

A Tale of Two Chileans: Pinochet and Allende

by

Robin Harris

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Contents

Introduction	
Chapter One	The Gathering Storm
Chapter Two	Allende's Programme - "Total, Scientific, Marxist Socialism"
Chapter Three	The Attack on the Constitution
Chapter Four	The Problem of Resistance
Chapter Five	Background to the Marxist "Self-Coup"
Chapter Six	The Battle for Chile
Chapter Seven	Pinochet's Achievement

Appendices:

Appendix A:

Violent Deaths under Allende

(Reproduced from pp 81-84, The White Book of the Change of Government in Chile, 11 September 1973. Printed by Empresa Editora Nacional "Gabriela Mistral".)

Appendix B:

"Plan Z"

(Reproduced from pp 56-63, The White Book of the Change of Government in Chile, 11 September 1973. Printed by Empresa Editora Nacional "Gabriela Mistral".)

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"The military saved Chile....!"

The following is an extract from an interview with the Spanish newspaper ABC, published on 10 October 1973, given by the former Chilean President, Eduardo Frei. He was commenting on the widespread misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the situation in Chile under Allende, and explaining why the military took power:

"People cannot imagine in Europe how ruined [Chile under Allende] was. They don't know what happened..."

"The Marxists, with the knowledge and approval of Salvador Allende, had brought into Chile innumerable arsenals of weapons which they kept in private houses, offices, factories, warehouses. The world doesn't know that the Chilean Marxists had at their disposal armaments superior in number and quality to those of the army, enough for over thirty thousand men...The military saved Chile for all of us....Civil war had been perfectly prepared by the Marxists. And that is what the world does not know or does not want to know."

"..The military were called in, and they fulfilled a legal obligation, because the Executive and the Judicial Power, the Congress and the Supreme Court had publicly denounced the President and his government for their infractions of the Constitution....Allende's aim was to install communism by violent and undemocratic means, and when the democrats who had been tricked realised the scale of the trap that had been set it was already too late. Already the masses of guerillas were armed and well prepared for their planned extermination of the military leaders."

"I tell you this [to the interviewer, Luis Calvo]...when a government refuses to fulfil the social laws, ignores the warnings of the Bar Association, insults and disobeys the Supreme Court, scorns the great majority of Congress, provokes economic chaos, arrests and kills workers who go on strike, crushes individual and political liberties, depletes the market so as to direct food and other goods to the Marxist monopolists in the black market; when a government behaves in this way, when there arise in Chile conditions never seen on such a scale anywhere in the world, then the right to rebel becomes a duty".

INTRODUCTION

When Senator Augusto Pinochet Ugarte was arrested on a defective warrant, served as he lay in pain in a London clinic, it doubtless seemed the kind of public relations triumph which Britain's New Labour government relished. Who after all would come to the defence of a sick old man with a shocking reputation for brutalities against idealised Left-wing heroes - let alone speak out for him at a time when the whole respectably enlightened world was celebrating the cause of international human rights? But it is a strange irony, not unknown in life, that those who cynically exploit other people's vulnerability themselves come unstuck. And there are already clear signs that this is happening. For though it may be precious little comfort to Senator Pinochet, still languishing (at the time of writing) in a gloomy rented house on the Wentworth estate, or indeed to Chile whose political stability has been threatened, the whole sorry affair may yet yield some benefits. Above all, it has made people in Britain sit up and ask questions of quite fundamental importance nationally and internationally.

To many with little interest in the political upheavals of Chile in the 1970s, or even the situation in Chile today, it came as a considerable shock to learn that former heads of government can now expect to be arrested on British territory at the demand of foreign judges in order to answer for their alleged previous political decisions and actions. There has, naturally, been speculation as to which other visiting foreign statesman might next fall victim to this novel form of kidnap. Surviving British Prime Ministers, and indeed other Ministers, whose past actions could be deemed to infringe the "rights" of some politically influential foreign pressure group, will certainly have to review their travel plans. Hardly less serious, though, may be the likely effects on current and future leaders, when faced with difficult but necessary decisions, if those leaders know that they might later be despatched for trial before a hostile foreign court and a politically motivated judge. There are worrying implications for national democratic institutions too. Claims of extra-territorial jurisdiction so wide-ranging as those now advanced by the Spanish courts, combined with the interpretation currently being placed on the various international "human rights" instruments, threaten to make a mockery of the democratic mandates and responsibilities of national politicians.

It is, indeed, worth remembering that not one of the countries involved has ever had any practical national interest in Senator Pinochet's detention and extradition - quite the contrary. It is clearly in Chile's national interest that the Senator should be allowed to return home, in order to maintain the delicate political balance on which that country's democracy rests. (And almost all Chileans are agreed on this). Similarly, it is not in Spain's well-developed interests in Latin America to incur the wrath not only of Chileans but of most other countries in the region, which see this Spanish action as both contemptuous and neo-colonialistic.

Above all, perhaps, it is not in Britain's interests to antagonise, perhaps permanently, our closest and oldest ally in South America. The economic price of doing so looks likely to grow sharply as the Chilean government throws its full weight behind retaliatory measures. Moreover, without General Pinochet's and his countrymen's almost imprudently strong support for this country in 1982, the British Falklands would now be the Argentine Malvinas. (It has recently been revealed how Chilean radar and communication intelligence equipment monitored all Argentinian airforce movements at the time and that the Chileans then relayed

this information to the British fleet by direct satellite link). With Argentina showing no signs of conceding its claim to the Falkland islands, the Pinochet affair has seriously, and unnecessarily, jeopardised their defence.

All these clear national interests - of Chile, of Spain and of Britain - are currently being overridden because of the novel doctrine that the authority of judges and international conventions and bodies must prevail against all other considerations. Indeed, we have reached such a state that the British Home Secretary, whose wide political discretion the Law Lords have noted, pretends to act like a judge, while certain foreign judges appear quite uninhibited in acting like politicians¹.

The other focus of discussion has, of course, been on what happened in Chile in the 1970s and afterwards: but this, it is fair to say, is still heavily dominated by hysteria, confusion and a large amount mendacity. Extraordinarily, only the "victims" of Pinochet ever receive a hearing, as if the rest of the Chilean people's opinions and experiences were not worth anything. And even those politicians and journalists who argue that General Pinochet should be permitted to return to Chile usually include in their remarks disclaimers such as "Of course, no one defends what happened under Pinochet", or "Much as I deplore Pinochet's rule", or "Evil as he clearly is...". Whereas the murderous Fidel Castro or the genocidal Chinese gerontocrats or the corrupt tyrants still ruling a large number of African states are all duly qualified as "Presidents", "Prime Ministers", "Leaders" and so on, the only description deemed appropriate to Senator Pinochet by the British media is "former dictator". The almost universal assumption is that Pinochet personally is guilty of unspeakable crimes: indeed, if there were one single, over-riding reason to return the Senator to Chile it is because it is absolutely clear already that there is such prejudice against him in Britain and Europe that he has not the slightest hope of a fair hearing.

Most people have, of course, very little knowledge of why Pinochet and the military took power in Chile. That ignorance is understandable and excusable. Those, however, who do know the circumstances in which that action became necessary and the facts about the continuing threat of Marxist terrorism which the country subsequently faced, have also, with a few exceptions, so far remained silent. That too is understandable, but it is not excusable.

Although the military coup on 11th September 1973 was the result of factors within Chile, not of CIA plots (as the paranoid Chilean Left claimed), the change of regime did have a hugely beneficial impact that extended far beyond Chile. The West, after all, fought and won the Cold War by proxy - and so in the process avoided its becoming a "hot" war. Within Latin America the Cold War was won, above all, and most completely, through the action of General Pinochet, backed overwhelmingly by the Chilean people.

The principal purpose of this pamphlet, however, is to begin the task of trying to explain the truth about Pinochet by examining one specific question in detail - why the armed forces acted to overthrow the Presidency of Salvador Allende. The importance of this to the broader

¹ On the occasion of the (now quashed) judgement of the Law Lords in the Pinochet case on 25 November 1998, Lord Nicholls, who in fact came down against Pinochet's immunity, concluded: "Arguments about the effect on this country's diplomatic relations with Chile if extradition were allowed to proceed, or with Spain if refused, are not matters for the court. *These are, par excellence, political matters for consideration by the Secretary of State in the exercise of his discretion under section 12 of the Extradition Act*". (Emphasis added).

"Pinochet case" should be immediately obvious. Over half of all the violent deaths in Chile between 1973 and 1990 (1261 out of 2279 - figures that include members of the armed forces) occurred soon after the military coup of 11 September 1973. If we can explain why what happened then *did* happen, we can gain an essential perspective on most of the "crimes" with which Pinochet is (in a loose sense) charged.

In the final section of this pamphlet I go beyond the events of 1970-1973 to examine briefly the enormous achievements (and serious but limited shortcomings) of the military government during the period until Pinochet handed over to the new President, Patricio Aylwin. To fail altogether to cover these events would be to leave too much of the true story still untold. (In the course of this I also deal briefly with some of the specific accusations now brought against Pinochet.) But a full and authoritative treatment of these and other matters will shortly be available in England with the publication of an important book written by the distinguished Chilean journalist Hermogenes Perez de Arce, *Europa vs Pinochet: Indebido Proceso*. (I have also myself drawn on Senor Perez de Arce's work, as well as the other sources noted below and in the footnotes).

