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Records of the Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (PELCS)5951004

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Description is written in: English.

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	4
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Controlled Access Headings	6
Burke Library record group:	6
Collection Inventory	7
Records of the Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (PELCS)	7

Summary Information

Repository: Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

Creator: Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (Location of meeting: Santiago, Chile). Date of meeting or treaty signing: (1972 :.)

Title: Records of the Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (PELCS)

ID: 5951004

Date [inclusive]: circa 1971 -- 1973

Physical Description: 1 linear foot 1 linear foot; 2 boxes

Language of the Material: Spanish , English .

Abstract: The Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo was a conference organized by a group of 80 Chilean priests (known as "Las Ochenta" and later as "Cristianos por el Socialismo"). The primary goals of the conference were to unite Latin American Christian groups across the church's hierarchical and denominational divides and to foster the integration of Christian and socialist ideologies. The PELCS records consist of reports, correspondence, publications, and other materials relating to the conference, including essays on the conference's 10 themes: 1. Underdevelopment, dependence and the transition to socialism in Latin America; 2. Mobilization of the masses; 3. Conditions for a strategic alliance between Christians and Marxists; 4. Ideology and religion, cultural revolution and the Christian faith; 5. Class struggle, ethical positions and obstacles for Christians; 6. Christian institutions and ideology, a critical evaluation; 7. Political action and faith, liberation theology; 8. Popular parties, unions, and pragmatic Christianity; 9. Field-labor movements and church initiatives; 10. The middle class, women in the revolution, and the Christian factor.

Preferred Citation

Item description, MRL 9: Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (PELCS) Records, 1971-1973, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

The Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (PELCS) represents the concerted efforts of eighty Chilean priests whose socialist commitments drew followers from throughout Latin America. Originally dubbed Las Ochenta (the eighty), this group issued a 1971 manifesto supporting the socialist movements in Chile. One year later, the group had changed its name to Cristianos por el Socialismo and had expanded their group's vision to include laity, women religious, and Protestants. They called for the first "encounter" of Christian socialists to take place in Santiago, Chile in April of that year. PELCS had two primary goals. First, this conference aimed to unite Christian groups across the church's hierarchical and denominational divides. Thus, attendees included Roman Catholic priests, Protestant ministers, laity, and women religious. In doing so, the PELCS sought to create a broad commitment to the liberation of Latin American people from economic dependence on capitalist countries. They argued that such dependence had resulted in Latin America's state of underdevelopment. The second goal of the PELCS concerned the integration of Christian and socialist ideologies. In doing so, conference leaders sought to provide a rationale by which Christians could understand their faith as a basis for participation in the liberation struggles taking place. The PELCS conference was deliberately held at the same time (and across the street from) the United Nation's Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). An article from *The Christian Century* noted that those attending the PELCS were "constantly aware of the nearby UNCTAD sessions, whose call for developed nations to assist underdeveloped nations sharply contrasted with the socialist Christians' conviction that prolonging dependency and underdevelopment in the Third World is necessary to developed nations, and that development programs serve only to maintain such relations and conditions." The conference drew more than 450 attendees including various organizations such as Third World Priests of Argentina, the Golconda Movement of Columbia, and Church and Society in Latin America (ISAL). Many of the attending laypersons were fieldworkers living in base communities.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection contains reports, correspondences, publications, and other materials relating to the PELCS congress. The majority of documents are in Spanish. English translations of the conference's final report are included. The bulk of the materials were created in preparation for PELCS. This includes reports on socialist movements in various Latin American countries; dispatches from the executive secretary of the PELCS, William Redington; and in-depth essays on the ten áreas (themes) of the conference as follows: I. Underdevelopment, dependence,

and the transition to socialism in Latin America. II. Mobilization of the masses. III. Conditions for a strategic alliance between Christians and Marxists. IV. Ideology and religion: Cultural Revolution and the Christian faith. V. Class struggle: ethical positions and obstacles for Christians. VI. Christian institutions and ideology: a critical evaluation. VII. Political action and faith: liberation theology. VIII. Popular parties, unions, and pragmatic Christianity. IX. Field-labor movements and church initiatives. X. The middle class, women in the revolution, and the Christian factor.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

This collection is organized in one unarranged series.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2024-02-27

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Onsite storage.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Formerly part of the independent Missionary Research Library (MRL), these records were accessioned by the Burke Library at the time of the MRL's closure in 1976.

