

The Evolution of a Chilean Socialist: Marmaduke Grove

JACK RAY THOMAS*

ON APRIL 19, 1933, representatives from several small reform parties met in the Municipal Theater at Santiago to create the Socialist Party of Chile. Five years later this heterogeneous organization had grown sufficiently in numbers and resources to play a leading role in the formation of Pedro Aguirre Cerda's Popular Front government. In this formative period the party leadership consisted not of doctrinaire socialists inspired by Karl Marx but rather of men devoted to welfare statism. Typical of this breed of non-Marxian, nontheoretical socialist was Colonel Marmaduke Grove Vallejo, career army officer, senator from Santiago, and secretary general of the Socialist Party.

Chilean socialism prior to 1933 developed slowly with frequent crises and agonizing reverses. It evolved from and later complemented the labor movement, which had expanded rapidly after the turn of the century under the bold leadership of Luis Emilio Recabarren. In 1909 Recabarren's efforts bore fruit with the establishment of the Workers' Federation of Chile (FOCH), and in 1912 he organized the Workers' Socialist Party. Both groups were initially moderate, designed to "cultivate amicable relations with the public powers and administrative authorities, while adhering closely to the spirit of the statutes. . . ." Yet a few years later the workers abandoned these principles and openly embraced Marxism. In 1922 the Socialist Workers' Party voted to join the Communist International, and by 1925 Communists were in positions of power in FOCH.¹

Meanwhile, many Chileans who sought social and economic advancement refused to accept the alliance with communism. Disillusioned socialists formed a number of political parties, but they all proved ineffective in national political warfare. For a few years each of these parties went its own way until finally it became clear

* The author is Assistant Professor of History at Bowling Green State University. Research for this article was made possible by a grant from the Henry L. and Grace Doherty Foundation.

¹ Alberto Edwards Vives and Eduardo Frei Montalva, *Historia de los partidos chilenos* (Santiago, 1949), 158.

to the various leaders that socialism could succeed in Chile only through the concerted action of a single party. Once this idea was accepted, it was only a short step to the creation of the Socialist Party in 1933.

Marmaduke Grove was a leader in the socialist unification movement. As a youth in 1891 he became enmeshed in the Congressionalist rebellion against President José Manuel Balmaceda, when government troops imprisoned his father for outspoken criticism of the Balmaceda government. Infuriated, the young Grove attempted to join the rebel army in Copiapó, his home town. As he was leaving with the troops, however, his mother took him from the train because he was only thirteen years old.

Another impulsive act of Grove's formative years occurred at the Naval Academy, which expelled him in 1894 for participation in a student revolt against the school directors. Undaunted, Grove managed to gain admittance to the Military Academy in Santiago and subsequently graduated with the rank of second lieutenant. Even as an army officer he failed to curb his impetuosity, and he could never really accept the regimentation of a military life. On occasion he verbally assailed his superiors, and at one point he openly challenged orders given him by a general staff officer. For a time Grove escaped expulsion only because other officers indulged in the same activities without fear of punishment. Discipline had broken down in the Chilean army after the loss of dedicated officers in the War of the Pacific and the defection of the navy and some army units from the Balmaceda government in the 1891 insurrection. Grove's outspoken attitude and his desire for quick action led him into several insurrections and finally did cost him his commission, though not until he had risen to the rank of colonel and had served for thirty years. Even dismissal from the service did not alter his personality, and he remained a volatile, impulsive man of action throughout his life.

Grove came to socialism by a digressive and implausible route. From his father, a leading member of the Radical Party in Copiapó, he early learned to identify himself with the aspirations of the rising middle classes. Later, when his profession took him to William II's Germany on a military mission, he appeared to espouse a more conservative program. Friends noted that Grove admired the order, the discipline, and political stability which he felt characterized a monarchical government.² Upon his return to Chile, however, Grove

² Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones ordinarias*, May 28, 1934, 119.

became increasingly concerned with social problems, though he could not accept a genuinely socialist solution. In 1927, during an extended tour of duty in Europe as military attaché, he praised the English political system for sincerely respecting personal liberties, in sharp contrast, he said, with the prevailing lack of freedom in Chile.³ With the passage of years, then, Grove vacillated between conservatism and liberalism. There is no evidence that he accepted socialism prior to the establishment of the short-lived Socialist Republic of Chile in 1932.