A Note on Sources

The connection between the appearance of this pamphlet and the timetable of General Pinochet's case in Britain meant that there was no time for research of primary sources in Chile. So I relied on secondary material sent from that country to supplement what was otherwise available in Britain. Many of the statistics and documents mentioned in the following pages come from the so-called "*White Book*", published in 1973 by the new military government. (Especially significant documents reproduced in that publication are cross-referenced in my text: two extracts are also reproduced here as appendices). One would ordinarily, of course, be suspicious of such a source. But the immensely detailed documentation in the *White Book*, including numerous facsimiles of manuscript and typed originals, has not in fact been seriously challenged, even by Pinochet's harshest critics. It can thus be deemed reliable - and a great deal more so than the self-serving diatribes concocted by those who tried to make Chile communist, and failed. I also found useful Suzanne Labin's *Chile: the Crime of Resistance* (Richmond, 1982); Robert Moss's *Chile's Marxist Experiment* (Newton Abbot, 1973) and his *The Collapse of Democracy* (London, 1977); James R. Whelan's *Out of the Ashes: Life, Death and Transfiguration of Democracy in Chile - 1883-1988* (Washington DC, 1989) and his various articles; some of the material contained in the *Informe de la Comision de Verdad y Reconciliacion* (Report of the Chilean National Commission of Truth and Reconciliation, 1990); on the economy, papers by Tomas Flores "Balance Economico del Regimen Militar 1974-1989" (published in *Revista Libertad y Desarrollo*) and by Carlos Caceres, "The Economy in Chile: Continuity or Change?" (delivered to the US Council on Foreign Relations, 1 April 1991). Particular references to these and other sources appear in the footnotes.

I am grateful to a number of British and Chilean friends for assisting with this venture - particularly Professor Fernando Barros who helped generously throughout and commented upon the script.

CHAPTER ONE

THE GATHERING STORM

By common consent, Chile is unlike any other South American country, and so has been its history. Both its geographical separation by the Andes from its neighbours and its "European" ethnic homogeneity provided from the beginning favourable conditions for nation-building. Moreover, the need first to subdue the ferocious Mapuche indians in the south and later to assert control over mineral resources in the north always required strong central government. One of the most important political fruits of all these historical conditions was a degree of stability amid surrounding revolutions. There were, indeed, occasional upheavals - notably in the years immediately after the achievement of independence in 1818, then during the "second anarchy" of 1924 to 1932, and finally of course under Allende's Marxist Socialism between 1970 and 1973. But there were notably fewer such periods - and they were somewhat shorter - than in the other countries of the region.

Chileans developed over the years not just a strong patriotism (which was hardly unusual in South America) but also the institutions to give it practical effect (which was a good deal more so). As part of this process, they built an effective navy under British influence and an efficient army on the Prussian model, and they always won their wars. But they also developed a respect for their constitution, their courts and their laws such that the military, as a rule, stayed out of politics.

This long tradition of relative stability was only, in fact, seriously challenged in modern times when Marxism in various shapes and sizes began to gain a grip. At the core of this challenge was the small but highly disciplined Chilean Communist party, the oldest in South America, with its well-deserved reputation for slavish obedience to the Kremlin. But it is sometimes over-looked that the party of which Salvador Allende was a co-founder, the Chilean Socialist Party, was also avowedly Marxist. Indeed, the decision of the Party's 1948 conference publicly to espouse Marxism-Leninism resulted in its expulsion from the Socialist International.

In the course of the 1960s, the fashion for soft-left politics in Chile, as elsewhere, also provided the hard left with opportunities. So most of the old Chilean Radical Party swung sharply left. (The anti-socialist remainder of the Radicals started a new party).

The Socialist Party became ever more strenuously committed to a revolutionary programme. Thus at the Party's Congress in Chillan in 1967 the following statement was agreed unanimously:

"The Socialist Party as a Marxist-Leninist organisation proposes the taking of power as a strategic objective to be accomplished by this generation, to establish a revolutionary state which will free Chile from dependence and economic and cultural backwardness and begin the process of socialism. Revolutionary violence is inevitable and legitimate. It constitutes the only way that leads to taking economic and political power....The socialist revolution can be consolidated only by destroying the bureaucratic and military structure of the bourgeois state".

A totally new force in the sixties, which would be of crucial importance in the Allende years, was the MIR (*Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* - Movement of the Revolutionary Left). This was a militant and indeed quasi-military body, whose extremism would be welcome to the Communists and Socialists in power, though disingenuously blamed by them later. Allende's nephew, Andres Pascal Allende, was one of the MIR's leading figures.

But perhaps the most significant change was in the nature of Christian Democracy in Chile, a change which directly paved the way for Allende's and the Marxists' accession to power. The Chilean Christian Democratic Party, founded after the Second World War, suffered from the ambiguity, not to say muddle, with which Christian Democracy - trying to plot a "middle way" between Left and Right - was afflicted elsewhere. But in the 1960s it in truth became a Party of the Left, implementing under President Eduardo Frei (father of the the present Chilean President of the same name) between 1964 and 1970 a large extension of state control over the economy, including the nationalisation of the copper mines, and beginning the programme of land reform which would later be applied violently and illegally under Frei's successor. None of this programme, though, was socialist enough for some sections of the Party, which split off to form respectively the MAPU (*Movimiento de Accion Popular Unificada* - Movement for United Popular Action) and the Christian Left faction.

Nor were other institutions unaffected by the drift to soft or indeed hard Marxism. The Chilean Catholic Church under Cardinal Silva, archbishop of Santiago, offered a welcome to those priests, imbued with liberation theology, who believed that political militancy was the only proper response to the Gospel message. Silva became for a time a warm apologist for Allende's government. The Communist Party also controlled the leadership of the largest Chilean trade union. Thus by the time of the elections of 1970 which eventually brought Allende to power, socialism as an omnipresent ideology and hard line Marxists in various groups and guises had achieved a grip on Chilean political life. Yet for all that, Allende could never have become President but for the naivete of non-Marxists and, naturally, his own willingness to dupe and exploit them.

Salvador Allende was venerated by liberal/left international opinion during his life-time and swiftly canonised by it after his death. Even the present British Prime Minister seems to share this misguidedly sentimental view: he has apparently confided to Isabel Allende his admiration for her late father². It is generally a healthy instinct not to speak ill of the dead, but the extraordinary myths which have been woven about Allende do need to be deconstructed, if only to shed clearer light on the decisions subsequently made by the widely anathematised Augusto Pinochet. Whether Allende can properly himself be described as a communist is essentially a matter of definition. He was not a member of the Communist but rather of the Socialist Party, as has been noted; but equally the Socialists were professedly Marxist-Leninist. In a revealing published series of interviews with the French Leftist philosopher, Regis Debray, in 1971 Allende made no bones about his objectives.

"As for the bourgeois state at the present moment, we are seeking to overcome it. To overthrow it!"

"..[W]e must expropriate the means of production which are still in private hands".

² *Daily Telegraph*, 28 October 1998

"..[C]omrade, the President of the Republic is a socialist...I have reached this office in order to bring about the economic and social transformation of Chile, to open up the road to socialism. Our objective is total, scientific, Marxist socialism."³

Allende was himself a somewhat unsavoury, though truth to tell far from unusual, blend of the ideologue and the opportunist. Though himself a Marxist-Leninist, his hedonistic lifestyle hardly conformed to the puritanical image of the revolutionary hero. Nor indeed did the character of his regime: after their over-throw, huge sums of cash were found in Allende's and other Ministers' residences. And between 1970 and 1973 Chile also became the main distribution centre for cocaine in South America.

Allende was always willing to say one thing publicly and something different to his close associates. The most extreme example of such cynicism is his behaviour in the matter of the so called Statute of Guarantees, which - though anticipating a little - is worth describing at this point.

In order to become President, Allende needed the support of the Christian Democrats in Congress. (See below). So, in order to reassure them about his intentions and after protracted negotiations, Allende promised to abide by a publicly promulgated Statute of Guarantees. These "guarantees", if adhered to, would have ruled out the imposition of totalitarianism, promising as they did respect for the Chilean Constitution, the protection of the armed forces from party political interference, freedoms of expression and association, the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary. In his speech of 22 October 1970 committing himself to the Statute, Allende solemnly proclaimed that "these dispositions (i.e. the contents of the Statute) must be understood not only as principles consecrated in the Constitution, but as the moral rule of a compromise before our own conscience and before history".⁴

In fact, Allende, as we shall see, made no attempt to adhere to these promises. But the full insight into his cynicism is succinctly given in his interview with Debray, just weeks later:

Debray: "Was it absolutely necessary? Was it essential to negotiate that Statute on democratic guarantees?"

Allende: "Yes, that's why we did it....Put yourself in the period in which this Statute got onto the books, and you will see it *as a tactical necessity*." (Emphasis added).⁵

The truth is all there. For Allende, as for any Marxist-Leninist, the choice between the pursuit of one's objectives constitutionally or unconstitutionally, peacefully or violently, honourably or deceitfully, was, and viewed from his ideological perspective could only be, tactical. Only "useful idiots" could believe otherwise, and even these in Chile, at least, were to be swiftly disillusioned.

About Allende's own deepest convictions an element of doubt must remain. Revolution was, in one sense, quite a family affair. Allende's sister was a Socialist Deputy, close to perhaps the most consistently vocal advocate of revolutionary means, Carlos Altamirano, the Socialist

³ *The Chilean Revolution: Conversations with Allende* by Regis Debray (New York, 1971), pp. 82, 87, 118

⁴ *White Book*, First document, pp. 207-208

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 119

Party leader. As already noted, Allende's nephew was a leader of the MIR. One of his daughters married a senior member of the Cuban embassy, Luis de Ona, who had been the desk officer in Havana responsible for coordinating Che Guevara's expedition to Bolivia

For his part, Eduardo Frei, who had spent years dealing with Allende, summed him up as intelligent, a clever, superficially eloquent politician, not really a committed ideologue, essentially frivolous, more intent on power than anything else⁶. Perhaps because that power depended on satisfying the revolutionaries who dominated his government he pressed ahead with a revolution which may have mattered less to him than did his magnums of Chivas Regal. Perhaps, indeed, on this analysis we should ultimately see him as a prisoner of the extremists with whom he increasingly surrounded himself. In the last resort, though, it hardly matters. Whether a Marxist-Leninist by conviction or convenience, he was at the heart of a regime which posed the most sinister threat to Chile in that country's history and which nearly managed to achieve Castro's dream of communist domination of South America.

