

Day nine

Bibliography

Chile as a focus of political debates. Many publications available.

Throughout the years I have come to own several books published as a result of the events of the 11th of September, 1973. These books have assisted me to have a better understanding with the subject of 'Chile' in all its complexity and to write my own account about the Chileans Refugees in Scotland. The books mentioned below are all good books dealing primarily with people, their culture, their politics, their religions, and their social behaviour in society. These books had been written while many of us have been in exile in many parts of the world. The writers of these books are Chileans and foreigners claiming to know what they think, we do not know. Many of these authors tend to write with good intentions, others with political bias but on the whole I notice that these authors write with convictions and knowing that at the end of the day money will be available to them for the task of writing a book: 'a book about Chile'.

These books represent a synthesis of the development of our own story in the context of South America and the world. Many books were written before 1973, many during the Allende era (1970-1973), many during the Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1990) and many after this date. That is the era of the Concertacion*, the centre-right political coalition which came to power after Pinochet. These books have been written by Chileans and foreigners using their own language, and are a result of the incredible interest throughout the world in the so called 'Via Chilena hacia el Socialismo' which ended up with a bloody dictatorship. These books have been written by political analysts, academics, specialists in Latin-America, journalists, historians and protagonists subjected to torture and exile.

Many people saw, in the Allende socialist experiment, a great many ambiguities, contradictions and dangers as a result of the 'Via Chilena hacia el Socialismo'. It implies deals and compromises inside the parties making up the Popular Unity, hard negotiations between the UP and the opposition and discussion between the UP and the Armed Forces. One of these writers, the French philosopher Régis Debray, produced "Conversations with Allende", which explores many aspects of Allende's personality, his long political career and his thinking about the future of Chile under his government. The book was published by Feltrinelli in 1971 in French and Spanish and in the English language by NLB. It cost £1.05:

"The election in Chile of the Marxist leader of the Socialist Party, Salvador Allende, to the presidency in October 1970 inaugurated a political situation unique in Latin America and of world-wide significance. Allende's Popular Unity coalition embraced Socialists and Communists and campaigned on an election programme of unprecedented radicalism - nothing less than the abolition of monopoly capitalism and imperialism in Chile. In this book Régis Debray, recently released from his Bolivian goal, questions President Allende about his strategy for socialism. These discussions range widely over the history of the workers' movement in Chile, the strength of imperialism in Latin America, the experiences of the first months of the Allende government, the role of the Chilean Armed forces, Allende's personal background and friendship with Che Guevara, the seizure of land by peasants since the Popular Unity, and the international outlook of the new Chile..." "Many observers from other Latin American countries are surprised, when they arrive in Chile, by the level of politicisation of the Chilean working class, and of the Chilean people as a whole. The fact is real, but we should not forget that this social consciousness has been historically expressed and channelled in the forms of bourgeois political rule - and notably in its representative mechanism and functions."

* the concertacion is regarded as a centre-left coalition. This is not my view. I regarded it as a centre-right coalition.

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Some of these books provide dramatic accounts of people very close to President Allende, such as "Homenaje a Salvador Allende" published in Havana on the 7th of October, 1973, that is, less than a month after the coup. The book contains speeches made in Havana to thousands of people by Beatriz Allende, one of Salvador Allende's daughters, who eventually committed suicide in Cuba, and Fidel Castro. Beatriz explained in some detail some dramatic moments in the presidential palace on the morning of the 11th of September, 1973:

"The aerial bombardment of the palace was near. The war-planes were flying low and my father ordered firmly that the women ("las compañeras") had to abandon immediately the compound of the palace. One by one he explained why it was more useful for us to be out to comply with our revolutionary responsibilities...my father disapproved of my presence at the presidential palace because I was pregnant... he personally conducted me toward the exit in Morande Street. There he took a decision to ask for a cease fire and a military vehicle so that the compañeras could get out without any trouble."

My own father was a Christian Democrat voter. Like him, millions of working class people, many of them very poor, voted in 1964 for Eduardo Frei Montalva, attracted by the so-called "Revolution in Liberty" which consisted of cosmetic and superficial economic arrangements in pursuit of desperate economic changes to help the working class in Chilean society, still in a sort of medieval state in many rural areas of the country. The CDP was elected in 1964 with the help of the United States: according to a U.S congressional report, "*The CIA spends more than \$2.6 million in support of the CDP*". (*Chile Since Independence, edited by Leslie Bethell, Cambridge University Press, 1993*)

"La DC IN CILE" by Franca Bertolini and Frieda Hermans, and "L'IDEOLOGIA DEMOCRISTIANA E L'INTERNAZIONALE DC" by Corrado Corghi, published by Gabriele Mazzotta Editore, Milano, 1974, is another book about the CDP.

The election in 1970 of a socialist government by democratic means indicated a) that Chileans wanted more than cosmetic economic arrangement to get out of the trap of poverty and underdevelopment and b) the realization that the CDP was just another right-wing political instrument being sold to Chileans like my father under the banner of Christianity, suggesting fairness and honesty. By the 1970s, this Christian party in parliament unashamedly put the working class interest aside to defend the interests of the middle classes, the upper middle classes and those of the U.S.

As soon as Allende was elected as President of Chile, the CDP immediately began to do their best to create the conditions to destabilize the Allende Government. By doing so, it began to create the conditions for the Army to come to power. Regrettably the Army was lead by General Pinochet. From the book we read:

"The Chilean Christian Democratic Party was born when certain sectors of the country and the new industrial power began their struggle against the oligarchy and, since its beginning; the party offered itself to the country as an alternative between liberalism and Marxism. How, then, can the present political behaviour of the CDP be explained? What did its "Revolution in Liberty" mean? What ideology and what interests are behind this party? The aim of this book is to analyze in depth its roots, which developed from reformist and moral ideals to the defence, so evident and violent, of the national and international upper classes. A very interesting book to read, it helps us understand the politics of the

Italian CDP, to which the Chilean CDP is linked in an ideological and international context, examined by Corrado Corghi in the last part of the book." (*My own translation from the Italian book*)

Hernán Valdés's "Tejas Verdes", printed in Barcelona in 1974 and published in Britain in 1975 under the title "Diary of a Chilean Concentration Camp", is a book about Valdés's experiences in a concentration camp located on the coast not far from Santiago:

"On a February evening in 1974, members of the Chilean secret police burst into Hernán Valdés' home, ransacked the place, blindfolded him and, at gunpoint, rushed him off to jail. Later he was taken to Tejas Verdes, a former air force camp which had been used as a concentration camp since 1973 September coup.