On several occasions before 1932 Grove expressed deep concern for the unhappy lot of Chile's lower classes. In the 1920 presidential election he openly supported the reform candidate, Arturo Alessandri Palma; again in 1924 he aligned himself with a group of army officers who bitterly resented congressional apathy toward the economic problems of the poor.⁴ Staging a barracks revolt, they forced congress to pass the social legislation which Alessandri had vainly urged upon that conservative-dominated body for four years. Although Grove took no part in this insurrection, he attempted to justify his brother officers' conduct in a series of articles published in the Santiago newspaper, *La Nación*. By nature sanguine and idealistic, Grove believed that social and political reforms, benefiting not only the lower classes but the middle and upper segments of society as well, would inevitably accompany a military uprising. A healthy, progressive economy, he asserted, meant prosperity for capitalists and workers alike.⁵

In *La Nación* Grove repeatedly urged electoral reforms in order to reduce the notorious voting frauds. To combat the prevalent abuses of multiple voting he proposed a uniform registration system including identification cards with photographs and fingerprints. Grove also pointed to the necessity for a national civil service reform. Far too many government positions went to incompetent or untrained individuals, he wrote, solely because of their political and family connections. He suggested instituting on the national level an administrative method which had been employed successfully at the Military School. Aptitude tests should be given to all aspirants, and the person with the highest score should be offered the job first. He

³ Marmaduke Grove, *Toda la verdad* (Buenos Aires, 1929), 55.

⁴ Marmaduke Grove, "Las elecciones del año 20 y la 'movilización de D. Ladislao!'," *Claridad* (Santiago), February 12, 1938.

⁵ Marmaduke Grove, "Sepamos esperar," *La Nación* (Santiago), October 4, 1924.

believed that this system, if conscientiously employed, would not only eliminate corruption but also improve the caliber and efficiency of government workers.⁶

In the weeks immediately following the military revolt, the officer-dominated government—which had forced Alessandri into exile—developed opposition within its own ranks. To restore the officers' unity of purpose Grove urged a united military front against the forces of political reaction. In his view the military government had a fourfold objective: (1) to cleanse the administrative services; (2) to inaugurate fiscal reform; (3) to revise the constitution so as to make the government acceptable to the majority of Chileans; and finally (4) to adopt laws which would ease the plight of the laboring classes. Grove believed that all military officers who wished to create a progressive nation would support this program.⁷

By November a clash between the younger officers and their more conservative superiors appeared imminent. After the overthrow of President Alessandri in September the revolutionary officers had formed two separate organizations, the Government Junta, composed of three older, conservative officers who actually administered the government, and the Military Junta, made up of several younger officers who acted only as advisers. Predictably, friction developed between the two organizations, as the younger officers became suspicious of their superiors and jealous of their predominant role in the government. The younger officers also favored more liberal policies, and they resented the Government Junta's obvious drift toward conservatism.

Grove himself began to doubt the liberal nature of this professed reform movement; for to his surprise and displeasure the ruling committee did not appear as concerned with social justice as he had expected. His suspicions seemed to be confirmed when the Conservative Party openly supported the military government.⁸ Temporarily, however, Grove chose to cling to his illusions concerning the Government Junta, and he attempted to persuade the public—and perhaps himself too—that his fellow officers had no desire to govern Chile in a dictatorial fashion. Once again using the columns of *La Nación*, he asked the country to retain its confidence in the military

⁶ Marmaduke Grove, "Reforma indispensable," *La Nación*, October 7, 1924.

⁷ Marmaduke Grove, "La unión hace la fuerza," *La Nación*, November 11, 1924 and Marmaduke Grove, "Será necesario levantar una horca . . .," *La Nación*, November 6, 1924.