Processing Information

When the Burke Library acquired the PELCS papers, an attempt was made to maintain the original order imposed on the contents. Folded materials were flattened. Staples, rubber bands, and metal clips were removed and replaced with plastic clips. All materials were placed in acid-free folders and boxes. The collection was updated in 2014 as part of the Henry Luce Foundation grant; over time the folders had become acidic, and were thus replaced. The finding aid was created by Miguel Escobar in 2006, reviewed and updated by Brigette Kamsler in 2014 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2024.

Conditions Governing Use

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[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (Location of meeting: Santiago, Chile). Date of meeting or treaty signing: (1972 :.) -- : Archives

Burke Library record group:

Missionary Research Library Archives: MRL9, Latin America

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Records of the Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cristianos por el Socialismo (PELCS), circa 1971 -- 1973

Physical Description: 1 linear feet 1 linear foot; 2 boxes

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This series is open for research.

Arrangement

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Scope and Contents

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Title/Description	Instances	
Records, circa 1971 -- 1973	box 1	folder 1
Scope and Contents		
Documento final, edición popular; Índice de documentos; Áreas I-V: I. Sub-desarrollo, dependencia y transición al socialismo II. Movilización Popular III. Condiciones de una alianza estratégica entre cristianos y marxistas IV. Ideología y religión, revolución cultural y fe cristiana V. Lucha de clases--posiciones y bloqueos éticos de los cristianos		
Áreas VI-X, circa 1971 -- 1973	box 1	folder 2
Scope and Contents		
VI. Instituciones e ideología cristiana: evaluación crítica VII. Acción política y fe: teología de la liberación VIII. Partidos y sindicalismos del pueblo y práctica cristiana IX. Movimientos campesinos y		

acción de las iglesias X. Capas medias y la mujer en la revolución y el factor cristiano

Final report in English; Articles on PELCS, 1972	box 1	folder 3
Records, circa 1971 -- 1973	box 1	folder 4
Scope and Contents		
Conclusiones Finales; Carta al Sr. Cardenal Raúl Silva Henríquez, Marzo 20, 1972.; Copia fiel de la reunión sostenida por el cardenal Silva Henríquez con los participantes en el congreso "Cristianos por el socialismo" el día 25 de Abril en el arzobispado de Santiago.		
Records, circa 1971 -- 1973	box 1	folder 5
Scope and Contents		
Notas para las comisiones; Conclusiones de comisiones; Primeras redacciones de los documentos finales, 1ª y 2ª ediciones; Documento final, 1ª edición		
Informes Nacionales: Bolivia, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, República Dominicana, circa 1971 -- 1973	box 1	folder 6
Informes Nacionales: Ecuador, Honduras, México, Canadá, Panamá, Perú, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, circa 1971 -- 1973	box 1	folder 7
Despachos del Secretario Ejecutivo, pre y pos encuentro, 1971 -- 1973	box 2	folder 1-3
Final document translated into English; Articles on PELCS, 1972	box 2	folder 4
Documento final, 1ª edición Áreas V-VIII, duplicate copies, circa 1971 -- 1973	box 2	folder 5
Áreas IX-X, duplicate copies, circa 1971 -- 1973	box 2	folder 6
Áreas I, duplicate copies, circa 1971 -- 1973	box 2	folder 7
Área II-IV, duplicate copies, circa 1971 -- 1973	box 2	folder 8

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)