A well known Chilean writer, Valdés supported the Allende Government but was not a member of a political party, and had not thought himself to be in any danger. In this compelling book, he brings his period of imprisonment most vividly to life: the awful physical conditions, the tensions, and the friendships, among the prisoners, the mindless cruelty of the guards, the long drawn out uncertainty, the overpowering feeling of humiliation and finally the dreaded process of interrogation, in which torture was freely used, and which left Valdés in a shattered state. Then, after so much meaningless suffering, he was casually released. He fled to Spain where he wrote this reconstructed diary. He is now living and teaching in Britain."

"Un viaje por el infierno" (A Journey Through Hell), published in 1984 by Empresa editora Araucaria, is a dramatic account of the Chilean journalist Alberto 'Gato' Gamboa, director of the popular tabloid Clarin, detained in 1975, tortured in the Santiago National Stadium and then taken, with many others, to the Chacabuco concentration camp situated in the far north of the country. The sickening experiences of "Cat" Gamboa and of so many prisoners at the hands of soldiers in a sort of "deliberate state of insanity", inflicted upon them by the High Command of the Chilean Army, make us all reflect on these pathetic cowards - Chilean Army soldiers using their weaponry, belonging to the Chilean state, and their position of privilege to impose incredible misery and terror on innocent unarmed men, women and children to satisfy their sinister masters at the top of the Army, protecting the bourgeoisie and the economic interests of United States in Chile. To think of the Chilean Army of the 1970s and 1980s is to sense a certain affinity with the Nazi soldiers in Europe. The Chilean Armed Forces' personnel at times surpassed the cruelty of Hitler's soldiers.

One of the people who accompanied "Gato" as a prisoner in Chacabuco was Carlos Geisse, a history professor from Santiago's "Universidad Tecnica" who is another of the people who arrived in Glasgow as a refugee. We have fond memories of Carlitos as a great talker, who, according to Gamboa, was a real character inside the concentration camp and a reliable source of knowledge, highly appreciated by the prisoners and very much distrusted by the soldiers who saw in Carlos a threat. It was not pleasant, according to Gamboa and other prisoners, to witness an innocent lecture given by Carlitos to a group of stony-faced "Pinochetist" soldiers about the weapons they were holding in their hand. *How could one forget the one-hour lecture he gave us in a Drunchapel council flat about the Nike of Samothrace?* It all began when someone had shown him a small picture of the Goddess of Victory. Carlitos left Scotland for Chile some time ago to live there with the Scottish 'compañera' he met in Glasgow. Carlitos and her partner has just paid a visit to Glasgow in November 2006.

"Salvador Allende, la via chilena hacia el Socialismo" (Salvador Allende and the Chilean road towards Socialism) is a selection of Salvador Allende's speeches compiled by Joan Garces in 1971. The aspects touched on here are Allende's thinking

and the magnitude of the task ahead as a leader of the Popular Unity trying to transform dramatically, by democratic means (the vote), the political landscape of our country. *“Stop the economic exploitation!, stop the social inequality! , enough of political oppression!”*. Some important aspects of his thinking are contained in speeches that Allende made on the 5th of November, 1970, during the inauguration in Santiago of the XIV session of Cepal, on the of 27th of April, 1971 and the one made to the National Congress the same year. There are also fragments of improvised speeches made by Allende at several press conferences. Cepal is also known as ECLAC and is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations, created in 1948 for the purpose of contributing to the economic development of Latin America. 1971 is the year in which we Chileans could already see that it was not going to be possible to project Chile into the socialist future as Allende had envisaged it in 1970. Allende had been elected with only 36% of the vote, with the Senate in the hands of the opposition. These people, in collaboration with strong allies in the United States and the powerful local bourgeoisie, had been engaged in a powerful campaign of terror and intimidation targeting military personnel the objective: to undermine the Popular Unity’s Government lead by Allende. The commander-in-chief of the army, Rene Schneider was killed on the 22 of October, 1970, and on July 26, 1973, President Allende’s naval aide, Commodore Arturo Araya Peters, was also assassinated. Their aim was to create chaos in the country and provoke a coup against the President of Chile who *in the Inaugural speech at the National Stadium, 5th of November, 1970* referred to them as:

“the representatives, the mercenaries of the minority, who since colonial times, has exploited our People after giving away our natural resources to foreign countries”

There are many analytical books scrutinizing and criticizing all the processes taking place under the Allende Government, with the intention of trying to provide political, cultural, economic, and social answers to what was wrong with the “*via chilena hacia el socialismo*”. One cannot fail to notice that books like these seem to have formulas, or a series of theories, about what was wrong. *But what was Allende supposed to do to establish socialism in our country?* These engaging books look for the UP’s mistakes that cost Allende his own life, the lives of thousands of Chileans, the loss of democracy, exile for thousands of us and the end of an interesting political experiment followed with keen interest by millions throughout the world. *Who is to blame?* or *What went wrong?*

In 1973 was published in Argentina “Chile: Los Gorilas entre nosotros” by Helios Prieto. A translation of Prieto’s book was published in 1974 in Britain by Pluto Press under the title “The gorillas are among us” in a translation by Mike González, who also offered us this Introduction:

“The generals’ coup in Chile disturbed the left throughout the world. It put immense strain on their belief in a ‘peaceful parliamentary road to socialism’. In this implacable attack on Allende’s government of Popular Unity, Prieto shows clearly the dangers of not preparing the people for successful resistance to counter-revolution.”

In Prieto’s view of the downfall of President Allende:

“the main causes lie in the ‘model for transition to socialism’ chosen by the Chilean reformists, and in the resulting economic policy that they applied during the first two years of UP government...Chile is another classic example of the fate that awaits the proletariat under reformist leadership”.