⁸ Marmaduke Grove, "Declaraciones sospechosas," *La Nación*, November 20, 1924.

organization and assured the Chilean people that it had nothing to fear from its leaders.⁹

Soon after this, however, Grove learned that the Government Junta had pledged support to a Conservative candidate in a forthcoming presidential election. This alarming announcement convinced him and other officers of field grade that they must now wrest power from their superiors. Late in December the Government Junta precipitated a revolt by dissolving the subordinate group without previous notice or even a satisfactory explanation. This peremptory action provoked the military insurrection of January 23, 1925, led by Major Carlos Ibáñez del Campo and Lieutenant Colonel Grove.

After their successful revolt Ibáñez assumed the post of minister of war while Grove was appointed chief of the air force.¹⁰ Using his new post as a stepping stone, Ibáñez became the virtual dictator of Chile in 1927. As part of a policy designed to eliminate opposition Ibáñez named Grove military attaché to France and England. Once in Europe Grove joined a group of Chilean expatriates, led by ex-President Arturo Alessandri, in a conspiracy against the Ibáñez regime. Participation in this plot led Grove to think more in revolutionary terms and to examine more closely the problem of military intervention in politics. Curiously, he was not concerned with the harm such action might do to the civil government, but he feared instead its ill effects upon the armed forces. "I wish," he wrote, "that destiny would permit the armed forces to remain . . . outside the political struggles that divide and malign, persevering in its professional tasks that serve to unite and dignify."¹¹

But Grove himself could not remain aloof from politics. He continued to attack the Ibáñez government for its arbitrary rule and its trampling of civil liberties, while, at the same time, he lashed out at politicians in general for their errors in judgment, their corruption, and their lack of patriotism. He wrote letters to Ibáñez protesting his erstwhile co-conspirator's policies; he wrote letters to friends condemning Ibáñez; and he made his unfavorable views known to the press. Finally exasperated, Ibáñez charged Grove with complicity in the Alessandri conspiracy and in August 1928 sent to the Senate a request for Grove's dismissal from the service. When the Senate

⁹ Marmaduke Grove, "No hay por qué alarmarse," *La Nación*, December 8, 1924.

¹⁰ Ejército de Chile, Comando en Jefe, Dirección del Personal, *Datos Biográficos del ex-coronel (F) Don Marmaduke Grove Vallejos* [sic], Santiago, November 3, 1961 (Mimeographed).

¹¹ Grove, *Toda la verdad*, 20.

approved this proposal Grove found himself stranded in Europe with no means of support.¹²

One of the charges leveled against Grove at the time of his expulsion was that of Communist sympathies and activity, a charge which would be repeated with great success four years later. In 1928, when the issue first arose, Grove flatly denied any association with the Communist Party, adding pointedly that he had frequently denounced its political philosophy. In his own defense he wrote: "It is a very current error . . . to view the supporters of worker betterment as enemies of capitalists, when on the contrary, worker organizations will produce . . . the greatest understanding among the two great currents of humanity—Labor and Capital—without whose common accord all social work would be ephemeral. . . ." ¹³ Such thoughts illustrate Grove's political philosophy at this stage of his career. He was obviously neither a communist nor a socialist, although by this time he had committed himself to a program by which the plight of Chile's lower classes could be eased. Although favoring social reform, he did not advocate the destruction of Chile's political system, but sought instead reforms to strengthen his country both politically and economically. Had the socialists been more attractive during these years they might have lured Grove into a more active role in the movement, but the bickering among the small parties only repelled him.

In the early 1930s, however, Grove moved even closer to socialism. His cordial relationship with Eugenio Matte, founder of the New Public Action Party, and probably the most influential Chilean socialist of his time, hastened Grove's drift toward the socialist camp. At the same time socialists were beginning to put aside their differences, and talk of unification became commonplace. Marxian phrases now appeared in Grove's writings and, after his election to the Senate in 1934, in his speeches as well.

