterparts, Chilean intellectuals played a crucial role in identifying the problems of the university and in debating about the institution's nature and aims. In some cases, they were active in the movement itself. But it was through other groups inside and outside the university that reforms were eventually implemented during 1968–69 in Chile. The role of philosophy and of philosophers was nonetheless of paramount importance precisely because of the pre-existing conflict between professionalism and social concerns within the ranks of the philosophical community. Just as Argentinean intellectuals had rebelled against positivism in the early part of the century and had attacked it by means of a university reform movement, some Chilean philosophers attacked the philosophical schools that they identified with professionalism and in the process became involved in a larger movement favoring reform of the university.

The sequence of events leading to the Chilean university reform process began in 1967, when students of the Faculty of Philosophy and Education, the largest university faculty in the country, took over their classrooms and demanded that the authorities resign.<sup>67</sup> They attacked the administration of the college for inefficiency and undemocratic procedures. Professors in the Department of Philosophy polarized immediately when the conflict exploded, most siding with the besieged authorities and condemning what they believed to be an intolerable politicization of the university environment. Juan Rivano and some other junior faculty members sided with the students and supported their demands. Whether for or against the student movement, many professors of philosophy supplied the arguments that gave this conflict its peculiar political and philosophical character. Not for many decades had the university seen its philosophers so involved in a conspicuously social and political debate.<sup>68</sup>

Proposals for the reform of the National University had already been presented by several organized groups prior to events in the Faculty of Philosophy. University reform was on the agenda of the two center and leftist political coalitions competing for power during the first half of the 1960s, namely, the Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC) and the Marxist Frente de Acción Popular (FRAP). The PDC, which had won the 1964 presidential elections, proceeded to implement educational reforms to modernize and democratize the National University. Both par-

ties agreed about the need to make changes in an institution that began with five faculties in 1842, grew to eight faculties and twenty-six schools by 1940, expanded into thirteen faculties and more than seventy schools by 1967, and yet possessed no adequate mechanisms to represent the different interests and sectors of the institution.<sup>69</sup> But the two major political groups, both with large student followings at the university, differed about the extent to which the institution should be reformed. The left, particularly the Communist party, sought to transform the university into an institution actively involved in the promotion of social change,<sup>70</sup> while the PDC administration sought mainly to modify the university to make it more responsive to the needs of the state, more democratic, and more accommodating to scientific research.<sup>71</sup> Although the aims of reforming the university might have been similar for both groups, they remained deadlocked in constant conflict over dominance at higher political levels.

The student movement at the Faculty of Philosophy unexpectedly broke the deadlock and accelerated the process of reform. Controlled by neither of the above mentioned groups, the student activists not only forced the dean to resign but caused the collapse of the entire administrative structure of the faculty in a matter of weeks. An ad hoc committee was formed to rule the occupied faculty while representative elections (until then a reformist ideal) were held within every department. The central administration of the university found this situation intolerable and threatened to demand forcible governmental intervention. Leaders of the movement at the faculty responded that they would not leave the facilities until substantial changes were made in the administrative structure of the institution. This demand proved to be more than the progovernment forces were willing to accept, despite their own reformist intentions. Even the left, which naturally welcomed any disruption of the existing status quo, wavered in its support of a movement over which it seemed to have little control. Independent of the major political parties, the movement at the faculty swiftly became the controversial focus of the university reform process. Demands and rejections went back and forth between the faculty and the University Council. At issue was the university's willingness to tolerate its own democratization.

Rector Eugenio González, who faced an unyielding University Council and an equally unyielding Faculty of Philosophy, resigned in May of 1968, precipitating a crisis of national proportions that lasted until November of 1969, when Rector Edgardo Boeninger was elected. During that period, the National University became the arena for the most violent political struggle in its history. All the major political parties of the country became involved in the conflict, which their leaders saw as an opportunity to gauge the strength of the different political forces already emerging for the 1970 presidential elections. Although the PDC won this

struggle, the left also made substantial gains at several university levels that heralded their upcoming victory in the presidential contest. Such involvement by political parties has led most scholars concerned with this issue to suggest that the university became a politicized arena where larger national issues were at stake.<sup>72</sup>

Profound institutional changes nevertheless resulted from the movement for university reform, which apparently was inspired primarily by the need for institutional adjustments in a changing society. The power of the tenured faculty was substantially diminished, authorities were elected by a wider university constituency, and the university became more active in public affairs.<sup>73</sup> Within the Department of Philosophy, students and junior faculty gained more influence over their academic programs, which no longer depended on the sole authority of the *catedrático*, or tenured faculty member. Consequently, emphasis on the critical and social aspects of philosophy increased, and the system of seminars was adjusted to accommodate the new orientation of philosophical studies. Several members of the department fled to other centers and institutions of the university because they thought the academic environment at the Faculty of Philosophy too politicized.