The reformists here are, of course, the parties making up the political coalition that put Allende in power in 1970. That is, the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and other small parties of Christian philosophies such as the MAPU and La Izquierda Cristiana. The Communist Party was a prestigious party in our country, preserved in the consciousness and the memory of the working class by the CHCP's rich tradition of struggle in Chilean contemporary history. By the 1970s, the CHCP was a strong party, supported by a wide range of working class people. Today, the CHCP is a very small party, however, as I write this paragraph, (the 8th of March, 2005, International Women's Day), the funeral of Gladys Marin, the leader of the Chilean Communist Party, is being held in Santiago. According to a right-wing tabloid, La Tercera of the 9th of March, the city was paralysed by a multitude of about 200 thousand people many of them singing "El Pueblo Unido Jamás Será Vencido". This multitude of people, for other observers numbered much more than 200, were attending Gladys's funeral in recognition of a rather exceptional Communist woman who gave everything on behalf of the working class people of Chile, especially during the time of the dictatorship. Her husband was one of the disappeared people. All of this to say that the Communists are held in high esteem in our country, whatever their current political situation.

In Allende's time, the Communist Party was characterized as being well disciplined and a staunch devotee of the then Soviet Union. Their members were Stalinists and sectarian, as were all parties making up the UP. Sectarianism was a weakness during the Allende period and sectarianism continued to be a feature among Chileans in exile. The CHCP, however, supported the "Chilean via to socialism" by accepting the importance of the ballot box as part of Chilean tradition. Their belief in reaching socialism or communism by the ballot box was their recognition of a cultural democratic principle dear to all the Chilean people. Deep changes had to be made by democratic means and the armed struggle to achieve power, as happened in Cuba, was not part of the Chilean Communist manifesto. In fairness to the Communists, the armed struggle was not part of the working class agenda amalgamated in the other parties of the left comprising the UP. Salvador Allende, the leader of the UP, on the other hand, was neither Che Guevara nor Fidel Castro, just as Chile was neither Cuba nor the Soviet Union. Many important political and cultural differences separated these great South American leaders, just as many important political and cultural differences separated Chile from Cuba and the Soviet Union. Chilean socialism, if at all, had to be achieved under difficult circumstances and within a narrow framework: under the wing of a type of 'democracy' worked out by the bourgeoisie to guarantee bourgeois privileges and minimal concessions to the working class, such as giving them the chance to vote.

The majority of us never in our life knew freedom or democracy as it was understood in many countries of the so-called Western world. Chileans were aware that there was scope to provide real freedom and real democracy if, but only if, a particular government would be prepared to diminish the power of the few to allow the majority to take direct control of Chilean affairs. That government was the one under the presidency of Salvador Allende.

But was possible to achieve socialism by democratic means?

It was not possible or acceptable to continue to pretend that to achieve socialism it had to be done under a 'bourgeois democracy'. Many believed that the armed struggle was the only way for Chile to become a socialist country. However, the many were, in Chile, a minority in term of numbers. This minority seemed to have clear ideas about the many contradictions facing Allende's project of achieving socialism by peaceful means. The MIR was the extra-parliamentary party which epitomized this political position. Salvador Allende was not a 'Mirist'. He was a prestigious socialist parliamentarian with millions of workers supporting, for decades, his ideas about social equality and his political programmes to achieve socialism in our country. Allende, and the parties of the traditional left, led people to believe that socialism was possible through the ballot box. Maybe it was the case, if the right-wingers and the United States had allowed it but, naturally, the right-wingers and the US were never prepared to relinquish power by democratic means. Their position was clear: To defend their privileges at all cost and this they did. In this context, socialism becomes only a dream as the opposing forces have the military means to win and the money to sustain the economic losses of a civil war. The right-wingers and the United States were in a good position to block everything to allow them to continue with their debauchery of our country. By the 1970s, Salvador Allende and the Left were there to do their best to improve democracy in order to end, once and for all, "el libertinaje" (the licentiousness) of the bourgeoisie in Chilean Society. It follows that we, Allende's supporters, should never be ashamed of trying to get rid of our bourgeoisie and to take an anti-US stand. We, the working classes, were prepared to put our own interests first and to claim sovereignty over our copper mines, which were producing fortunes for a bunch of American stockholders and misery for the working classes. To achieve Allende's dream, our dream, involved passion, intelligence, courage, pragmatism, political vision and wisdom to navigate safely among so many dangers and contradictions. Neither the UP's leadership nor we, its supporters, seemed to know sufficiently how to plot a safe route to achieve our goal because of one question: *were we prepared to achieve socialism involving a high human and economic cost?* I do not know the answer. What we do know is that we went straight into the open arms of the Armed Forces, waiting patiently to give us a bloody nose. We had forgotten that the well-known expression 'Chile's political stability' was, in a way, an euphemism for Chile's bourgeois strategic institutions, such as the Armed Forces, the Catholic Church and the Judicial System, always ready to guarantee them their privileges in society. According to Colin Henfrey and Bernardo Sorj - authors of "Chilean Voices", published in Britain in 1977 - Helios Prieto's book falls into the category of:

"superficial and sectarian, of the 'told you so' variety".

It is not easy to accept Helios's analysis of Allende's Chile. Similarly, we cannot refute charges against the leadership of the UP, charged with directing the destiny and safety of so many and of socialism in our country.

According to its authors, "Chilean Voices" is an attempt to provide Chileans, grass roots activists from all walks of life, with a viewpoint on the impact of the Popular Unity experiment and to try to answer such questions as "*What did 'popular power' mean to factory workers?*", *What differences did the PU make to women?*, *What conclusions did they draw on the PU's strategy and its implications for the future, not only in Chile but all over the world?*" "Beyond this, the book belonged to the speakers." who are seven activists belonging to the main parties of the UP and the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR)

In 1976, Praeger Publishers produced the book “Allende’s Chile”, edited by Philip O’Brien. It is a series of academic papers which includes contributions from the original members of the Chile Solidarity Campaign in Glasgow: Philip O’Brien, Jacqueline F. Roddick and Mike González and the Chileans Pablo Lira and Cristobal Kay. Pablo was a Chilean refugee who, on a wet Glasgow night at Suzi’s flat, interrogated me to find out who I really was. I was taken aback by his intrusiveness.