⁶ *Interview with ABC*, 10 October 1973

CHAPTER TWO

ALLENDE'S PROGRAMME - "TOTAL, SCIENTIFIC, MARXIST SOCIALISM"

At the Presidential elections of September 1970 Salvador Allende gained 36.5 per cent of the votes cast. His opponents, the Independent Jorge Alessandri and the Christian Democrats' Radomiro Tomic, gained 35 per cent and 28 per cent respectively. Allende had thus won the support of slightly more than a third of the Chilean electorate.

According to the Chilean constitution, since no candidate had an absolute majority, it was up to the Congress to make the final decision. In normal circumstances this would be almost automatically in favour of the the candidate who had secured a relative majority. But so knife-edge was Allende's lead over his conservative opponent, and so deep were the worries about his and his allies' intentions, that it was only by his solemnly agreeing to limit his power by the Statute of Guarantees (see above) that Allende gained the requisite Congressional support for his appointment as President.

The new government's revolutionary intentions were not, truth to tell, seriously in doubt even at the beginning, though the chaos they threatened did not mature immediately. Posts in the new Popular Unity Front government (UP - *Unidad Popular*) were shared out among the Communists, Socialists, Radicals, MAPU and others. With the encouragement of the government, the economic and social basis of the revolution was swiftly established.

The **first** aspect of the programme was the assault on private property through seizures (*tomas*) of agricultural land. Although a fig-leaf of legitimacy had been provided by the earlier legislation passed under Eduardo Frei, which had authorised expropriation (though peacefully and with compensation) of holdings over 80 "basic hectares", Allende and his supporters went much further. Expropriations were now carried out through by the violent attacks of armed bands, usually members of the MIR which was particularly active in the agricultural areas; even quite small plots were now regarded as fair game; and the President himself turned a blind eye to the illegality of such procedures, even making a speech threatening severe punishment for any land-owner presumptuous enough to try to take his property back. The victims of these assaults were sometimes murdered; others committed suicide or died of heart attacks⁷.

Between 1 November 1970 and 5 April 1972, 1767 farms were seized by armed bands⁸. These and later *tomas* did not in fact lead to the satisfaction of poor land-hungry peasants, a class for whom the Marxist intellectuals of the UP had no time at all. Instead, the land was handed over to be mismanaged by collectives, contributing to the near famine which threatened at the end of Allende's catastrophic term.

Secondly, there was a concerted, though superficially piecemeal and pragmatic, attempt to gain control of finance, industry and commerce. Much of Chile's industry was already state owned: when Allende took over, the state controlled more than 50 per cent of industrial production. The state development agency, CORFO (*Corporacion de Fomento de la*

⁷ See Appendix 1

⁸ *White Book*, p. 92

Produccion), was turned into a huge state holding company engaged in buying up private firms. The powers of the Directorate of Trade and Industry, DIRINCO (*Dirección de Industria y Comercio*), were now used to fix prices so as to benefit state corporations at the expense of private ones. (DIRINCO, like most other key economic agencies, was soon under Communist Party control). The nationalised banks were also used as a political lever by the UP, which ensured that they refused credit to companies out of favour with the government.

The process of nationalising Chile's economically vital copper mines had begun under Frei, though Allende made it total and its results were far worse, not least because of the militancy and disorder his regime encouraged. Allende himself described copper as the "wage of Chile". It might have been more appropriate had he described it as Chile's golden goose, for that is how the industry was treated. Since the story of copper nationalisation under Allende is part of the wider myth of exculpation of his regime it is worth briefly noting a few of the relevant facts here.

The nationalisation of the remaining American copper interests under Allende and the government's refusal to achieve a satisfactory arrangement with the companies whose assets were stolen resulted in some problems with US financial institutions - though these have certainly been exaggerated. (See below). Much more serious, though, was the drainage of American and other expertise as a result of the gross mismanagement of the mines. For example, the Chuquicamata mine (known as "Chuqui"), the largest open-cut copper mine in the world, lying in the northern Chilean desert of the province of Antofagasta, was in effect turned over to Communist Party control. Indoctrination and agitation replaced work with the obvious and inevitable results - production fell. Similarly, the El Teniente mine in the province of O'Higgins, south of Santiago - the largest subterranean copper mine in the world (previously, like Chuqui, worked by Americans) was taken over by the Socialists - with similar results.

The Allende government was not particularly lucky with the international price of copper - but neither was it particularly unlucky either (unlike the Pinochet government - see below). The price of copper in 1971 and most of 1972 was somewhat depressed, but it then rose sharply from 48.5 cents to 66 cents per pound in the first quarter of 1973. The trouble was that by then strikes and inefficiency prevented the industry taking advantage of it⁹. The truth is that the "wage of Chile" was so inadequate because under Allende's government economic management was so chaotic.

The main method applied to achieve "total, scientific, Marxist socialism" (as Allende put it) was, though, characteristically more devious. Rather than seek a straightforward legislative authority for nationalisation, the President, on the advice of his legal experts, preferred to exploit loopholes offered by provisions passed decades earlier and with quite different original ends in view. One of these, Decree Law 520, for example, allowed state intervention by a government-appointed *interventor* (a term which, thankfully, has no English equivalent) in cases where the "operational norms" in all "basic industries" were not being met. Specifically, where industries were judged to be "in recess", or paralysed by strikes, or responsible for a "lack of supplies on the market", a Socialist *interventor* could step in to take

⁹ The story of Chilean copper and other features of Allende's calamitous economic policy are well summarised by Robert Moss, *Chile's Marxist Experiment*, pp. 61-74

control of the business. These provisions stemmed from the so-called (and short-lived) "Socialist Republic" of Chile of 1932; even then, they had originally only been intended as of temporary application, something similar, say, to civil emergency powers in Britain. But Allende distorted their purpose in order to make them instruments for permanent expropriation - and when the Courts or the Comptroller General protested, he over-rode objections by so-called "decrees of insistence", themselves only envisaged for use in extreme emergencies. (For Allende's constitutional manipulation, see below).

The seizure of the Chilean textile industry is a case in point. At the start of April 1971 a press campaign began in pro-government newspapers against one branch of the YARUR textile company: on 25 April it was seized by the workers there: on 29 April it was taken into full state control. About a month later the Socialist Economics minister publicly stated his intention to nationalise the rest of the YARUR enterprises and other named companies. On the next day the workers seized all these plants. Two days later they were grabbed by the government. Not so much socialism without tears, as theft without shame.

Along with price controls and manipulation of the government's control of the supply and distribution of essential commodities, the process of public vilification, followed by fomented militancy, followed by state "intervention", rapidly (and often violently) brought key industrial sectors into Socialist hands. By the end of Allende's term, some 80 per cent of Chilean national production was under the control of the state.

That process was intimately connected with the **third** aspect of the programme, which was the Socialist campaign against freedom of expression. It should not surprise anyone (though sadly it still may) that Allende and his colleagues had not the slightest respect for this liberal totem, nor indeed for the concept of the value of objective truth. As Allende put it in a harangue (of which notes remain) to his UP colleagues, "things are good or bad according to whether they bring us nearer to or further from power, according to whether they assure or not the irreversibility of the revolutionary process."¹⁰

Of course, the destruction of private property (not just by confiscation, but by the undermining of savings through a combination of price controls and hyper-inflation) would itself in due course remove the conditions for the independent expression of opinion. But the Allende government also acted directly and indirectly against non-Socialist newspapers and radio stations.

An interesting example of the indirect attack on the press is the government's campaign against the sole supplier of Chilean newsprint, La Papelera. A variety of stratagems was employed: the government offered to buy the company's shares at a huge premium, but hardly any share holder proved ready to sell; UP militants tried to hold up distribution of the necessary timber supplies; then the state-run price control agency refused to allow the company to raise its prices as inflation soared; the resultant losses provided, of course, an excuse for demands that an *interventor* be appointed to run the firm. Somehow, though La Papelera survived¹¹.

¹⁰ Original published in the *White Book*, p. 32

¹¹ Labin, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61

So too did the most important and highly respected Chilean national newspaper, El Mercurio, which was the target of Socialist propaganda, an advertising boycott by UP-controlled enterprises, the cutting off of credit from now-state-controlled banks, militant agitation - and even two attempts at incineration of the premises. In fact, only the fearless support of the bulk of the workforce, which took a large pay cut and refused to support the militants, enabled El Mercurio to survive. By contrast, the management and staff of numerous lesser newspapers and television and radio stations were beaten into submission - in one case literally, as the personnel were imprisoned and flogged¹².

The **fourth** aspect of the UP programme was the setting up of parallel structures intended initially to challenge and then, when appropriate, to replace the official institutions of the Chilean state. In the first year the bizarre institutions known as "People's Courts" were set up. The "judges" were untrained, apparently elected locally but in fact the nominees of left-wing organisations, and they enjoyed wide powers to administer punishment for actions deemed anti-social. The existence of these "Courts" was used as an excuse to exclude the official institutions - state courts and military police (*carabineros*) - from areas under the grip of revolutionary control. In 1972, as the economic situation rapidly worsened, a further set of parallel bodies were set up to ration supplies and control prices (JAPs - *Juntas de Abastecimientos y Precios*), and these also quickly, and predictably, fell into the grip of a left-wing mafia.