He remained essentially an exponent of welfare statism, however, and constantly sought methods to incorporate the army into his schemes for social reform. As early as 1918, while a general staff officer, Grove had proposed dividing the city of Santiago into sections, each with its own military unit. Officers and men would contribute food to needy children living in their sections and generally look after the unfortunate. This humanitarian idea died in infancy, primarily because the army transferred Grove to the Escuela Militar

¹² *Ibid.*, 117.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 124.

before he could initiate his plan.¹⁴ In company with other officers at the military school, however, Grove procured a list of the poorest children attending public schools in the vicinity of the military establishment. Since these schools lacked facilities to provide warm lunches, the military school served the children food purchased with contributions from soldiers and civilians working in the area.¹⁵

Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s Grove continued to look to the armed forces for social and political leadership, emphasizing at the same time that the actual administration of affairs should be left in civilian hands.¹⁶ Perhaps for this reason he did not hesitate to use the Air Force to launch an insurrection in 1932, which led to the so-called Socialist Republic of Chile. The movement seemed to promise a genuine reformation of Chilean society; yet within twelve days the officer corps had shifted its allegiance to a conservative junta and shipped Grove off into exile on Easter Island.

Languishing in the South Pacific with his fellow exile Matte and disillusioned by his betrayal, Grove finally realized that only broadly based civilian support could bring about the needed reforms. From that moment, he worked to build a powerful political organization dedicated to the establishment of socialism in Chile. Grove's efforts, along with the work of many others, led to the formation of the Socialist Party of Chile in April 1933. Once unified, the party no longer placed faith in the military as a vehicle for reform but relied now on legal processes to achieve its objectives. With party support Grove himself managed to win a Senate seat in 1934.

As a Socialist, Grove resented the communist label his brother officers had fixed upon him, a label which, he asserted, was nothing more than an excuse by which the officers sought to justify his unwarranted exile.¹⁷ By 1936 political opponents were chiding Grove for his antimilitary attitude, which he indignantly denied, arguing that "companions in arms . . . know that Marmaduke Grove would never do anything that could be termed detrimental to the professional dignity of our armed institutions."¹⁸ To prove his good will Grove continually brought before congress matters which he considered essential for military progress. On one occasion, when a

¹⁴ Marmaduke Grove, "Acción social del ejército," *Claridad*, February 10, 1938.

¹⁵ Marmaduke Grove, "Las fuerzas armadas al servicio de los niños," *Claridad*, February 17, 1938.

¹⁶ Alberto Alzamora, "Entrevista con Grove," *Hoy*, November 26, 1936, 17.

¹⁷ Carlos Barella, "No proclamo el derecho a la venganza, dice Grove," *Zig-Zag*, November 5, 1932, 4.

¹⁸ Alzamora, *Hoy*, November 26, 1936, 17.

debate raged over the construction of a new cavalry school, Grove voted against the proposal on the grounds that the site chosen was too far from Santiago. He argued that such a move would create a hardship for the men and their families, while the school's establishment in an isolated area would deprive the cadets of cultural opportunities unavailable outside Santiago.¹⁹ From his Senate seat Grove frequently pleaded for financial benefits for retired military personnel with inadequate pensions.

As minister of national defense during the short-lived Socialist Republic Grove had had an unprecedented opportunity to implement socialist doctrines. Yet the regime did not establish a socialist system, and its only notable change was an attempt to aid the lower classes within the framework of the existing political structure. The government had earlier instituted the *Caja de Crédito Popular*, which granted cash loans to individuals, taking as collateral household goods, clothing, tools, or indeed, almost any personal possession. When the full force of the 1929 worldwide depression struck, many people deposited as security the very implements with which they earned their livelihood. Without these tools they could not obtain work, and without a job they could not raise money to redeem their tools. To remedy this situation Decree Law 15 ordered the agency to return equipment left as collateral on loans. The government itself would then assume the responsibility for unsupported loans.²⁰ By acts such as these Grove unmistakably demonstrated that he had no intention of establishing a socialist government. Instead, he centered his attention on the condition of the underprivileged, seeking through legislation to ameliorate their poverty and suffering.

After the fall of the Socialist Republic, Grove remained on Easter Island for about four months, returning as a presidential candidate on election day, October 31, 1932. Though he failed in his bid for the presidency, he nevertheless made a strong showing, placing second behind Arturo Alessandri in a field of five candidates.