Jacqueline F. Roddick, wrote the paper: *Class structure and class politics in Chile*

Pablo Lira wrote: *The crisis of hegemony in the Chilean left*

Cristobal Kay wrote: *Agrarian reform and the transition to socialism*

Mike González wrote: *Ideology and culture under Popular Unity*

Philip O’Brien wrote: *Was the United States responsible for the Chilean coup?*

and *The Military in power and the lessons of Chile*

Was the United States responsible for the Chilean Coup? Yes! Thirty years after the event in our country, we know that there was a lot of interference in Chilean internal affairs by the US, before and after Allende came to power. It was clear that the United States was not prepared to tolerate a socialist republic in South America. With Cuba they had had enough. We should note what Philip had to say on the subject: “for if the crucial factor in the coup was U.S. interference, then presumably other attempts at a peaceful road to socialism may succeed provided the United States does not interfere. But if U.S. interference was of relatively minor importance, although admittedly of assistance, then one of the clear lessons of Chile is that a transition to socialism is likely to lead at some stage to armed confrontation.”

By March, 1974, the text of the book “*How Allende Fell, a study in US-Chilean relations*” was completed. This book, written by James F. Petras and Morris M Morley and published by the Bernard Russell Peace Foundation Ltd., explores:

“the role of the United States in the overthrow of the elected government of Salvador Allende. Was a coup d’ etat inevitable, and who benefits from the installation of a rule of terror of the extreme right? Such questions are among the most important to be faced in the 1970s, and the answers will reverberate for decades”

Three decades later, we know that the role played by U.S. government officials, led by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, a peace Nobel Prize winner, was very important in getting rid of Allende and making the Pinochet dictatorship appear as a success in economic terms. From the epilogue of the book we read:

“the Chilean military dictatorship has benefited from the new financial largesse shown towards Chile by the international capitalist world: approximately \$470 million in loans and credits from the United States, Brazil, Argentina and other international institutions...”

We learned, three decades later, that American and Chilean banks were doing ***“flor de”** business with money belonging to all Chileans and being used by Pinochet and his family as their own. It has been established that Pinochet had a number of accounts in the U.S., involving millions of dollars.

* “flor de” - Chileanism for “very good” business

According to La Tercera, the Chilean tabloid of the 15th of March, the banks in question are: The Riggs Bank, with branches in Miami and New York, Espiritu Santo, Citibank (New York), Banco Atlantico, Institucion española (New York branch), Banco de Chile, Bank of America (Simi Valley) and Pacific Bank of Los Angeles Today, the 16th of March, 2005, the U.S. Senate published a report called: “Money

Laundering and Foreign Corruption: enforcement and effectiveness of the Patriot Act, Supplemental Staff report on U.S. accounts used by Augusto Pinochet."

It is sad to see that the Government of that country poured scorn on the government of Allende in order to help install General Pinochet and bring about the end of Chilean democracy. But is not the United States a firm advocate of democracy?

"By demanding payments on schedule, the U.S. policy makers had a 'no lose' strategy in mind: if Chile paid up, it would have to divert scarce funds from popular programmes and development projects, thus generating political opposition; if Chile did not pay, its international credit rating would decline, new loans from non-U.S. sources would not be forthcoming, and loss of financing of imports would cause an economic decline generating political discontent."

In 1973, "The Chilean Road to Socialism" was published by Anchor Press, New York with an introduction by Dale L. Johnson, a professor of Sociology at the State University of New Jersey. What we see in this book is that Allende's Chile was a very busy country trying hard to fulfil the expectations of so many people. Their social, economic and political interest was at stake, unfortunately based on false expectations: the poor and the underprivileged were, in the eyes of the world, ready for a justified or unjustified manipulation of their lives by those in a position of privilege.

"Chile has been flooded by visitors from all over the world: Regis Debray, famous French strategist of guerrilla warfare for Latin America, came directly from his Bolivian prison to reflect on the varieties of revolutionary strategy; political exiles from repressive Latin American regimes settle to find refuge and employment; international bankers fly in to voice concern about Chile nationalization policies; Russian, East European, and Chinese trade delegations and political observers come to talk; sophisticated West European tourists visit to reflect on the local political culture while sipping Chile's wine; Italian and French Communist come to learn about la Via pacifica; North American academicians travel to write endless books, theses, and articles; U.S. revolutionaries and reformers pass through to learn firsthand how imperialism works and how changes might be brought about non-violently in another setting; multinational corporation executives return from New York to drive hard bargains or close up shop; American journalists stay to write misleading stories and the CIA agents sneak in to conspire with the local opposition to bring down the Allende regime."

Gary MacEoin's "Chile, the struggle for Dignity, ITT, CIA, CHILE", published first in 1974 in the USA as "No peaceful Way", is supposed to be a terse and convincing account of the Allende years. To help us to understand something about our country during the Allende period it is essential to look into the activities in our country of the International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation, known as ITT, and the role played by the CIA in our home affairs. Here we see the connections they have with our powerful bourgeoisie inside Chile such as the Edwards and the Matte Larrain* families:

"Simultaneously ITT was moving directly in Chile. It started, along with other United States firms, to "pump some advertising into El Mercurio," Santiago's biggest daily owned by the Edwards interests. Agustin Edwards, head of Chile's most powerful economic empire, had long been an implacable foe of Allende.

* Matte Larrain is a name appearing every year in Forbes Magazine as one of the wealthiest men in the world.

Shortly after the election, he moved to Miami, and become an international vice-president of the Pepsi Cola Corporation, whose president Donald Kendall is a close friend of President Nixon".

Other pressures proposed by ITT included getting back on radio and television some twenty propagandists whom Edwards and the Matte Groups had been supporting, having the U.S. Information Services distribute the editorials of El Mercurio around*

Latin America and Europe, and persuading the European press “through our contacts there” to give publicity to “the story of what a disaster could fall on Chile if Allende and co. win this country.”...After the June meeting, CIA director Richard Helms promised McCone an expenditure of \$400,000 in CIA money to assist anti-Allende news media.”