The **fifth** element of the UP strategy to take total power - one without which none of the rest would ultimately have been possible - was the threatened and actual use of violence. Salvador Allende may have promised that the "Chilean Path to Socialism" would be accompanied by "the lowest social cost that may be imagined in our circumstances..", as he did to the Chilean Congress on 21 May 1971. But their actions suggest that from the very beginning Allende and his comrades assumed that force was required and that they would have no hesitation in applying it.

Already in 1971 Allende had created his own praetorian guard, known euphemistically as the Groups of Personal Friends (GAP - *Grupos de Amigos Personales*). These increasingly heavily armed thugs effectively took over the President's protection from the state authorities. The decision was strongly attacked by the Christian Democrats.

The MIR has already been mentioned. Its leaders, previously imprisoned for various political and straightforwardly criminal acts of violence, were pardoned by Allende immediately on taking office. (Among the terrorists pardoned by Allende - people he referred to as "young idealists" - were those who later assassinated the leading CD politician and former Vice-President, Edmundo Perez Zujovic). From the first, the MIR trained, paraded and spoke as what it was - an armed political militia. It set up special military camps, three of which were around Santiago. Complementing these camps were the so-called "industrial belts" (*cordones industriales*) - zones containing factories which had been seized and housing estates which were controlled by MIR and other Left Wing paramilitaries. From these zones armed "communal commandos" operated. Their purpose was described in one of the publications to which they gave rise as "to prepare the working class and direct it towards taking power"¹³.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 53

¹³ Quoted by Robert Moss in *The Collapse of Democracy*, p. 156

Indeed, the MIR never really concealed its objectives. For instance, in 3 August 1971 it declared that "only by destroying legality and the institutions which impede the advance of the workers can one advance along the path of the revolution. It is necessary to destroy the laws of the state, all that is built to oppress the people, exploit it and maintain it in poverty....The government has been conquered, but not power"¹⁴.

Nor did Allende's own Socialist Party lag far behind in its intoxication with the *via armada*, the way of violence. The Socialist Leader, Carlos Altamirano, had as early as 22 December 1970 promised a "confrontation". In April 1971 the Central Committee of the Socialist Party declared (with approval) that "the action of the Popular Government has sharpened greatly the class struggle and has polarised the social and political forces". In May the Central Committee proclaimed that the Party "united with the Communist Party constitutes the vanguard of the revolutionary process.."

On 1 March 1972 Altamirano declared at a press conference that "regardless of the legal or constitutional reasons the Government may have, the workers will know how to use their own arms and methods for fighting". On 12 June 1973 he told the MIR of the *cordones industriales* that "fists and a revolutionary conscience are not enough to defend the Fatherland". Nor did they need to be, because by this time a major build-up of arms in the hands of the various political and military components of the Left was well under way. (See below).

Perhaps to the modern British reader such turgid, cliché-ridden, bombast may appear more ridiculous than sinister. But it is vital to remember that in Allende's Chile this was - quite literally - deadly serious, the ideological and rhetorical backcloth to calculated and brutal violence.

The most clinical and irrefutable calculation demonstrating that there was nothing peaceful about the "Chilean Path to Socialism" is provided by the list of those known to have lost their lives during the period of Allende's Presidency, that is before the coup of 11 September 1973. The (nearly a hundred) names, and the circumstances of their demise, are given at Appendix A¹⁵. The list shows how violence, at times bordering on anarchy, was inextricably integrated into the unfolding tragedy of Allende's Chile.

¹⁴ Quoted in the Chilean army's memorandum to the Committee on Truth and Reconciliation, p. 70

¹⁵ *White Book*, pp. 81-84. The pages are reproduced here without emendation, linguistic warts and all.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ATTACK ON THE CONSTITUTION

In some countries the embarrassing truth is that constitutions do not matter much to anyone, except perhaps the draftsmen. Thus the joke runs of the reader in the British Museum who in years gone by asked for a copy of the French constitution, only to be told: "Sorry, sir. We don't stock periodicals".

Chile was and is not in that category. The constitution which Allende so outrageously manipulated in his term of office had been instituted in 1925. The armed forces had, in contrast to other Latin American states, not intervened for forty years before the 11 September 1973 coup, except to prevent putsches against the constitutional order. To Chileans the constitution, the courts and due process mattered.

But, as has been noted earlier in discussion of the Statute of Guarantees, such things did not matter one whit to Allende. As the UP government became more unpopular and the initially stunned and frightened resistance to it grew, the President had a clear choice. He could tone down or at least slow down the march to Marxism, or he could subvert the constitution which still inhibited him in his plans: he chose the latter course.

Since the great majority of the land seizures (*tomas*) were clearly illegal, it was only natural that those who suffered should appeal to the courts for restitution. The same applied in the case of the owners of businesses nationalised by the device of "intervention". But the government would not listen. The Allende administration's refusal to permit implementation of court judgements brought it into direct conflict with the Chilean Supreme Court. As time went on, the latter's exchanges with the President became increasingly bitter.

Thus on 26 May 1973, protesting at yet another case reported to it by a subsidiary court of the political authorities' refusal to comply with judicial decisions, the Supreme Court unanimously resolved to tell the President:

"This Supreme Court is compelled to represent to Your Excellency for the umpteenth time the unlawful attitude of the administrative authority in its illegal interference in judicial affairs, as well as for placing obstructions upon the execution of orders from a Criminal Court by the uniformed police, which orders, under the laws in force, must be carried out by the said police force without obstacles of any kind; all of which implies an open and willful contempt of judicial decisions, with complete disregard of the alterations that such attitudes or omissions produce in the judicial order; which attitude further implies not only a crisis in the state of law, as was represented to Your Excellency in a previous despatch, but also a peremptory or imminent disruption of the legality of the Nation"¹⁶.

Allende responded by a short official note and a long public speech. In the latter he made the following assertion:

¹⁶ *White Book*, Second document, p. 209

"[I]n a period of revolution, the political power has the right to decide in the last resort whether or not the decisions of the judiciary fit in with the lofty aims and historic needs of the transformation of society, which must take absolute precedence over all other considerations; consequently it is the Executive's right to decide whether or not to carry out the judgments of the judiciary"¹⁷.

The Supreme Court understood the significance of this extraordinary assertion only too well. It, therefore, replied on 26 June that it would no longer seek the President's support in having judicial decisions executed, because "the powers and authorities of the Judicial power are being disregarded by Your Excellency, thus justifying and giving an honest appearance to the contempt of court shown by the Administration."¹⁸

Allende's use of power was condemned not only by the Supreme Court, but also by the Comptroller General (*Contraloria*) - an institution only two years younger than the constitution itself and one whose function it was to pronounce upon the legality or otherwise of the government's administrative actions. On at least thirty occasions the Comptroller General protested, only to see his opposition over-ridden by the President's use of so-called "decrees of insistence".

The use of these decrees was one of the cunning and fundamentally unconstitutional devices suggested by Allende's legal advisers. Intended for use in only the most extreme emergencies, but applied as a regular instrument of power by Allende, they allowed the President to override objections by the Comptroller General through a decree signed by the head of state and all his ministers.

It was not only the courts and the Comptroller General, however, whose authority was steam-rolled by the UP. So too was that of the two houses of the Chilean Congress. Most of the Christian Democrat parliamentarians soon realised the error they had made in believing Allende's promises - though the murder of Edmundo Perez Zujovic by left wing assassins soon after he publicly expressed this sentiment was a timely reminder of the threat democratically minded politicians now faced. In the Congress the Christian Democrats, the National Party and the (break-away) Radical Democrat Party could command a large majority. This enabled them to impeach UP government ministers for misconduct. Under the constitution the President had a duty at this point to dismiss the minister in question. But, publicly demonstrating his contempt for Congress, Allende preferred just shake up his cabinet, yet again, and appoint the disgraced minister to another post. For example, in January 1972 the Congress impeached the Interior Minister for failing to protect rights to property, free speech and freedom of assembly, only to see him made Defence Minister. In July that year a new Minister of the Interior was impeached, implicated in the scandal of Cuban arms imports (see below), but was then appointed by Allende to another senior post in the administration. In December the Finance Minister was impeached because of his illegal action against workers on strike: he was promptly made Economics Minister.

Oddly enough, the issue which brought the political parties, the Comptroller General, the highly respected Chilean Bar Association and ever more vociferous public opinion together

¹⁷ Reproduced in Labin, *op. cit.*, p 151

¹⁸ *White Book*, Third document, p. 211

in opposing Allende was a somewhat unexciting, though in fact important, measure - namely, a constitutional amendment to delineate (and so preserve from the Marxist drive for totalitarian economic control) the "three sectors" of the economy, i.e. state owned, mixed and private. This modest measure was endorsed by the Congress in 1971 and went to the President for promulgation within a fixed period; but Allende refused to comply. Instead, he attempted to promulgate only those parts of the measure of which he approved. This was roundly denounced by the Comptroller General as unconstitutional. Allende was still refusing to do his constitutional duty by full promulgation of the amendment on the "three sectors" at the time of his government's final overthrow.

The socialist apologists for Allende claimed, and still claim, that his popular mandate was such that he was anyway entitled to ride rough-shod over the constitution and the law. As long as one accepts a Marxist definition of "the people" - that is those forces which support Marxists - this view makes a kind of crazy tautological sense. But if by "the people" we mean "the majority", it is demonstrably false, at least in the case of Allende's Chile. For example, if Allende had wanted to avoid promulgating the law on the "three sectors" he had it within his power according to the constitution to call a referendum on the matter. He did not - and he dared not - do so, because once the true nature of his regime was manifest, which it was very clearly by 1972, he was extremely unpopular. Democracy, even of the crude populist kind, posed too much of a risk for the proponents of popular revolution.