After the university reform movement of 1968, the institution became politically active, largely because the major political parties of the country had discovered the advantages of having some measure of control over the nation's largest university. Indeed, their claims to political and intellectual legitimacy rested on that type of control. The university, including the Department of Philosophy, continued to function in the politically charged climate. But it became increasingly difficult to do so under the administration of Salvador Allende, when frequent strikes and confrontations among various groups disrupted activities almost completely. All university activities were brought to a subsequent halt by the coup d'état of 1973 that installed a military junta that still retains a firm control over all institutions of higher education. Philosophical studies in particular have returned to their former professionalistic thrust, and social and political concerns have been removed from the department.<sup>74</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Bertrand Russell once suggested that metaphysics originated from two different human impulses to attain knowledge about the world—one toward mysticism and the other toward logic and science. He concluded that the attempt to harmonize these two goals made philosophy “a greater thing than either science or religion.” In his many writings, however, he made it clear that he placed little value upon mysticism and metaphysics as means of attaining knowledge. He nevertheless believed them to be inspiring and also helpful as preliminary steps toward scienti-



fic knowledge. In Russell's view, the choice between logic and mysticism was ultimately a human option, a conscious decision as to which one allowed a greater degree of knowledge.<sup>75</sup>

While history of Chilean philosophy demonstrates little about the options and attitudes toward knowledge that Russell discussed, it reveals a significant amount of conflict between the proponents of metaphysics and logic. The ongoing debate reflects not the individual preferences of these proponents, but the social implications that Chilean philosophers believed could be derived from either logic or metaphysics. The advocates of logic also supported introducing social concerns into the study of philosophy and the goals of education. These views led them to confront the proponents of metaphysics, who by and large advocated freedom from social concerns for both philosophy and the university.

Although Andrés Bello, Valentín Letelier, and Juan Rivano had differing views on logic and science, they all believed that metaphysics was ultimately damaging when it dominated national educational goals and the field of pedagogy. While the study of metaphysics does not necessarily exclude socially engaged thinking, many practitioners of this discipline were perceived as being unconcerned with social and political issues. Bello therefore sought to counteract metaphysics by encouraging the study of logic. Letelier went further in explicitly identifying metaphysics as one of the greatest evils of the Chilean educational system and in banning the subject from the curriculum of higher education. Juan Rivano, who had been educated in an already professionalized environment of philosophical studies, pointed an accusing finger not only at metaphysics, but at academic philosophy in general because of its lack of social concerns.

When its advocates carried Chilean philosophy far in the direction of professionalism and became proud of their lack of involvement in larger social concerns, a spark of disenchantment ignited among some members of the philosophical community who combined philosophical argumentation with concrete steps for university reform. Hence emerged not only the substantial changes of 1968 at the National University, but a fundamental change in the orientation of philosophical concerns. A clear pattern was then revealed whereby philosophy, however dormant it might have seemed after decades of professionalism, demonstrated a significant potential for not only the critique of its own activities, but for such sweeping institutional changes as the university reform of 1968.