Another book, called “Evidence on the Terror in Chile”, is a series of first hand experiences of Chileans and foreign nationals soon after the coup. It was compiled by Raul Silva, Brigitta Leander and Sun Axelsson. It was published in 1974 by Ab Raben & Sjogren, Stockholm. It was translated by Brian McBeth and published in 1974 in London by Merlin Press Ltd.

Part one of the contents reads:

*The price of Solidarity,
The conspiracy continues
Guacolda’s story: a Mapuche Indian from Cautin
Hitler’s Saw
How to kill a Child,
João, in the Chile Stadium
Cell two - Torture Chamber
A letter from Jacqueline
The Latin American Sewer
Oscar Manuel, an Argentinean worker
The destruction of a Culture
The words of “Camilo Henriques” in a Paris Café
‘Patriot, denounce your foreign neighbour’
The prisoners of Pisagua
The assault on the Moneda Palace
Beatriz Allende: My father’s last few hours
Allende speaks*

Then follows E.P.Thomson’s “Homage to Allende” and in Part Three of the contents we read:

*The Legacy of Salvador Allende
Alliances and political concessions
The Christian Democracy (1964-1970)
The Triumph of Popular Unity
The Internal Conspiracy and the Silent Vietnam
Secret Documents of ITT
Opposition in Parliament
The Parliamentary Elections of 1973: the Point of No Return
Agreement for a Civil and Military Action
The Tank-Revolt of June 29th: a Dress Rehearsal
Arms Control and the Army Purge
The truck-owners’ strikes
The resignation of General Prats
Pinochet’s Treachery: Testimony of Joan Graces
Outlook for the Popular Movement*

Evidence

“The name of those who gave evidence cannot be revealed here, as many of them have relatives in Chile and others are still living in the country. In all other respects their testimony has been faithfully adhered to and their exact words reproduced. The truth of what they say is confirmed by the same events being described by several of those interviewed”.

Extract from Cell two - torture chamber:

“Eight days after the coup d’etat, a student and a priest went to look for one of their friends - Jorge Dios Dalenz - at the mortuary. He reports “Before I found the body of Jorge I had to walk up and down the room twice. I kept going back along each line of naked bodies. I counted 180 bodies; three belonging to women and five to children. Most bore similar types of wounds from where blood still flowed occasionally...

“I recognised Jorge. He had an enormous hole in his chest. Part of his leg had been torn away exposing the bone. The body carried a ticket which was written “Killed in the street by a bullet”. He had not been officially identified” - A friend of the murdered student.

*“The Chilean Road to Socialism”, edited by J. Ann Zammit with the cooperation of *Gabriel Palma, is a thick book of 461 pages, published in 1973 by the institute of Development Studies of the University of Sussex, England. (*a Chilean economist who teaches at Cambridge University)*

“In March, 1972, a unique international gathering of economists and other social scientists assembled in the Chilean capital of Santiago to discuss the Chilean Road to Socialism. They were joined by Chileans in Government, actively engaged in putting the Popular Unity programme into practice. The Round Table, organized jointly by the Chilean National Planning Office and the British Institute of Development Studies, examined a wide range of problems facing the Popular Unity government, particularly in the economic sphere.

The participants came from Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union, from East and West of Europe, from Asia and Africa as well as from other parts of Latin America. Prominent Chileans who addressed the Round Table, or participated in its discussions, included President Allende himself; the Christian Democrat presidential candidate Radomiro Tomic; the Minister of Economics, Pedro Vuskovic; the Minister of Agriculture, Jacques Chonchol; the head of the Planning Office and Minister of Planning, Gonzalo Matner; The head of the Copper Corporation, Jorge Arrate; and the president of the Trade Union Federation, Luis Figueroa.

Included in this volume are speeches by the principal participants and a summary of the discussions that followed prepared by the editor, J. Ann Zammit. In addition, the Round Table was presented with a number of papers throwing light on the nature of the socialist road in Cuba, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Tanzania. These, too, are reprinted here, together with the Popular Unity programme.

Rarely, if ever before, has a revolutionary government revealed its aspirations and difficulties so frankly to a group of foreign observers...”

As we can see, Chile under Allende was open to great debates and the country came under intense scrutiny from many quarters because the ‘Chilean Road to Socialism’ was a “new thing” impregnated with predictable and unpredictable difficulties. As Allende put it in his presidential speech to the Congress on the 21st of May, 1971: *“La tarea es de complejidad extraordinaria porque no hay precedente en que podamos inspirarnos. Pisamos un camino nuevo; marchamos sin guía por un terreno desconocido apenas teniendo como brújulas nuestra fidelidad al humanismo de todas las épocas - particularmente al humanismo marxista- y teniendo como norte el*

proyecto de la sociedad que deseamos, inspirada en los anhelos mas hondamente enraizados en el pueblo chileno”

(The task is of an extraordinary complexity because there is not any precedent from which we could draw inspiration. We are walking on a new road without a guide and through unknown terrain, having as compasses only our faith in the humanism of all epochs - particularly Marxist humanism - and having as a fixed north the project of the type of society we desire, inspired by the longings which are so deeply rooted in the People of Chile).

In 1975, there appeared “The Lesson of Chile”, edited by John Gittings, published by the Bernard Russell Peace Foundation: *“This volume contains a selection of papers and discussions held in Amsterdam on 22-24 February, 1974. It was organised by the Transnational Institute, and those taking part included Chileans who had been forced to leave their country, European socialists of various tendencies, and fellows and staff of the Transnational Institute and its parent body in Washington, DC, the Institute for Policy Studies. Among the Chileans were members of all the political groupings which had participated in the Unidad Popular under President Allende, as well as the MIR. Also taking part were observers from some American church groups as well as former Senator Eugene McCarthy. The purpose of the Amsterdam Conference was to look at Chile, from a mainly European perspective, and to ask not so much the question what went wrong but the rather more useful question what can we learn? For socialism, it was felt, should be as multinational as the forces which oppose it”.*