Indeed, the nature and limits of the UP democratic mandate are worth examining. Neither Allende nor his UP coalition ever gained the support of an absolute majority of the Chilean electorate, as the following table of election results shows:

UP Support

September 1970 (Presidential)	36.5 per cent
April 1971 (Municipal)	49.23 per cent
March 1973 (Parliamentary)	43.98 per cent

To say this is not, of course, to suggest that only governments enjoying the support of over half the electorate are legitimate: it is simply to put Allende's triumphalism in perspective. The 1971 result was achieved when the financial hand-outs were still available but before the financial consequences - notably inflation - were much apparent. From then on, serious popular opposition mounted and UP support accordingly shrank. Consequently, the government decided to perpetrate wholesale electoral fraud.

So great was the outcry at the plethora of anecdotal reports of fraud at the March 1973 elections that the prestigious Catholic University of Chile set up a committee of professors to produce a scholarly and detailed report. Published on 17 July, this document pointed to numerous cases of multiple registration and substitution of both living and dead electors, and concluded:

"Thus, at present we can say that our democracy is broken. Our electoral system has permitted an enormous fraud and it does not give any security that at the next election

this cannot be repeated again. At the same time, it casts a shadow of doubt about the previous elections, held during the last years, under the same government"¹⁹.

But by now it was in any case clear that the UP government was rapidly abandoning even the pretence of legality and constitutional propriety. Preparations for advance along the armed path to socialism were, as we shall see, well developed.

¹⁹ *White Book*, Fourth document, p. 223

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROBLEM OF RESISTANCE

By 1973 Allende and his colleagues had to face the fact that there was no democratic or constitutional means left to implement the revolution. So, without any obvious soul-searching or even hesitation they embarked whole-heartedly on the alternative path of violence, to which in any case many of their number had always been attracted. But the democratic opponents of Allende were faced with a still greater problem. This was that they too had altogether run out of options - and they were unarmed.

Neither the courts, nor the Comptroller General, nor the Congress by now elicited any appearance of respect from the administration. Yet it says much for their desperate desire to avoid the imminent civil war that even now these bodies issued final warnings about the consequences of the government's continuing along the present course.

On 8 July, Eduardo Frei, President of the Senate, and Luis Pareto, President of the Chamber of Deputies, issued a solemn joint statement, noting that "inflation has reached intolerable limits", that "an organized process of hate and violence ... divides the country", and that "neither laws nor institutions are respected". Significantly, the two statesmen then added that "the democratic sectors which we represent are not armed", but that "those [the UP] who for months have carried out a publicity campaign against the danger of civil war are those who now give out arms and are provoking an armed confrontation that menaces all Chileans"²⁰.

Still stronger was the warning contained in the resolution of the Chamber of Deputies on 22 August, as angry parliamentarians reacted to the machine-gunning of students who had mobilised to help protect the wives of striking miners. The Chamber stated:

"That it is a fact that the present government of the Republic, from its beginning, has persisted in conquering total power, with the clear purpose of submitting all the people to the most strict economic and political control by the State, and to obtain the implantation of a totalitarian system, completely opposed to the democratic representative system established by the Constitution."

The Resolution noted that the government had, among much else, "deprived the Congress of its main function, which is that of legislation", "headed a defamatory campaign of insults and slander against the Most Excellent Supreme Court", "mocked the action of the law in the cases of delinquents belonging to parties and groups pertaining to or having an affinity with the government", "seriously infringed liberty of expression", "violated the autonomy of the University and its right, recognised by the Constitution, to establish and maintain a television channel", "infringed the liberty of teaching...by means of...a plan whose final purpose consists of the incorporation of Marxism into education", "systematically violated the constitutional guarantee of the right to property", "not acknowledged the rights of workers and their union organisations and guilds", and "allowed the formation and development, under the protection of the government, of armed groups, which besides threatening the

²⁰ *White Book*, Sixth document, pp. 228-229

safety of citizens and their rights, and against the internal peace of the nation, are destined to confront the Armed Forces".

Highly significant too were the decisions...

"First, to manifest to the President of the Republic and the Secretaries of State members of the Armed Forces and the *Carabineros* Corps the serious breach of constitutional order...; second, to manifest to them that it is up to them to end immediately all the above mentioned circumstances...; third, that if this were done the presence of such Secretaries of State would mean a valuable service to the Republic, otherwise it would seriously harm the national and professional nature of the Armed Forces and the *Carabineros* Corps..."²¹

Repeatedly, the emphasis was thus on the looming violence. But for the first time, and most ominously, in the Chamber of Deputies' resolution the armed forces, whose leaders were at this stage members of the Cabinet, were explicitly called upon to force Allende and his government back to legality. Less than a month later the generals (and one admiral) did precisely that in the only way open to them.

In one sense, everything already written above about the Allende government explains how this abyss had been reached. But the decisive development which toppled Allende into oblivion and Chile into bloody civil war was undoubtedly the economy.

Under the conditions of an orderly democratic state, like those that are taken for granted in the West in the 1990s, there is a well-oiled mechanism which ensures that any serious economic failure soon results in popular discontent, and that as the government becomes unpopular it either mends its ways to stay in office, or leaves it to another party in government to implement a sounder policy. The assumption that matters will work like this is so automatic as to be unspoken. But in a quasi-revolutionary, deeply disorderly state like Allende's Chile, economic breakdown has a quite different effect. For although it causes wide-spread discontent, economic collapse also brings with it the destruction of property and a consequent diminution of ordinary people's capacity for resistance - all of which can actually work in the Marxists' favour. So, for example, Carlos Matus, one of Allende's Economics Ministers, gave an interview at the time to the West-German weekly, *Der Spiegel*, in which he commented:

"If one goes by conventional economic criteria, we are, in effect, in a state of crisis. If, for example, the previous government had found itself in our economic situation, that would have been the end of it. *But what is a crisis for others is for us the solution*". (Emphasis added)²².

Both the "crisis" and the "solution" were most apparent in the horrendous rate of inflation which the grossly irresponsible financial policies of the Allende government generated. 1971, sarcastically referred to by Chileans as the "year of presents", saw the beginning of a

²¹ *Ibid.*, Eighth document, pp. 232-235

²² Quoted in Moss, *Chile's Marxist Experiment*, p. 58.

profligate programme of wage and staff increases in the public sector - the number of state employees doubled under Allende. This spending widened the budget deficit - it quadrupled. This deficit in turn was covered by the printing presses; moreover, as is classically the case with such policies, the whole mad process had to accelerate in order to underpin the initial illusion of a better standard of living. So the money supply was expanded by 120 per cent in 1971 and 171 per cent in 1972. Inflation, of course, soon took off. Hyper-inflation (which can certainly be said to have been reached by 1973) is almost impossible to measure anyway, since estimates of prices become meaningless. This was particularly so in Allende's Chile where monetary profligacy was accompanied by an all-embracing attempt by the state and its agencies to fix prices. The best recent estimate seems to be that inflation was running at over 500 per cent and rising at the time of the 11 September coup - though others thought it was higher (See below).

The effects of all this were greatly worsened because the programme of violent nationalisation and chaotic collectivism sharply cut output. Most disastrous, perhaps, was the decline in agricultural production, as peasants refused to cultivate land under collective control and at bureaucratically fixed prices for their produce. In fact, the only sector that flourished under Allende was the black economy. While the under-privileged workers and house-wives queued for hours, those with the right connections and access to officially restricted luxury imports thrived, as only elites in controlled economies and societies can.

As good a near contemporary summary of these conditions as any, from someone with no particularly love for the military that had just excluded him from political activity, is provided by former President Eduardo Frei in the course of a long statement addressed on 8 November 1973 to the President of the Italian Christian Democrats:

"The *Unidad Popular* [Allende and his allies] promised to end inflation, never to seek foreign loans, to increase production, make the country economically independent and improve the standard of living.

"What was the result of its management?"

"The world knows...In less than three years the government of the UP which had promised not put the country in debt, according to its programme, increased those debts to around a thousand million dollars, destined not for investment, but exclusively to buy food to make up for its agricultural failure....Inflation according to the government's official figures reached 323 per cent in the last two months, but the university institutes, taking account that the country practically lived off the black market, reckon it was over 600 per cent.... The dollar in the free market at the end of the Christian Democrat government was exchanged at a rate of 20 *escudos*. In August just past [1973] it had reached 2,500 *escudos*, that is a devaluation [of the *escudo*] of more or less 12,000 per cent. All the indices of industrial production had fallen by more than 7 per cent; in agriculture by about 23 per cent and in mining by about 30 per cent...".

The Allende government's combination of incompetence, corruption and calculated assaults on property naturally elicited strong popular opposition, and not just from the well-to-do middle classes. On 2 December 1971, and then precisely a year later, the women of Santiago

staged mass protests by clashing their pots and pans together to protest against the administration's policies. Students and teachers rose up in opposition in 1972 against the attempt to force a monolithic framework and a Marxist curriculum on schools in this overwhelmingly Catholic country: they successfully aborted the plan. In March 1973 the miners at the copper mines of El Teniente defied the authorities and went on strike; in the face of organised violence and even murder they eventually forced the Socialist authorities to yield to their demands. Most important and effective were the lorry-drivers' strikes of October 1972 and July 1973. The imprisonment in 1972 by the authorities of the striking truckers' leaders was met by a huge walk-out of blue- and white-collar workers, small businessmen and members of the professions. Then when Allende went back on the promises that ended the 1972 strike, a further one promptly began in 1973 and was still under way at the time of the 11 September coup.