NOTES

1. The most important sources in this regard are William Rex Crawford, *A Century of Latin American Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961); Germán Arciniegas, *Latin America, A Cultural History*, translated by Joan MacLean (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967); Miguel Jorrín and John D. Martz, *Latin American Political Thought and Ideology* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970); and Harold E. Davis, *Latin American Thought: A Historical Introduction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972). These sources generally neglect the nonpolitical and academicist trends of thought in the region.
2. Andrés Bello, *Obras Completas*, vol. 8 (Santiago de Chile: Pedro G. Ramírez, 1885), p. 309.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 238. Important sources on the establishment of the University of Chile are Raúl Atria B., Eduardo Acuña A., Patricio Dooner D., Edmundo López H., and Ernesto Moreno B., *Actores sociales y cambio institucional en las reformas universitarias chilenas* (Santiago: Corporación de Promoción Universitaria, 1973), particularly chapter 5 by Patricio Dooner. Also, the issue entitled "Homenaje al bicentenario del natalicio de Andrés Bello," *Atenea: Revista de Ciencia, Arte y Literatura*, nos. 443–44 (1981). Most articles in this issue touch upon the establishment of the University of Chile; see particularly Sergio Fernández Larraín's "Elogio de Bello," pp. 13–40. An important source on Bello's ideas for the university is Raúl Hernán Silva, "El pensamiento de Bello en el discurso de instalación," *Boletín de la Universidad de Chile* 35 (November 1962): 28–32.
4. Andrés Bello, *Obras Completas* 7:451.
5. On the objectives of the colonial university, see Mario Góngora, "Origin and Philosophy of the Spanish American University," in *The Latin American University*, edited by Joseph Maier and Richard W. Weatherhead (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), pp. 17–64.
6. Crawford, for one, emphasizes Bentham's influence on Bello; see his *A Century of Latin American Thought*, pp. 52–57.
7. Hanns-Albert Steger, "The European Background," in Maier and Weatherhead, p. 87.
8. Góngora, *ibid.*, pp. 41–42.
9. Bello, *Obras* 8:450.
10. Bello, "Curso de filosofía, por N.O.R.E.A.," in *Obras* 7:317–36. A similar emphasis may be found in his comments about other textbooks, such as Jaime Balme's *Filosofía fundamental* and Rattier's *Filosofía*, contained in the same volume.
11. These ideas were originally presented in Lastarria's "Investigaciones sobre la influencia de la conquista i del sistema colonial de los españoles en Chile," published in Santiago in 1844. He elaborated on them later in his *Recuerdos literarios* (Santiago: Editorial Zig-Zag, 1967).
12. Andrés Bello, "Investigaciones sobre la influencia de la conquista i del sistema colonial de los españoles en Chile: memoria presentada a la universidad en sesión solemne de 22 de Septiembre de 1844, por don José Victorino Lastarria," *Obras* 7: 71–88. An excellent account of the polemic between these two intellectuals can be found in Allen L. Woll, *A Functional Past: The Uses of History in Nineteenth-Century Chile* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), chap. 2.
13. Quoted by Norman P. Sacks, "José Victorino Lastarria: un intelectual comprometido en la América Latina," *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía* 140 (1972): 160.
14. Lastarria's autobiography, *Recuerdos literarios*, provides one of the best sources on his thought and activities. One must be aware, however, of his tendency to overemphasize his importance in the context of Chilean intellectual history. In addition to the Sacks article, useful sources are Luis Oyarzún, "Lastarria y los comienzos del pensamiento filosófico en Chile durante el siglo XIX," *Revista de Filosofía* 1 (August 1949): 27–56; and Renato Cristi, "El gesto filosófico de Lastarria," *Teoría* 5–6 (December 1976): 3–14.
15. Lastarria, *Recuerdos literarios*, p. 35.
16. Solomon Lipp, *Three Chilean Thinkers* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University