What we can learn from the Chilean experience is that, in the future, millions and millions of people in Latin America will at all costs be prevented, by powerful groups and countries, from searching for new roads which can take them out of under-development. Any deep change involving social overtones irrevocably troubles the interests of the local bourgeoisie and the North American interests in the region. Today, in the year 2005, Latin America is a man-made calamity of an economic zone, created artificially by a capitalist system which for years has responded well to a minority of people and the economic interests of the US in the region. To intend to change this order for a socialist system is simply suicidal: a) the people of Chile tried it by peaceful means and it brought disastrous consequences. Fidel Castro had proved that one way to impose socialism in a country is by the use of force and by being confrontational with the United States – although, in reality, it has been the United States which has been belligerent towards the people of Cuba. *Can any small nations of the world afford to defy the US, as Chile and Cuba have done in the past?* No. The Cuban people has been in a war situation - first of all against the Batista regime and then for decades against the U.S. The economic and social cost of this war has been extremely high for the People of Cuba but has involved no cost to the US. There is also the fact that there is no guarantee that any armed rebellion can be as successful as the one in Cuba. The examples of Nicaragua and the El Salvador in the 1980s are still fresh in our mind. It was sad to see thousands and thousands of young Nicaraguan and Salvadorean revolutionaries killed at the hand of contra-revolutionaries helped by U.S. Government and its agencies, such as the CIA.

The people of Latin America and of so many nations around the world have already suffered heavily in terms of lives lost at the hand of the U.S. Armed Forces and other capitalist countries and there is nothing we can do. I sound negative because I do not know how to give the U.S. Governments and their Armed Forces a good bloody nose.

What we know is that U.S. napalm bombs in Vietnam and those ‘intelligent bombs’ in Iraq have helped us to understand that the atrocious deaths of so many children will not deter the government of the United States from doing whatever they like with any weaker nations who intend either to assert their cultural traditions or to embark on an anti-capitalist path. b) Similarly, it would be erroneous to say that a socialist system in the mould of a Marxist regime is the right political answer for Latin America’s economic problems. There is not a set role model to follow, although from Fidel’s Cuba there are many extraordinary things which can be applied to the reality of Latin America: their education system, their health service, the way in which they take care of their cultural heritage are just a few examples of a system which has worked in benefit of all the Cuban people. Costa Rica provides us with the good example of not having an army. It is sad for me to write this pessimistic view about the prospects for any country trying to contradict our masters, the U.S. But how can one not feel cynical when we live today in a world full of powerful capitalist images and fantastic electronic products which we all love to have, such as: computers, mobile phones and cars? This capitalist modernity ensures that our revolutionary consciousness, or what is left of it, remains useless and immobilised. And yet we know that successes in technology are the product of an imperfect capitalist system run today by ambitious and unscrupulous political leaders such as Tony Blair, G.W. Bush and Silvio Berlusconi - ready to provide multi-million pound military protection for multinational companies to exploit to their advantages the natural resources of the peoples of the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and other parts of our wide world. *Have we not noticed that our world is becoming a nasty place not only for the millions of oppressed people but also for those of us living in wealthy countries as a result of immoral western politicians?* The U.S. has become by far the most bloody and sinister empire in the history of humanity and we are motionless in front of this reality. Chavez in Venezuela, Lula in Brazil, and Kirchner in Argentina have to take into account this horrible truth if they want to do something different to what Chile has been doing so far in the post-Pinochet era which is a) to provide plenty of opportunities for the bourgeoisie to become richer and richer and b) to provide plenty of opportunities for the working class to work harder and harder in order to get poorer and poorer.

These days in Chile, the people who are doing extremely well are the exporters, a sophisticated entrepreneurial class made up of Chilean companies and foreign multinationals exporting, to all part of the world, fruit, wines, vegetables, sea-food and salmon. The ones doing very badly in this multi-million pound business are, according to several international reports, the ‘temporeros’, seasonal workers employed by the exporters in their farms and in their huge vineyard complexes of the central valleys of Chile. The ‘temporeros’ are being paid a pittance, which explains why we can buy Chilean wine so cheaply in our British supermarkets. This is at the expense of their poor standard of living and the deterioration of their health, endangered by the use of pesticides which are banned in Europe and the U.S. *“Eugenia Mejias, a former fruit-picker, is now paying what many experts believe is the hidden cost of cheap Chilean wines and fruit. Her days are spent tending to her daughter, Evelyn, a seven-year-old who appears no older than three. A rash covers her legs, paralysed and stiff; her swollen head grows steadily larger. When she rolls her on to her stomach, her back is twisted, her spine exposed. Evelyn’s parents worked in the fields around Rancagua, a town in Chile’s fertile central valley, whose vineyards supply supermarkets including Waitrose, Marks & Spencer and Tesco.*

They worked as temporeros – workers without a contract who migrate from job to job for piecemeal wages”.

The facilitators of this state of affairs in our country are former Marxist-Socialists and Communist leaders from the Allende’s era and the usual reactionary Christian Democrat politicians making up the government of **La concertación** for 15 years, working hard to make Chile a paradise for exploiters and scoundrels like Pinochet, and a hell for the working class.

“The Revolution Disarmed, Chile 1970-1973” by Gabriel Smirnow, was published in 1979 by Monthly Review Express, New York:

“Smirnow’s goal is to examine Chile, 1970-1973 to see if socialism can be achieved while the old ruling class with its military support and international corporate backing remains intact and is allowed to freely act within and outside government institutions...”