Heartening as it is to know that so many ordinary men and women were willing in the face of intimidation and violence to stand up for their rights, the fact remains that the Socialist authorities, by now armed to the teeth, were simply too strong for them. As the parliamentarians implied in their final protests against Allende's illegalities, there was just no way in which democratic, constitutional forces could now prevail. Only the army, airforce, navy and *carabineros* stood between the Chilean people's vestiges of freedom and the totalitarianism which was poised to triumph.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BACKGROUND TO THE MARXIST "SELF-COUP"

The whole notion of a "coup against oneself" or "self-coup" (*autogolpe*) seems on the face of it bizarre: after all, why should those in charge of the government themselves wish to overthrow the state? In fact, though, this is a revolutionary tactic with a well established pedigree. It was, after all, what the Nazis under Hitler perpetrated in Germany in the years after 1932 (when they received a slightly higher vote than did Allende in 1970), and - a still more appropriate model - it was precisely the same approach as that used by the Communists under Gottwald in Czechoslovakia after 1946²³. In all three cases - Germany, Czechoslovakia and Chile - the revolutionaries gained a limited, temporary, hold on power which they then used in order to make their power unlimited and permanent. Subversion, terror, violence and intimidation were employed, both from within and from outside the apparatus of the state, in order to take total control of all institutions and thus of society itself. The difference between Chile on the one hand and Germany and Czechoslovakia on the other was that in the nick of time the Chilean armed forces acted to prevent this revolutionary plan succeeding.

Though the Chilean Left were by 1973 thoroughly committed to preparations for the "self-coup", the most consistent advocates of the path of violence probably hailed from outside the country, above all from Castro's Cuba. It is therefore convenient to consider here the truth about foreign involvement in what now happened.

In later years, Soviet-inspired myth-makers were keen to portray the Americans as responsible for the Allende government's collapse. American financial power was condemned for having brought Chile's noble Socialist Experiment to a halt. More specifically, the CIA was blamed for Allende's downfall. Neither thesis is sustainable. As far as can be judged from the evidence available, the truth is as follows²⁴.

Anxious at the prospect of Allende's coming to power, some of those in the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT) approached the CIA with an offer to finance an operation against him. This offer was refused, not least because at this time the Americans wrongly thought Allende would still lose. Later, after Allende's victory, a CIA official approached ITT to discuss a plan for economic disruption intended to frighten the Chilean Opposition into denying Allende the Congressional confirmation he needed. This plan was not acted upon either - and understandably so, because it greatly underestimated the solidarity between Allende and most of the Christian Democrat Congressmen. (In fact, the killing at this point of the commander-in-chief of the army, General Schneider, by a lunatic fringe group of Right Wing would-be kidnappers actually helped to increase moderate CD support for Allende). The truth seems to be that that the agency's involvement was neither well judged, nor effective, nor even particularly serious. Certainly, the Chilean politicians were more inclined to regard the United States as a honey-pot than a threat: the former American Ambassador to Chile, Edward Korry, told the Senate Committee investigating these matters

²³ This important parallel is discussed in Moss, *Collapse of Democracy*, pp. 138-149

²⁴ See on this the well-informed account in Moss, *Chile's Marxist Experiment*, pp. 7-9. This judgement is, of course, necessarily provisional on any new information which may be released in the US on the subject.

that "all three political groups" - i.e. even Allende's - had approached the US Embassy for funds. Between 1970 and 1972 US intervention seems to have been limited to fairly modest funding of Allende's centrist opponents and the non-Socialist media: most importantly, there is no evidence that the CIA was more than a passive, if sympathetic, spectator of the events of 11 September 1973. The military coup was definitely made in Chile.

Similarly, the allegation that American-dominated international credit institutions froze out Allende's Chile and so fatally weakened its socialist reform programme is very wide of the mark. In fact, Chile was generously bailed out by both US and European banks, as even Allende's Finance Minister admitted at the time: the huge debts thus accumulated would prove a heavy burden for the succeeding Pinochet government. The reason international credit was in truth so *easily* available (given the financial lunacy of Allende's programme) is actually of some significance. The period of Allende's rule more or less coincided with the high-point of that particular brand of development economics which encouraged the now discredited nostrums of import substitution, industrial concentration and confiscatory policies towards capital ownership. This was the era before the first oil shock of 1973-74: no-one would or could have afforded to bail out Allende in later years.

Foreign involvement *was*, however, important in deciding Chile's fate. But this was involvement not by the lackeys but by the sworn enemies of capitalism. Admittedly, the Soviet Union, whose economic problems were as we know multiplying, proved a good deal more stingy than Allende hoped. The Soviets feted him on his December 1972 visit to Moscow, but their aid was always linked to specific projects and tied credits. In any case, Moscow's policy was to channel support and exert control in that hemisphere almost exclusively through Castro's Cuba. And Havana was indeed almost as important as Santiago in the events which now unfolded.

Years before gaining power, Allende already knew Fidel Castro well, and as President of the Chilean Senate he had demonstrated his revolutionary credentials to the Cuban dictator by offering refuge on Easter Island to six survivors of Che Guevara's Colombian terrorist group. Castro arrived in person on 10 November 1971, accompanied by a large entourage to spend an extraordinary 25 days in Chile being fawned on by the authorities while pontificating revolution to the increasingly bored and irritated masses. But even when Castro left, many Cubans stayed: during the Allende years the personnel at the Cuban Embassy swelled to a size greater than that of any other diplomatic mission.

In fact, not just Cubans, but assorted revolutionaries from all over Latin America - Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Peru, Santo Domingo, Nicaragua and Honduras - flooded into Chile, many of them finding posts in state enterprises, engaging in various kinds of revolutionary activity under the protection of the sympathetic state Investigation Service. A number of these, though, came to grief in other ways and were shot in scuffles and robberies or blew themselves up with their own explosives. The military authorities subsequently estimated the number of foreign extremists in Chile on the eve of the self-coup as between ten and fifteen thousand.

Closely associated with the Cuban connection was the build up of arms in the hands of the UP and its associated organisations. This came embarrassingly to light in March 1972 when thirteen crates allegedly containing personal "gifts" for Allende from Castro were stopped by

the Chilean customs. They had been brought into Chile by the Director of the Investigation Service, Eduardo "Coco" Paredes, who angrily refused to allow the crates to be opened. The Minister of the Interior had to race to the airport to prevent their true contents being revealed and bring them back to Allende's house in Tomas Moro street. After the military coup it was confirmed from a list of contents found in Paredes' apartment that Castro's "gifts" had consisted of over a ton of sophisticated weaponry and ammunition. Yet the affair of the "Cuban crates" was just the tip of a much larger iceberg. Arms were not only by now being regularly smuggled into the country, they were also stolen from army supplies and other sources and then either stored in official "safe" hiding places, like the Presidential residences, or distributed to paramilitaries for immediate use.

The details which subsequently emerged of the scale of these arms caches make it easy to see why ex-President Eduardo Frei emphasises in his interview with ABC, noted above, that "...the Chilean Marxists had at their disposal armaments superior in quantity and quality to those of the army..". At the Presidential palace of La Moneda and at the President's private residence in Tomas Moro - that is at just two centres of many - the following armaments were discovered after 11 September: 147 semi-automatic rifles, 10 semi-automatic carbines, 10 Mauser carbines, 1 Winchester carbine, 54 automatic pistols, 13 rifles, 28 semi-automatic pistols, 11 revolvers, two pistols for shooting tear-gas bombs, 1 shotgun, 3 machine guns, 9 rocket launchers (Soviet manufacture), 2 recoilless cannons, 1 mortar, 58 rifle bayonets, 58 hand grenades, 625 basic home-made explosive bombs and 832 with extra explosive power, 68 rifle grenades, 236 anti-vehicle mines, 432 tear-gas bombs, 12 paralysing gas throwers (spray type), 25,000 electric detonators, 1500 fuse detonators, 22,000 metres of slow fuse, 3600 metres of detonating cord, 625 kilogrammes of potassium chlorate, 50 boxes of dynamite, 250 kilogrammes of TNT, 750 Molotov cocktails, 230 litres of sulphuric ether (incendiary element), more than 80,000 cartridges of all types, almost 5000 carbine magazines for automatic rifles, semi-automatic pistols and other guns, and a range of other equipment²⁵.

In order to train those who would have to use the weaponry which Allende and his fellow-plotters had assembled, the services of Chilean and foreign trained guerillas were employed in different camps dotted around both agricultural and urban areas. Allende's residence at El Canaveral was the site of an important training centre. Those being put through their paces were carefully tested as to their technical and psychological fitness for the coming struggle. The training schedules and some of the "reports" on those attending these courses in terrorism have been found and published²⁶. Allende himself, naturally, was also keen to be seen preparing for the armed conflict which was in store. A number of photographs were accordingly taken of him holding a sub-machine gun. (See inside back cover.)

Fidel Castro, always keen to encourage his protege's militancy, gave him such a weapon and it is symbolically appropriate that this was what Allende used to commit suicide²⁷. Castro had, indeed, been intimately involved in the final preparations for the self-coup. In August 1973 he sent to Chile two of his most senior specialists in organising political violence, Cuba's Deputy Prime Minister, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, and the head of the feared Cuban

²⁵ *White Book*, p. 47

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46 and Addendum no. 12, pp. 167-168

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 8. For the facts about Allende's suicide see below

secret police, Manuel Pineiro, known as *Barbarroja* (Red Beard). It was indignantly denied at the time that the presence of these two sinister figures had any notable significance: they were, it was even suggested, just visiting friends, an explanation which perhaps even had some credibility given the ubiquitous presence of Cuban "advisers" in Chile at the time. But, of course, it was just another lie, as is shown by the contents of a secret personal letter from Castro, which these two special envoys brought with them and which was subsequently discovered and published. The letter begins:

"Dear Salvador, Under the pretext of discussing with you questions concerning the meeting on non-aligned countries, Carlos and Pineiro have gone to see you. The real purpose is to discuss with you your situation and, as always, to offer you our willingness to cooperate in the face of the difficulties and dangers which hinder and threaten the [revolutionary] process....."