Following his defeat at the polls, Grove worked for the socialist cause as enthusiastically as he had formerly carried out his military duties. Politics, however, required considerable tact and a conciliatory nature, neither of which Grove possessed to any marked degree. He soon ran afoul of the Alessandri government because of his caustic and unrelenting criticism. Government agents took him into custody while he was on a speaking tour in the south and sent him into exile on Melinka Island. Because the Melinka climate was extremely harsh,

¹⁹ Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones extraordinarias*, November 15, 1934, 524-526.

²⁰ Contraloría General de la República, *Recopilación de decretos leyes*, 1932.

Grove petitioned for a transfer to Easter Island. The government recognized his plight and moved him not to Easter Island but to a prison in Santiago for reasons of health. Meanwhile the senator from Santiago died in office, and the Socialist Party nominated Grove as its candidate in the special election. Finally, on the day of his release from prison, the people of Santiago elected him their representative to the Senate.

In his maiden speech, anxiously awaited by both friends and detractors, Grove announced that Chilean socialism had as its primary objective the "profound and revolutionary transformation of our economic and political life. . . ." Citing H. G. Wells, Grove pointed out that social revolutions do not arise from plots and conspiracies but constitute instead symptoms of social distress. He argued: "So long as profound social maladies are not remedied, so long as there is no solution put forth for Chile's economic and political ills, no one can speak of order . . . as our plutocracy does. But the Socialist Party, in its program, accepts as a basic point the confrontation and solution, with revolutionary methods, of Chile's problems. With Marxism as its guide, the party will solve the economic, political, and social problems that confront us."²¹

These problems, Grove believed, stemmed in part from the very nature of capitalism, which divided society into two groups, the rich and the poor. With the passage of time this division had sharpened, particularly in Chile. The few who exploited the bulk of the population traditionally encountered no opposition, he said, since Chile's lower classes had inherited a servile mentality. Confronted with such a challenge, the Socialist Party promised to unite intellectual and manual workers in an effort to construct a socialist state. Together these elements would pursue their goal but only through peaceful acts, forsaking violence and bloodshed.²²

During his early years in the Senate Grove frequently deplored the lack of civil liberties in Chile, particularly among reform elements. When Alessandri became president a second time in 1932, he immediately abandoned the ideals which had guided his first term. Instead of advocating additional social reform he joined with more conservative elements and concentrated on the restoration of political stability after eight years of anarchy and dictatorship. To achieve this end he drastically curtailed civil liberties and dealt severely with his opponents, particularly Grove and the socialists.

Greatly disappointed in Alessandri, Grove argued that the presi-

²¹ Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones ordinarias*, May 23, 1934, 98.

²² *Ibid.*, 100.

dent had falsely accused his supporters of communism and had alienated the majority of Chileans by organizing forces outside the law, such as the Republican Militia, to combat this nonexistent menace. The conservatives, Grove insisted, were using Alessandri, and when they had no further need for his services, they would drive him from office. Grove promised to support Alessandri, the constitutionally elected president, whenever he might be attacked. He asked only that Alessandri guarantee freedom in the subsequent election, that he dissolve illegal armed forces, especially the Republican militia, and that he grant to socialists "plain and simple liberties."²³

One of Grove's greatest fears was that Alessandri would refuse to restore free elections. For two years Grove hammered away at the necessity for open balloting. By late 1936 he was apparently convinced that Alessandri would permit unrestricted voting and, of greater importance, that the president would abide by the will of the electorate. But, at the same time, political persecutions continued throughout the country, as police arrested socialists and communists, imprisoning some and deporting others. Participants in a railroad strike remained in jail while their case went to the Supreme Court, despite a lower court decision granting them freedom. Still others throughout the country were held in custody without specific charges, in clear violation of their civil liberties.²⁴ Of such conditions Grove wrote in the socialist weekly *Consigna* and in a national magazine: "Two roads are open to us—one of force, . . . the other of legality. . . . If the government continues in its unnecessary repression, surely the first will be imposed; if it respects the law and guarantees the rights of citizens, the second will carry us to triumph."²⁵

While the government harassed the socialists in the mid-thirties, attacks came also from the Chilean Nazi Party. In the Senate Grove protested that the activities of the National Socialist movement in Chile had been marked by destruction of private property and loss of life. He pointed out that in 1934 the Nazis assaulted participants at a socialist rally, leaving one dead and several wounded. A year later Nazis in Concepción murdered a socialist leader in his own

²³ Alberto Alzamora, *Hoy*, November 26, 1936, 22.