- Press, 1975), chap. 1; Jorrín and Martz, pp. 100–2; Crawford, pp. 69–74; and Davis, pp. 83–85.
17. Juan Bautista Alberdi, "Ideas para presidir la confección del curso de filosofía contemporánea," in *Escritos póstumos de Juan Bautista Alberdi* 15 (Buenos Aires: Imprenta Juan Bautista Alberdi, 1900). This essay was originally written in 1842.
  18. On the different phases of the Faculty of Philosophy, see José Echeverría, *La enseñanza de la filosofía en la universidad hispanoamericana* (Washington, D.C.: Unión Panamericana, 1965).
  19. Fanor Velasco, "Recuerdos del Instituto Nacional," *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía* 51, no. 55 (1925–26): 48.
  20. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
  21. John J. Johnson uses the name "liberal republic" to refer to this period in Chilean history. See his *Political Change in Latin America: The Emergence of the Middle Sectors* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958).
  22. The notion of "professionalism" has acquired a complex meaning, particularly in North American scholarship. Such authors as Burton Bledstein, Thomas Haskell, Bruce Kuklick, and others use it to refer to the rise of the academic professions in the United States. In the context of Chilean positivism, professionalism simply meant a practical emphasis placed on disciplines formerly taught under a purely academic model. With the decline of positivism, professionalism acquired a new meaning, much closer to North American usage.
  23. Diego Barros Arana, "Fragmentos del discurso de Diego Barros Arana con motivo del cincuentenario de la universidad en 1893," *Boletín de la Universidad de Chile* 35 (November 1962): 42–44.
  24. Augusto Orrego Luco, "La resurrección del latín," *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía* 101 (July–December 1942): 157–74.
  25. The most important source on Letelier's life and thought is Luis Galdames, *Valentín Letelier y su obra, 1852–1919* (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Universitaria, 1937). See also Leonardo Fuentealba H., "Filosofía de la historia en Letelier," *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía* 127 (January–December 1959): 313–51; and Peter J. Sehlinger, "Cien años de influencia de la obra de Letelier," *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía* 139 (1971): 72–85.
  26. Valentín Letelier, *Filosofía de la educación*, revised and enlarged edition (Buenos Aires: Cabaut, 1927), p. 167.
  27. Important studies on the impact of positivism in other areas of Latin America are Leopoldo Zea, *Dos etapas del pensamiento en Hispanoamérica: del romanticismo al positivismo* (México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1949); and João Cruz Costa, *A History of Ideas in Brazil: The Development of Philosophy in Brazil and the Evolution of National History*, translated by Suzette Macedo (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964).
  28. Letelier, *Filosofía*, p. 410.
  29. *Ibid.*, p. 414.
  30. An excellent account of German influences on Chilean education can be seen in William Walter Sywak, "Values in Nineteenth-Century Latin America: The Germanic Reform of Chilean Public Education, 1885–1910," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1977). Letelier made his admiration for the German model of education explicit in his *Filosofía de la educación*. The student of comparative history may find valuable insights about the German influence on education in the United States in Jurgen Herbst, *The German Historical School in American Scholarship: A Study in the Transfer of Culture* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1972).
  31. Specific details on the creation of the Pedagogical Institute can be found in Guillermo Feliú Cruz, "El Instituto Pedagógico bajo la dirección de Domingo Amunátegui Solar, 1892–1922," *Mapocho* 3 (1965): 11–43. Details on the hiring of the German professors can be found in Valentín Letelier, "Cartas a don Claudio Matte," *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía* 121 (January–June 1953): 34–53.
  32. Letelier, *Filosofía*, p. 429.
  33. Roger L. Geiger has pointed out that French intellectuals and educational figures also

- viewed the German educational system quite positively. German universities, in particular, were highly regarded. See his "Reform and Restraint in Higher Education: The French Experience, 1865–1914," *Yale Higher Education Program Working Paper* no. 2, 1975, pp. 8–9.
34. Leopoldo Zea, *El positivismo en México*, second ed. (México: Ediciones Studium, 1953), p. 188. See also Jorrín and Martz, pp. 30–31, 130–34.
  35. Many graduates of the institute, including Luis Galdames and Darío Salas, subsequently occupied important positions in the Chilean educational system. See Ricardo Donoso, "El Instituto Pedagógico: tres generaciones de maestros," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 6 (January 1964): 5–16.
  36. Clark Gill indicates that by 1850 only 1 percent of the population was enrolled in elementary schools. See *Education and Social Change in Chile* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966), pp. 15, 20. Only .2 percent were in secondary schools. By 1900 the figure for elementary school enrollment was 5.5 percent and .4 percent for secondary schools.
  37. The appendixes to Guillermo Feliú's article contain useful statistics on the evolution of the institute. See also José Echeverría, *La enseñanza*, on the merger of the Pedagogical Institute with the Faculty of Philosophy, Humanities, and Fine Arts in 1931.
  38. Julio Montebruno, "Don Jorge Enrique Schneider," *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía* 101 (July–December 1942): 197–98.
  39. For an overview of Mann's contributions to the study of different academic disciplines at the National University, see Hayra G. de Sommerville, Laura Zagal Anabalón, Carlos Videla V., and Esteban Doña U., "Una fase importante de la enseñanza de la filosofía, de la psicología y de la pedagogía en la Universidad de Chile," *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 100, nos. 45–46 (1942): 206–37. Of course, not all Chileans agreed that German professors made contributions. See, for instance, Raúl Silva Castro, "Don Eduardo de la Barra y la pedagogía alemana," *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía* 101 (July–December 1942): 208–35.
  40. On the Latin American reaction against positivism, see Risieri Frondizi and Jorge J. E. Gracia, *El hombre y los valores en la filosofía latinoamericana del siglo XX* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1975). The interest in man and values characterizes the new philosophical concerns and is remarkably similar throughout Latin America.
  41. Galdames, *Valentín Letelier*, p. 201.
  42. All the science departments combined, for instance, granted 171 degrees in 1910, only 27 percent of all degrees granted in that year. See Galdames, p. 589.
  43. Quoted by José Luis Romero in "University Reform," Maier and Weatherhead, p. 136.
  44. Enrique Molina, *La filosofía en Chile en la primera mitad del siglo XX* (Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1953), p. 18.
  45. On the philosophical thought of Vasconcelos and Caso, see Crawford, *Latin American Thought*, pp. 260–93. On their political and cultural activities, see Enrique Krauze, *Caudillos culturales en la revolución mexicana*, second ed. (México: Siglo XXI, 1977) and Daniel Cosío Villegas: *una biografía intelectual* (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1980), pp. 19–20, 22–24.
  46. Molina, *De lo espiritual en la vida humana*, second ed. (Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1947).
  47. Molina, *La filosofía*, p. 10.
  48. Molina, *Confesión filosófica y llamado de superación a la América hispana* (Santiago: Nascimento, 1942), p. 40.
  49. The period between 1931 and 1968 at the University of Chile has received comparatively greater scholarly attention than previous periods of its history. See Carlos Huneeus Madge, *La reforma universitaria en la universidad de Chile* (Santiago: Corporación de Promoción Universitaria, 1973); Frank Bonilla and Myron Glazer, *Student Politics in Chile* (New York: Basic Books, 1970); Albert L. Michaels, "Chilean Politics and University Reform," *Universities and the New International Order* 4, Special Studies Series no. 113, edited by Irving J. Spitzberg (Buffalo, N.Y.: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1979); and the already cited *Actores sociales y cambio institucional* by Raúl Atria et al.
  50. As the Department of Philosophy became "professional," dedicated to cultivating a