Castro sought to strengthen Allende's nerve for the coming conflict:

"...[D]o not for one minute forget the formidable strength of the Chilean working classes and the strong support they have always offered you in your difficult moments....Your courage, your serenity and your daring in this historic moment of your country, and above all, your strong resolve and heroic leadership, hold the key to the situation. Let Carlos and Manuel know how your loyal Cuban friends can help you."²⁸

In the light of the copious, unrefuted and indeed irrefutable evidence published in the *White Book*, from which the above account is largely taken, it is all but impossible to deny that Allende and the UP were at the time of the military coup already in the final stages of preparing their own. The only alternative explanation would, presumably, be that the massive military build up was intended for a defensive purpose, that is in order to resist a military threat to the UP government and the Chilean state.

This cannot, of course, automatically be ruled out. The Marxist-Leninist revolutionary mentality of those around Allende did not draw any clear distinction between opposition and war. They themselves assumed that there would be a violent confrontation and every sign of opposition simply reinforced that assumption. Ideological paranoia inevitably contains an element of mystery for those lucky enough not to be afflicted by it.

There are, however, three reasons to dismiss quite conclusively the notion that the huge arms build up by Allende and his comrades was defensive. The first lies in the inherently violent and anti-constitutional behaviour of Allende and the UP from their initial year in power, that is at a time when no rational observer could imagine that civil war threatened. (This behaviour has already been described.) The second reason for dismissing the notion that the Chilean Left's military activity was defensive lies in an understanding of the attitudes of the Chilean armed forces, which were in truth extremely reluctant to intervene in politics at all, let alone overthrow the government by force. (This is dealt with in the next chapter.) But the third reason for rejecting the suggestion that Allende's aim was merely self-preservation is

²⁸ Reproduced in the *White Book*, Addendum no. 1, pp. 103-104

that there exists clear, detailed, publicly available evidence of the UP's plans for a bloody assault on the forces opposing them.

From March 1973 the UP had appointed a permanent "Security Committee", consisting of 65 members (5 Radicals, 15 Communists, 25 Socialists, and 10 each of the two MAPU factions). Each of the constituent groups also put in place its own preparations for the forthcoming coup d'état. For example, the Santiago regional division of the Communist Party on 30 June gave its units in the city detailed instructions. Every Party militant was to obtain a fire-arm and to gather inflammable material and store it in his house. The instructions noted that electricity installations and water works would be targets. An interesting gloss on the purpose for which (as was later discovered) *carabineros* badges were being stolen is provided in the Party instructions, where Communist insurgents are warned not to shoot at *carabineros* without checking first whether they were not in fact fellow Communists in disguise²⁹. Nor were the Socialists any less advanced in their military planning. Lengthy documents detail plans for infiltration into the ranks of the armed forces, for acts of sabotage, for street fighting, for the organization of "liberated zones", for seizure of broadcasting stations and so on³⁰.

But the most important document detailing the UP's plans for a violent take-over is one found on 13 September in the desk of a Communist former under-secretary of state for the Interior. This document and its translation, taken from the *White Book*, are re-produced here as Appendix B. Its authenticity has not been disputed. The intention it reveals was to use the National Independence Day celebrations to take, as the document puts it, "total power and impose the dictatorship of the proletariat". The high command of the armed forces and other dignitaries were to be invited to an official banquet at the Presidential Palace of La Moneda and then treacherously assassinated there by the GAP, Allende's personal bodyguard. Meanwhile strenuous efforts were to be made to keep the rest of the - now leaderless - armed forces in their barracks. Previously infiltrated Marxist officers were to work with armed Leftist forces in the neighbourhood to seize control. Radio stations would be taken over by the "popular forces". Opposition "elements", military and civilian, throughout Chile were to be arrested, taken away and then "eliminated". Anyone wishing in the shortest possible time to reach a judgment about the character and intentions of Salvador Allende and his colleagues need only read "Plan Z". Unfortunately for the UP, and fortunately for Chile, there was no opportunity to put it into effect.

²⁹ These instructions are reproduced in the *White Book*, p. 50

³⁰ *Ibid*, Documentary annex to chapter II, summarised on pp. 53-54

CHAPTER SIX

THE BATTLE FOR CHILE

The desperate final actions of Allende and his colleagues in power are only explicable if one assumes that they had resolved on some kind of swift revolutionary solution to their problems. Incidents multiplied. From late June the supporters of the UP were constantly and openly calling for the "workers" to be armed. Miguel Enriquez, leader of the MIR, proclaimed: "The working class is today a properly constituted army, resolved to struggle for its interests and to resist the attack of the reactionaries". At this time posters appeared all over Santiago calling upon the soldiers not to obey their officers in the case of military action. In July, the (second) national truckers' strike was met with considerable violence from the UP. In August, attempts by the Christian Democrats to dissuade Allende from his course proved entirely fruitless. In early September, both Allende and the Socialist leader, Altamirano, made uncompromising speeches threatening the "bourgeois state" with retribution by "the people".

The economy was in ruins. A survey conducted in a popular chain of cooperative stores in late 1972 had shown that out of a range of 3,000 basic household products previously sold, more than 2,500 were now unavailable. Rationing was introduced in January 1973. There was hyper-inflation. Queues lengthened so much that people were unable to go to work. Those who protested were beaten. Then Allende on 7 September publicly announced that there was now only enough flour left for three more days' bread. Famine was at the gate. It was the end.

The Chilean armed forces had by now at last begun to overcome their traditional disdain for involvement in politics. It was, indeed, Allende himself who had invited their leaders into the government to give him support and lend him legitimacy. In the face of the (first) October 1972 truckers' strike and the massive popular resistance to the government that accompanied it, Allende backed down and the following month called the chief of the general staff, General Carlos Prats, and other generals into the government. The ploy was successful from Allende's viewpoint, the opposition to him being reassured by the soldiers' presence alongside the Left-wing ideologues at the Cabinet table. It also, incidentally, had the useful consequence of the passing of a law on the control of arms which, though widely flouted, gave the armed forces the legal authority to search for suspected weapons caches and so allowed them to amass a large amount of useful intelligence prior to 11 September about the scale and direction of the armed threat. But there was also one large disadvantage. This was that their leaders' participation in government placed the military institutions in the invidious position of being tainted with policies which they had no real ability to moderate. That was humiliatingly demonstrated above all by the UP's introduction of its measure to create a monolithic socialist education system, without any prior consultation of the generals. The latter consequently resigned in disgust on 27 March 1973. Prats himself, politically ambitious and with evident UP sympathies, might have been prepared to try to continue to work with Allende. But he was becoming increasingly discredited.

There were by now ominous rumblings within the military. On 29 June a highly amateurish putsch, organised by a colonel in charge of a tank regiment, was easily suppressed by the army. Prats and other military figures briefly rejoined the government in August, but resigned only days later when the Chilean Chamber of Deputies voted its stinging rebuke of the government for its illegal and unconstitutional behaviour.

In all probability, the crucial event prompting key figures in the armed forces to decide that Allende's rule must be ended by force was the discovery at the beginning of August of a plot, devised at the highest levels of the UP, to incite a naval mutiny. The leadership of the MIR, of the Socialist Party and of one of the MAPU factions were all deeply involved, as was shown at the subsequent court martial hearings - still continuing at the time of the military coup of 11 September. Two Chilean warships then riding in Valparaiso harbour were to be seized and their officers murdered: it was intended to use the ships' guns to blast the city into submission. Another connected rising was simultaneously planned for the port of Talcahuano, site of the Chilean naval dockyards³¹.

There was also by now a strong feeling that most of the the present leaders of the armed forces had allowed themselves to be drawn too far into Allende's intrigues to retain their credibility. Prats seems to have undergone some kind of nervous collapse: it was precipitated by a Chilean woman driving by the general and sticking her tongue out at him, at which he had his chauffeur give chase, with Prats firing his pistol at the terrified motorist. On Prats' resignation Allende made a fateful decision by appointing General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte to replace him. Later the complacent Admiral Montero was replaced by the far tougher Admiral Jose Teribio Merino Castro, commander of the squadron at Valparaiso (who had seen the danger of the *autogolpe* at first hand) as head of the navy. The leadership of the airforce also passed to General Gustavo Leigh Guzman. The new leadership of the armed forces and the *carabineros* were not themselves ideologues, but their very professionalism made them determined to resist the imminent collapse into chaos: they were also at the time of the coup and later able to ensure the complete unity of the security forces and the loyalty (if not always obedience) of their men. Otherwise, the subsequently exaggerated stories of the carnage would almost certainly have had better foundation in reality.

The armed forces were now, therefore, becoming more capable of taking independent action. But public opinion was still frustrated by their restraint. Army officers were openly taunted for their failure to move against the government. The Chilean women had taken to throwing down corn in front of the soldiers' feet as a sign of contempt for the military's "chicken-hearted" failure to act. On 5 September a mass demonstration of women warned that if Allende were still in office on 11 September, they would picket the military barracks till the soldiers came out to remove him. A public meeting of students was also scheduled to be held on 11 September for the same purpose.

The armed forces - under its new leadership - finally ended their hesitation and struck at dawn on Tuesday 11 September. The military institutions were completely united - the army under General Pinochet, the navy under Admiral Merino, the airforce under General Leigh and the *carabineros* under General Mendoza. They were also remarkably effective, bypassing likely centres of resistance and taking immediate control of radio and television centres and the main government buildings. By eleven o'clock that morning the military had assumed control and Allende, his daughters and close associates were holed up, surrounded by troops, in La Moneda Palace.