²⁴ Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones extraordinarias*, March 24, 1936, 203.

²⁵ "Grove explica el origen de algunos acontecimientos . . .," *Hoy*, February 26, 1936, 10. The day following the publication of these lines the government announced that it would convene congress and request extraordinary faculties, citing as one reason the words of Grove which the government charged threatened the use of force to gain power. *Hoy* maintained that this was a deliberate misinterpretation of Grove's words, demonstrating that the government did not wish to respect civil rights.

home, while in May 1936 they attacked the sellers of *Consigna*, injuring them and destroying their papers. Through all this his party refused to retaliate, he said, even though the government offered them no protection.²⁶

While Grove carried the socialist cause to the Senate and to the nation, he worked within the party to gain more influence. By 1934 he achieved some success, becoming one of the top party leaders. Because of his more influential position Grove's speeches now turned on several occasions to philosophical socialist arguments, and he began to examine his own brand of socialism. Earlier, before his election to the Senate, he said: "To seek an absolute social equality is an absurdity, a biological absurdity. It cannot be. It must not be. Yet, I know that to all it is necessary to give the same possibilities. Great, intelligent men have been born in destitution and poverty. Some managed to overcome it: Michelet, the French historian, almost died of hunger at nine. At forty he was a light as bright as the Eiffel Tower. How many more Michelets have gone undiscovered because they had not the means?"²⁷ How were these "possibilities" for everyone to be attained? For Grove, as for other socialists, the root of the problem could be found in economics. If economic equality could be achieved, he felt, the other inequalities would soon disappear. Therefore, the Chilean oligarchy, along with British and North American companies, must be forced from power and their holdings nationalized. This would end the exploitation of Chilean labor and bring dignity as well as a higher standard of living to Chilean workers.²⁸

A related matter of even greater consequence for Grove was the agrarian problem. For him it was the "touchstone of future struggles." Some two thousand families had inherited a manorial mentality from the colonial days of the Spanish *encomenderos*, he said. Now steps should be taken to alter this attitude:

The Socialist Party does not want land to exist without men, and men without land. It understands that in the present system production is haphazard and that small proprietors . . . have not received the benefits and assistance to which they are entitled. The Socialist Party will help . . . these individuals who have struggled and created wealth; it will be inflexible in its great struggle to deliver the land to those who work it. . . . The great destroyers are those who pay starvation wages and make of the *campesino* a beast of burden who eats an unwholesome cracker and who receives some

²⁶ Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones ordinarias*, June 15, 1936, 386.

²⁷ Carlos Barella, *Zig-Zag*, November 5, 1932, 4.

²⁸ Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones ordinarias*, May 3, 1934, 101.

few centavos as salary after having delivered all his efforts to the greedy patrón.²⁹

Part of the agrarian problem, as Grove saw it, was the nature of credit in Chile. Credit, he maintained, had been created to benefit the poor and humble of society, but it had quickly deteriorated into a means by which the wealthy enriched themselves at the expense of the entire economy. Through this unintended use of credit a false prosperity had developed which endangered Chile's economic structure. At the same time misuse of credit aided in creating a maldistribution of wealth and an attitude among those in power which enabled them to ignore the fact that many Chileans were deprived of the necessities of life. All in all, the rural Chilean worker, like his urban brother, existed on the fringe of Chilean life, denied even the barest essentials in a system dominated by those who possessed power and privilege.³⁰

Grove's solution to these problems was an economic overhaul. As a step in this direction he proposed the creation of a government agency in charge of wheat and related crops. The agency would be empowered to buy all the wheat produced in the country at a fixed price, thus eliminating the middle man who elevated the price paid by the consumer. The same agency would expropriate the principal mills and bakeries, thereby controlling both flour and breadstuffs. All this would be financed by the state with the consumer as the major beneficiary.³¹