My personal recollection is that, in Chile, we did not have a revolution. In Latin America we speak of only two revolutions: the Mexican and Cuban Revolutions. The title of the book is, therefore, misleading. What we had in Chile was a government, made up of Marxists and political parties of Christian, radical and liberal tendencies, bold enough to begin innovative changes with a view to having a socialist state in South America. It was during this process of ground-breaking social development that the coup took place, just at a moment when, amid many difficulties, the UP was putting up good performances at the ballot box. Allende had been elected with a minority of 36% of the vote but, by 1973, support had risen to almost 44%. Allende’s desire to implement socialist reforms provoked enormous reactions in all spheres of Chilean society. For some it was *“the chance and the only real chance”* for Chile to become a socialist state, while for others the triumphs of Allende at the ballot box were a disaster. Many rich individuals left the country taking with them their millions of dollars. As I have said before, some wanted the socialist process to be speeded up and instantly have a revolution - that is to say, for Chile to become a socialist/communist state overnight by armed struggle, in other words, by the use of violence. That would have meant an armed confrontation between the UP supporters and the forces who opposed it, which included the bourgeoisie, the Armed Forces, the establishment of the Catholic Church, and their ally, the United States of America. The Catholic Church is a powerful conservative institution in our country. By the 1970s, many priests and Catholic followers like me, influenced by the Theology of Liberation, took sides with the dispossessed and this was not viewed with sympathy by the hierarchy. Those who wanted revolution were perhaps dreamers, opposing the naive pragmatists who claimed that one could not afford to put the workers on an armed confrontation course against the millions of those who opposed the government of Allende. Workers in Allende’s time were not trained in guerrilla warfare. They did not even have weapons to initiate an armed revolution against a multi-million pound military organization. Workers in Allende’s time were trained in social consciousness to allow them to see for themselves that the bourgeoisie had, throughout the years, deceived them and that now was the time to begin a new era - that is, to take proper action to reverse the situation. Socialism was the economic system offered to us by Allende.

Between 1970 and 1973, Allende had to carry on tough negotiations with the opposition to allow him to become President and to form a government. There were concessions, too, and, in the opinion of many, this was a bad decision because it

allowed the opposition to assess the real strength of the UP, engulfed in internal political struggle while struggling with a hard-hitting opposition. The political struggle outside the UP was confined a) to an ideological “war” between the Communist Party and the MIR, accused by the communists of being a ‘divisive factor within the popular movement’ and b) The UP against the bourgeoisie and the U.S. Compromises allowed the opposition to gain confidence by allowing them to know exactly what was going on at government level, while allowing them to gain time to organise proper and effective action against the elected Government. The workers’ dreams of a socialist state were dashed by a combination of factors found inside the UP, the MIR and the opposition, which included the CDP and the United States.

There are many reference books on Chile published by academics belonging to prestigious universities. The academic’s role is supposed to be to examine events from a political and cultural distance. Any expression of emotion is restricted to a minimum, as the ultimate goal is to treat events and people objectively - but this is a fallacy, because the academics also have feelings and political points of view. The work of academics tends to be accurate insofar as they focus on reliable statistical data. However, they may consciously or unconsciously use their knowledge ‘to promote’ a concealed agenda akin to their political point of view.

I well remember how, one day, I walked out in disgust from a lecture on Latin-America given by Professor Edwin Williamson on the subject of Cuba and the Allende-Pinochet period in Chile. I felt at the time that this Edinburgh University Professor, an expert on Latin America and Borges, was in his lecture revealing an inner right-wing impulse. (I can accept that this may have been a wrong perception on my part, as people like me are very sensitive to anything that is said about Chile and Latin America). I felt offended because I knew very well where Allende and Pinochet stood in relation to working class people and, in the case of Allende, in relation to his supporters and his formidable opponents. I lived through the Allende period ,supporting him and seeing with my own eyes the extraordinary efforts being made by his government on behalf of people like me. I saw the activities of the opposition, trying harder and harder to do everything in their power to prevent Allende from having any success. I was at the lecture to receive knowledge and a balanced account and what I got instead was a lecture which I thought was very biased. (In any case, see Edwing Williamson’s “The Penguin History of Latin America” published in 1992.).

A reference book called “Chile Since Independence”, edited by Leslie Bethell, Professor of Latin American History at the University of London, is a good, concise, informative book which examines in some detail the economic, social and political history of Chile since independence. The book, published by Cambridge University Press in 1993, contains works by: Simon Collier, a tango specialist, Harold Blakemore, Paul Drake and Alan Angell.

Another interesting academic book is “A History of Chile, 1808-1994” by Simon Collier and William F. Sater, published by Cambridge University Press, 1996: “...this volume also provides a historical overview of Chile’s political journey from oligarchy to one of South America’s most democratic countries, only for it to fall prey to a military dictatorship following the 1973 overthrow of Salvador Allende. Finally, this book examines various aspect of Chile’s social history: the growth of the press, the process of urbanisation, the spread of education, the creation of a rich intellectual and

literary tradition, the experiences of the middle and lower classes, and the development of Chilean culture from a unique blend of Amerindian and European sources.”

The Chilean experience sparked the imagination of writers of fiction, including Christopher Hudson who wrote “The Final Act” which, in the words of the Financial Times”, is “a brilliant debut”. This thriller was published in 1982.

“The tough, gripping, sensational thriller of one man’s fight for justice in a world of hypocrisy, political chicanery and fearless terrorism.

SANTIAGO, CHILE. An innocent man is dragged by secret police from the American Embassy. U.S. diplomat James Dory is the outraged witness. His quest for justice becomes a personal crusade that leaves him a hunted, lonely man - trapped between secret police and terrorists, and betrayed by his own country”.

In reality, thousands of people were abducted in the middle of the night by the Pinochet secret police (DINA) and put into torture chambers. From here they were taken to many concentration camps scattered up and down our long and narrow country. Many of them were imprisoned and then made to disappear. *Did Hudson take as a model the case of Charles Horman, executed in Chile at the time of the coup?* In 1978, Thomas Hauser’s “The execution of Charles Horman: an American sacrifice” was published in the United States and subsequently published by Penguin in 1982 under the title, “Missing”. A successful film, directed by Costa Gavras and based on this book, was made, starring the actor Jack Lemmon.

“Charles Edmund Horman was born in New York City on 15th of May, 1942. He graduated from Harvard University, magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and was honourably discharged from the United States Air Force National Guard. In 1972, he settled temporarily in Chile with his wife Joyce to pursue a promising career in free-lance writing.

On 17 September 1973, six days after the military coup toppled the freely elected government of Salvador Allende, Charles Horman was arrested by the Chilean military. One month later, his fingerprints were matched with a body in the Santiago Morgue. He was one of two American citizens to die in the coup in Chile.

Almost five years have passed since Charles Horman’s death, yet the incident remains in public view.

What has kept it there are rumours of the most disturbing nature. Specifically, it has been alleged with increasing credibility that Charles Horman was executed with the foreknowledge of American Embassy officials in Santiago because he stumbled upon evidence of United States involvement in the Chilean coup. An examination of this charge in its proper setting follows”.