more academic than political brand of philosophy, histories of the discipline in Chile began to appear. The most important of these is Molina's *La filosofía en Chile*, which has already been cited. A more recent account of this period is Roberto Escobar's *La filosofía en Chile* (Santiago: Universidad Técnica del Estado, 1976). This source views philosophy in academic terms and examines rather superficially those Chilean philosophers who do not fit the author's professionalistic view of Chilean philosophy. Somewhat less biased, but still uncritical of philosophical professionalism, is Santiago Vidal's "Apuntes sobre la filosofía en Chile," *Cursos y Conferencias* 48 (March 1956): 39–60.

51. The Chilean *Revista de Filosofía*, whose first issue appeared in August of 1949, began to publish all types of communications and news related to the most professional aspects of philosophical activity in Chile.
52. Luis Oyarzún mentions the impact of Ortega's work on the intellectual milieu of his time in his *Temas de la cultura chilena*, Colección Imágenes de Chile no. 2 (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1967), p. 161.
53. Risieri Frondizi, "Philosophy," *Handbook of Latin American Studies* 5 (1939): 418–27.
54. "El Departamento de Filosofía de la Universidad de Chile," *Revista de Filosofía* 3 (July 1956): 101–3.
55. The organization and outcome of this congress are described in "Primer Congreso de la Sociedad Interamericana de Filosofía," *Revista de Filosofía* 3 (July 1956), and in "El Congreso Interamericano de Filosofía," *Revista de Filosofía* 3 (December 1956): 118–24.
56. Representative articles in this regard by Rivano are "Análisis crítico de algunas concepciones de la conciencia y el yo," *Revista de Filosofía* 3 (December 1956): 41–53; "Ciencia, realidad y verdad," *Revista de Filosofía* 5 (December 1958): 43–58; "El principio de la evidencia apodíctica en la filosofía de E. Husserl," *Revista de Filosofía* 6 (December 1959): 45–57; and the introductory essay to his translation of Francis H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, 2 vols. (Santiago: Comisión Central de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1961), pp. xiii–lxi. For an examination of Rivano's work in this period, see Félix Schwartzmann, "La Philosophie au Chili," in *La Philosophie Contemporaine*, edited by Raymond Klibanski (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1971); and also Iván Jaksic, "The Philosophy of Juan Rivano: The Intellectual Background of the University Reform Movement of 1968 in Chile" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1981).
57. Rivano, "Desde el abandono" (Santiago: 1963, Typescript), p. 18.
58. On the impact of the Cuban Revolution in Latin America, see Jorrín and Martz, pp. 270–71, 302–13. The impact of this revolution on Latin American university students has been described in Arthur Liebman, Kenneth N. Walker, and Myron Glazer, *Latin American University Students: A Six Nation Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 29–31.
59. Rivano, *Entre Hegel y Marx: una meditación ante los nuevos horizontes del humanismo* (Santiago: Comisión Central de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1962), pp. 27, 54.
60. Jorge Millas, "Discurso sobre la universidad y su reforma," *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 119 (1960): 249–61.
61. Félix Martínez Bonati, "La misión humanística y social de nuestra universidad," *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 119 (1960): 122, and *La situación universitaria* (Santiago: Prensas de la Editorial Universitaria, 1965), pp. 22, 46.
62. Juan de Dios Vial Larraín, "Idea de la universidad," in *La universidad en tiempos de cambio* (Santiago: Editorial del Pacífico, 1965), pp. 8–12, and "Acerca de la filosofía," *Revista de Filosofía* 8, no. 1 (1961): 91.
63. José Ortega y Gasset, *Misión de la universidad y otros ensayos afines*, fourth ed. (Madrid: Editorial Revista de Occidente, 1965), p. 71.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
65. Most important among these works are, in addition to *Entre Hegel y Marx*, "La América ahistórica y sin mundo del humanista Ernesto Grassi," *Mapocho* 4 (January 1964): 114–31; *El punto de vista de la miseria* (Santiago: Facultad de Filosofía y Educación, Universidad de Chile, 1965); *Contra sofistas* (Santiago: E. Hispano-Suiza, 1966);