Four years later Grove set forth his ideas in a more detailed fashion in his proposed agrarian reform law. In his speech to the Senate introducing the proposal he argued that his bill, if enacted, would utilize the land to its fullest capacity and, at the same time, provide jobs for the greatest possible number of workers. Moreover, it would be a step in the direction of a complete transformation of the socio-economic structure of Chile. This alone would be of immense value since the old traditional concept of a privileged few and an underprivileged majority would be destroyed.³² In addition the law would have three positive effects in Chile, he believed. First it would prevent anyone capable of working the land from renting his acreage for profit. Next it would expropriate and make productive all lands not cultivated, thereby ending agricultural underproduction, one of Chile's greatest economic problems. Finally the

²⁹ *Ibid.*, May 23, 1934, 100.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones extraordinarias*, January 16, 1935, 1517.

³² Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones ordinarias*, August 29, 1939, 1715.

law would enable vast numbers of people to find employment in rural areas, not as near-serfs but rather as dignified, productive workingmen.³³ This measure followed Grove's other proposals into oblivion, as the traditional parties controlled more than enough votes to prevent such radical legislation.

Along with agrarian reform, Grove believed that if the nation were to progress, the educational system would have to be reconstituted. If the masses could be educated, he thought, they would then see clearly the inequality and misery of society and bring pressure upon the state for change or, better still, elect a socialist government which would make the needed reforms. Grove had always been interested in education, both within his own family and at the national level. He lectured his children, particularly his sons, on the advantages of education for the individual and for the nation.³⁴ After his election to the Senate Grove's interest in education deepened. In debate on the 1935 budget he deplored the extensive amount of money spent by the Ministries of Justice and Interior for protection of the government from subversion and violence, while public instruction received a minimal amount, even though more than a third of the population remained illiterate.³⁵ In the following session he charged that the government had ignored education, that facilities were lacking, and that teachers were underpaid and undertrained. In emphasizing his point Grove declared that six or seven students were sometimes forced to share a single textbook, while each month teachers spent a portion of their paltry salaries to furnish washroom materials for which the school budget provided no funds.³⁶

As an initial step to end these miserable conditions Grove recommended five thousand new schools and fifteen thousand more teachers along with funds for the purchase of needed teaching materials. But he recognized this as only a partial solution. Adults as well as children must be educated. A large segment of the population which the government completely ignored had never had the opportunity to attend school. In the entire country there were only thirty-three night schools staffed by sixty-two teachers, he said. Grove insisted

³³ *Ibid.*, 1724.

³⁴ Letter, Marmaduke Grove to his son Marmaduke, Paris, December 12, 1928. This and other personal letters belonging to Grove are in the possession of Grove's brother Hugo, who now lives in Viña del Mar, Chile.

³⁵ Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones extraordinarias*, November 26, 1934, 695. It is significant that Grove chose to cite two ministries which received a large portion of the budget but omitted mention of the military which also ranked high in its budgetary share. By this omission Grove's fondness for the military was once again clearly illustrated.

³⁶ Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones ordinarias*, June 25, 1935, 581.

that provision should be made to educate these adults along with their children and thereby attack the illiteracy problem from two directions.³⁷

Grove regarded education as a means not only to improve the lot of the individual but also as a method to further the socialist cause. Through educational institutions staffed with socialists the Chilean youth would be subjected to socialist dogma, he asserted, and would become believers. Of course, education would also prepare those who would be technicians and specialists in the economy of the future. Nor could anyone deny education's cultural advantage, he felt. Moreover, Grove saw in academic training a means to generate nationalism among his countrymen. While he attempted to unite the worker parties of Latin America and occasionally spoke of international cooperation, Grove believed that Chile should stand above all other countries in its cultural endeavors. Education alone could make this possible.³⁸