According to the book Chilean soldiers had dragged Charles from his home in Santiago.

If we are interested in the cultural scene at the time of the UP then “Victor: an unfinished song”, written by Joan Jara, is an interesting read. Joan is an English dancer, married to Victor Jara, the songwriter and singer, murdered in the Santiago stadium in 1973. The book, originally printed in a shocking pink cover; by Jonathan Cape Ltd in 1983, is about love, that is between Victor and Joan, about the development of “La nueva canción chilena”, about Victor’s commitment as an artist of ‘The People’ and about his death in the famous Santiago stadium where, in 1973, he was held prisoner. I am glad to say that I, as a song-writer and singer performing for 30 years in this country, have been influenced not only by Victor ‘s songs but by

the human quality of this unique Chilean who based his talent on honesty - fighting, with guitar in hand, against the dishonest. The dishonest, in this case, are those found in the bourgeois opposition. Although dishonesty was not the rule among the leadership of the UP or its followers, we cannot rule out the possibility that, among them, there were many opportunists and traitors working for the opposition inside the UP (los infiltrados).

David E. Hojman: “Chile”, *the political Economy of Development and Democracy in the 1990s*, to which I referred above, suggests that the Free Market in Chile worked - but *how was it made to work?* “Chile: The Pinochet Decade”, published in London in 1983 by the Latin America Bureau, “traces the failure of the model from the ‘shock treatment’ of 1975, in which the economy was massively contracted in order to reduce inflation, through the supposed miracle years of high growth funded by foreign loans, to the present situation of bankruptcy and the final abandonment of the free market model”...the book “*tells the story of the rise and fall of the laissez-faire economic technocrats known as the Chicago Boys, who masterminded the experiment, and analyses the nature of their alliance with General Pinochet. The book shows how the Chicago Boys promoted a concept of ‘economic Liberty’ based on the individual’s right to compete in free markets. This could only be implemented through a state with vastly increased powers of repression and surveillance. In this way, manual and white collar workers and the rural and urban poor were forced to accept dramatic falls in their living standards which were a consequence of the model. For the Chicago Boys presupposed a political and economic system, in which only the privileged few are actors and notions of social justice do not figure.*”

To complement the above book, perhaps, it is interesting to read Andy Beckett’s book “Pinochet in Picadilly”, published by Faber & Faber in 2003. Beckett, a Guardian journalist, traces the detention of Pinochet in London in 1998 and then goes on to review the historical connection which has always existed between Chile and Great Britain. Lord Cochrane, the Scotsman who helped Chile to organise the Chilean Navy and combat the Spaniards in the 19th century, is one of one of the names scrutinised by Beckett. He also shows why Britain was Pinochet’s favourite foreign country and how his friend, Mrs Thatcher, began to import into Britain the Chicago Boys’ economic policies through her economic adviser Alan Walters, a regular visitor to Chile and an admirer of the Pinochet economists trained in Chicago by Milton Friedman. *What was the price paid by Mrs Thatcher to Pinochet for helping her during the Falklands conflict?*

Before I finish with this part of my story there are two more books which are part of my bibliography about Chile. One is Jacobo Timerman’s “*Chile: the death in the South*”, first published in 1987 by Alfred A. Knopf of New York and then in Britain by Picador. This is an account by Mr Timerman of his return to Chile during the dictatorship. He is a well known Argentinean journalist, founder of the liberal Argentinean newspaper La Opinion, arrested in his country in 1977 and tortured for two years. This is a small book about his impression of the Chileans and their ways of surviving politically and culturally under the Pinochet regime. The book contain records and testimonies of people in great difficulties but learning to resist the dictatorship. The following is one of many accounts which appear in this book.

“Testimony”

“Victor Opazo Cosío committed suicide in Caracas and was buried on October 30, 1985. The funeral was paid for by public charity and only an eleventh-hour intervention by a group of Chileans saved his remains from being buried in a communal grave. He died alone and in total solitude. Victor Opazo, a cultured gentleman, professor of Philosophy, director of public relations at Quimantú Publishing house, a pilot, one of the first professionals to go to Cuba to help after the flight of Batista, a journalist and outstanding intellectual, died in painful exile, condemned never to return to his native land. His home was a room in a modest hotel. He had been out of work for two years. His death became known only because a group of exiled Chilean journalists paid for a newspaper advertisement. As the jurist Graciela Alvarez de Calvo said at his funeral, Victor died not only because he was in exile but also because of disunity and indifference. His truncated life must be added to the list of more than one hundred Chileans who have taken the decision to eliminate themselves rather than fall into the degradation that leads to absolute misery. This is a taboo subject that nobody dares talk about: how many men and women of all ages have committed suicide in exile? (Extract from a letter that Virginia Vidal, a Chilean exile, sent from Caracas to the magazine Análisis of Santiago, Chile)”

I bought Marc Cooper’s “Pinochet and Me” in Italian in Florence because the first page of the book was a dedication “to Roberto Naduris”. It was Roberto’s name and the name of Suzi Weissman, his wife from my time in Glasgow that attracted my attention. The book was published in English by Verso in 2001. Marc, from the United States, was a translator working for the President when he was overthrown by Augusto Pinochet in 1973. *“In Chile the past has never been recognized. And without a sense of the past, a society has no future. This anti-memoir is a humble attempt to construct both”*.

Perhaps this is why I am now trying hard to reconstruct my past and that of so many of my “compañeros”, because it is an appendix to Chilean history and, by extension, part of Scottish history.

Book that I have also looked at are:

Pinochet De la barra Oscar, El Cardenal Silva Henríquez, “luchador por la Justicia”, 1987, Editorial Salesiana, Santiago de Chile

Pacheco Pastene Luís, El Pensamiento socio político de los obispos chilenos 1962-1973, 1st edition Octo, 1985, Editorial Salesiana, Santiago de Chile

Spooner Helen Mary, Soldiers in a narrow land, ‘The Pinochet Regime n Chile.

Valenzuela Arturo, Constable Pamela, A Nation of Enemies, ‘Chile under Pinochet’