- and *Cultura de la servidumbre: mitología de importación* (Santiago: Editorial Santiago, 1969).
66. Richard J. Walter, "The Intellectual Background of the 1918 University Reform in Argentina," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 49 (1969): 233–53.
  67. These events, like all others related to the university reform movement, were covered in detail by the press. The *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* published an extremely valuable issue that reprints most of these articles. See "Documentos reforma universitaria: prensa," *Anales* 126 (October–December 1968).
  68. The implications of university reform for the Department of Philosophy are examined in the *Revista de Filosofía* 14, no. 1 (1969).
  69. Enrique Kirberg, *Los nuevos profesionales: educación universitaria de trabajadores en Chile: UTE, 1968–1973* (Guadalajara: Instituto de Estudios Sociales, Universidad de Guadalajara, 1981), p. 103.
  70. See Hernán Ramírez Necochea's *El partido comunista y la universidad* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones de la Revista Aurora, 1964).
  71. Patricia Weiss Fagen, *Chilean Universities: Problems of Autonomy and Dependence*, Comparative Politics Series no. 4 (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1973), pp. 11–15.
  72. This point is largely accurate, but one is left with an obscure idea of the initial motivations for reform. Some scholars emphasize economic motivation as the basis for reform, particularly Bonilla, Glazer, and Michaels. Huneeus places a heavy emphasis on political motivations. Recent studies continue to view the events of 1968 as an expression of a larger political struggle between the major parties of the country. See Manuel Antonio Garretón, "Universidad y política en los procesos de transformación y reversión en Chile, 1967–1977," *Estudios Sociales* 26, no. 4 (1980): 83–109; Angel Flisfisch, "Elementos para una interpretación de los procesos de reforma en la Universidad de Chile, 1950–1973," FLACSO Documento Preliminar no. 19 (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, September 1981); and the book by Enrique Kirberg already cited. One major difference between the older and the more recent studies on university reform is the focus on student politics. The latter tends to emphasize more the implications of larger structural social changes on higher education. For an assessment of this shift in scholarly attention, see Daniel C. Levy, "Student Politics in Contemporary Latin America," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 14 (June 1981): 353–76.
  73. Most of the sources cited in note 72 agree on the achievements of university reform.
  74. This last statement is based on exchanges between students and faculty from the department and me, because an assessment of Chilean philosophy and of the Department of Philosophy under military rule is yet to be made. One can find valuable insights, however, in Garretón and Levy. I am particularly indebted to Levy's "Chilean University Policy under the Junta," in a forthcoming book entitled *Chile under Military Rule*, edited by Arturo Valenzuela and Samuel Valenzuela.
  75. Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays* (London: Longmans, Green, 1921), p. 1.