Although he recognized the need for reform in the educational system and cried out for civil liberties, Grove himself drew a nice distinction between extensive use of communications for propaganda purposes and thought control, and for the enlightenment of the public. In 1936 he announced that the Socialist Party, once in power, would control all means of cultural propaganda such as movies, radio, and theater because these provided the most efficient method of educating public opinion. Yet Grove did not look upon such action as conflicting with civil liberties. He argued: "The control of the press and of the means of propaganda will be realized preferably as an instrument of culture. Freedom of thought and expression will be respected to the end of permitting the widest revolutionary tolerance and interest of the workers." In addition Grove advocated reorganization and enlargement of the services of libraries and museums and the creation of cultural missions. Education and cultural advancement would be the exclusive function of the state.³⁹

As a socialist, Grove deplored capitalism and exalted collectivization. He demanded a society in which all men would possess dignity. Yet his overriding concern was not with theoretical principles, but with the immediate problems faced by Chile's unfortunate. He directed his energy toward ameliorating the condition of the lower classes while, at the same time, protecting their rights. Consequently, he spent little time in a conscious attempt to build a philosophy of

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 580.

³⁸ Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones extraordinarias*, April 14, 1936, 321.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

socialism, freely admitting that his knowledge of Marx was limited and his understanding of Marxian socialism infinitesimal.⁴⁰

Grove was strongly influenced, however, by the English Fabian Socialist, H. G. Wells. He read much of Wells' work and quoted from it frequently, when he found that his own views approximated the Wellsian approach. Yet he differed with Wells in one fundamental area—the role of the military in society. While the Fabians inflexibly opposed military interference in politics, Grove was confident—at least until 1932—that the military establishment could bring about the desired social reforms. The unhappy experience with his fellow officers after the collapse of the Socialist Republic tempered this view, but Grove retained his fondness for Chile's armed services to the end of his life.

Although Grove's socialism centered in practical problems, he was an ineffectual politician. A military officer accustomed to command, he was too often impatient with diplomatic language and conciliation. He never understood that compromise is an integral part of political life. Yet he enjoyed great popularity with the people, who identified easily with this romantic figure—the participant in so many military revolts, a man who had suffered exile on Easter Island, and who had been elected to the Senate while confined to jail in Santiago. Few Chileans had lived so adventurous a life, and a large number found themselves attracted to his colorful personality. As the journalist Tancredo Pinochet put it, he was a symbolic banner around which Chile's poor could rally.⁴¹

Unfortunately Grove's habitual concern with the poor and the uninfluential also reduced his political effectiveness. The record of Senate activity in the 1930s shows Grove's many attempts to gain redress for retired military men, for people living in substandard housing, or for a bookseller who ran afoul of the government's pornographic laws. He was often preoccupied with trivial matters of no interest to such an august body as the Chilean senate but vital to those involved. It is largely for this reason that Salvador Allende, current leader of Chilean Socialism, could remark upon Grove's death in 1954 that the Senator was a humanist: "He understood that at the base of all social problems was man—the concrete man, . . . the man who works, suffers, and hopes. . . . Thus for [Grove] social-

⁴⁰ In his ignorance of Marxism Grove was not alone. Oscar Waiss, a Chilean communist turned socialist, wrote that the socialist leadership in the 1930s was not concerned with philosophical principles, but was preoccupied with practical problems. Oscar Waiss, *El drama socialista* (Santiago, 1948), 25-26.

⁴¹ *Asies* (Santiago), May 13, 1938.

ism was humanism because the elements of socialism live in men. . . .'⁴²

Though he failed to secure congressional approval for social reform laws, Grove's activities in the Senate did serve to unite the underprivileged and to publicize their plight. In the midst of the battle against poverty, squalor, and misery he reacted much as a beleaguered commander who must deal first with the immediate problem and afterward think in terms of a long-range, more profound plan. Grove handled or tried to handle the immediate difficulty, finding time only on rare occasions to explore the theoretical and philosophical answers to the overall problems of Chilean society. Nevertheless, the rapid growth of the Socialist Party in the 1930s owed much to this man. Neither an accomplished politician nor an advanced thinker, Marmaduke Grove Vallejo was instead a friend, protector, and spokesman for all the anonymous, little people of Chile who had for too long seemed unimportant to politicians and intellectuals.

⁴² Cámara de Senadores, *Sesiones extraordinarias*, May 18, 1954, 2204.