³¹ *White Book*, pp. 28-29

Several offers were made to those inside the Palace to leave the country in safety, for the generals had no wish to see continued agitation, let alone cope with an embarrassing martyrdom. These offers were, however, refused. Then, in response to firing from within the Palace, a heavy aerial bombardment was launched. Abandoned by the "workers" on whose support Fidel Castro had urged his protegee to rely in his hour of need, Allende now agreed to leave the Palace with his party. His daughters did indeed leave, and Allende promised to follow. But when the deposed President's doctor, Patricio Guijon Klein, returned to collect his gas-mask (as he subsequently related), he arrived just in time to find Allende holding Castro's machine-gun to his own throat and preparing to fire. This Guijon was unable to prevent and he was still standing by the side of the former President's corpse when the soldiers burst into the room. For some years afterwards a doubly futile argument ensued as to whether Allende was killed or took his own life - futile firstly because there was an eye-witness to the suicide, but futile too because the justice or injustice of Allende's and the armed forces' actions is logically unaffected by the way in which the deposed President died. Presumably, though, the temptation for the opponents of Pinochet to tell just one more gruesome lie proved irresistible. In any case, this particularly unpleasant smear has clearly had its day: the Report of the Chilean Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up by President Patricio Aylwin and written largely by Pinochet's political opponents, has accepted that Allende indeed committed suicide.

The initial success of the military coup was complete, only seriously marred by the tragedy of Allende's own death. The military junta's *pronunciamento* was, indeed, greeted with widespread relief³². There was no general rising of workers living in the *cordones industriales*, to which Allende had histrionically threatened at one stage in his conflict with his opponents to withdraw. The armed forces were also able to release previously identified stocks of food which helped remove the imminent threat of famine and so relieved the air of panic that this had induced.

But the hard-line, well trained, highly armed Chilean Leftist paramilitaries and foreign extremists remained, and these now raised their own revolt against the new military government. The fighting was bitter, brutal and bloody and lasted for several months, much of it taking place in Santiago itself³³. In the course of the struggle, 1261 people lost their lives, 82 of them being members of the armed forces. The disparity between the sides is not very surprising: the Left had little popular support and was in disarray, the armed forces were seen as defenders of order and the constitution and were united. In spite of Cuban support, interestingly confirmed many years later in the course of one of Castro's show-trials, the Left were heavily defeated.

Several observations are relevant here which put these events into their historical context. First, given that 2279 people (including 254 victims of Leftist terrorism) are believed to have been killed over the *whole* seventeen-year period of military rule, the above figures show that *about half of these* died in the heat of what was in effect a short but bloody civil war, not subsequent "repression".

³² The text is reproduced in the *White Book*, Tenth document, pp. 241-242

³³ The following is based upon the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, analysed by Senor Hermogenes Perez de Arce in his aforementioned book.

Secondly, although it is possible to dispute the numbers killed - after all, on the one hand those who committed murders had every reason for covering them up, and on the other hand a number of those who "disappeared" may have changed their identities because of what they had done or intended to do - these figures from the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee do highlight the mendacious exaggerations of that time, and since. Radio Moscow's figures for the numbers killed in the direct aftermath of the military coup were 700,000. (Quite how many people the Moscow apparatchiks thought actually lived in Chile is unclear). Senator Edward Kennedy spoke with great emotion and complete ignorance of the (somewhat modest) Mapocho River, that runs through Santiago, running red with the blood of those slaughtered. The truth is that this Chilean civil war claimed far fewer lives than those in Mexico or Nicaragua, let alone Cuba. And it altogether pales into insignificance before the bloodshed in the Spanish Civil War that claimed some one million lives - a fact that does not seem to have registered with Judge Garzon and Pinochet's other Spanish enemies.

Thirdly, however, it is clear that during this early period many old scores were settled, as is the case with civil wars, and without doubt a number of atrocities committed. Soldiers, *carabineros*, farmers whose lands had been violently seized in the *tomas*, peasants intimidated by the MIR and so on - all had strong reasons for using the circumstances of the coup to exact revenge. There is though no evidence whatever of a deliberate policy of extermination pursued by the *junta* at this or indeed any stage. (The case of the DINA, Chilean Secret Police, will be examined shortly). As order returned, a number of those proved to have committed such brutalities were punished, though others clearly were not. Without excusing what happened, these reflections help explain it - as does the fact that many of those who died are known to have been involved closely with the Left's armed uprising against the new military government. Of course, it is also true (as the figures for known political affiliations of those who died, given in the Truth and Reconciliation Committee Report show) that a number of these people were not thus involved. It is also understandable that their friends and relatives should be grief-stricken.

But the brutal truth is that such casualties are the inevitable price paid when order in society is broken by civil war, especially when huge numbers of arms have already been distributed - witness most recently the bloody civil war that rocked Albania. Who authorised whom to do what on either side is murky and is unlikely to become less so more than twenty-five years later. But those who still demand "justice" for the victims of that struggle should remember that it was Salvador Allende and his advisers, the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the MAPU, the Radicals, Fidel Castro and the foreign extremists, *not* the Chilean armed forces, who destroyed the established order, brought the country to the brink of economic, social and political anarchy and flooded Chile with arms in preparation for their planned overthrow of the state. Allende's surviving former advisers and other leading figures in the UP government and the MIR should be the first to answer for the horrors that gripped Chile at this time. And the next to appear in the dock should be Fidel Castro, who assisted and encouraged the process at every stage.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PINOCHET'S ACHIEVEMENT

Military coups in Latin America have been two a penny; but not in Chile. Military rulers have come and gone; but not rulers like General Pinochet. After the first year or so when the professional soldiers who had been forced to take a political role they had never wanted sought to overcome their inexperience, Pinochet established a clear programme for the reconstruction of Chile out of the rubble left by Allende. There were errors from time to time along the way; some abuses of power and acts of brutality were perpetrated and went unpunished. But by and large the programme was followed through consistently and honestly. And the outcome was overwhelmingly positive for Chile, for South America and indeed for the wider world.

The primary and continuing obligation on the new government was the restoration of order. (It is only people in well-established Western democracies that under-rate the importance of order: those who have experienced anarchy, or revolution, or Third World kleptocracy are better informed.) The military defeat of the Left's uprising at the end of 1973 and start of 1974 was the precondition for this. But it was not a sufficient condition.

In June 1974 the National Intelligence Agency (DINA - *Direccion de Inteligencia Nacional*) was set up to continue the work against terrorism and subversion. DINA's successes were real. But it was also between now and DINA's abolition by Pinochet in 1977 that the least excusable abuses were committed, in some cases by DINA's top personnel. The most notable - and by far the stupidest - of these was the assassination of the former Chilean Foreign Minister, Orlando Letelier, and his American assistant, by means of a car bomb in central Washington DC on 21 September 1976. For their involvement in this crime the Director and the Chief of Operations of DINA were tried and convicted in Chile. They are still in prison, having been specifically exempted from the 1978 Amnesty Law - by contrast, those sentenced in America for their involvement have been freed.

Such abuses are, of course, deplorable. But there is absolutely no evidence of General Pinochet's involvement in them. Moreover, there should be no doubt of the reality of the threat that the country faced, and it was essentially this continuing threat that guaranteed miscreants in the security apparatus a degree of impunity. The facts speak for themselves. For example, in 1974 there were 52 members of the armed forces and police killed or wounded in terrorist attacks; in 1975 there were 25 such cases. There was then a lull in terrorist activity, though not in the Marxists' determination to overthrow the regime: in 1979, the Chilean Communist Party Secretary, Luis Corvalan, threatened that Chile "could become a second Nicaragua"; in 1980 he envisaged a new era of "acute violence". And indeed the early 1980s saw a large upsurge of terrorist attacks as communist forces in the "Manuel Rodriguez Communist Front" regrouped in Chile. The action was in fact principally organised from Cuba, as was recognised by the US State Department in a report to the Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs on 14 December 1981. The attempt to destabilise Chile was again defeated.

Significantly it was at the very time when Pinochet had already begun to set Chile back along the course to democracy that there was the most serious single attempt to destroy him. In

early 1986 the Chilean security forces discovered a huge cache of weapons supplied by Cuba, enough to arm 5000 men - yet it was only, it seems, part of a larger consignment whose location is still unknown. Some of this undiscovered weaponry in the possession of 70 terrorists was used in a carefully planned assassination attempt on Pinochet later that year, which spared the General but resulted in the death of five of his escorts. Nor was it just security personnel who were victims that year: altogether in 1986 23 died as a result of terrorism, including Metro- and bus-passengers and pedestrians. In the face of such continued Soviet-backed, Cuban-sponsored, communist-perpetrated terrorist action it is hardly surprising that the Chilean government clamped down. And when governments clamp down some abuses occur. But the fact is that order is preferable to disorder and law to lawlessness. Pinochet's action restored law and order to Chile.

Order was necessary if the right to private property was to be upheld, after the Allende government's contempt for it. And it was essentially upon respect for property that Chile's new prosperity under Pinochet - a prosperity which continues under the present Chilean government - was based. This is not the place to describe the details of that policy. Suffice it to say that it was Thatcherite before Thatcher, though with a tougher stance towards the trade unions and a more consistent commitment to monetarism and markets. Most dramatic was the slashing of controls on imports and exchange and investment, which amounted to a complete reversal of the statist, protectionist policies that for decades had kept Chileans poor. The result was that Chile emerged from the seventeen years of Pinochet's government as a country which was rapidly becoming part of the First rather than the Third World, the envy of Latin America and a model - as for example in its pensions system - for other Western countries.

Nor did Pinochet benefit from favourable external conditions: far from it. For most of his period in power he was overshadowed by some international cloud or other. Moreover, the 1974 oil shock with its knock-on effect on raw material prices hit Chile very hard, just as it was still trying to cope with Allende's legacy: in 1975 economic output contracted by 13 per cent. Again, the debt crisis sparked by Mexico's default in the early 1980s had a devastating effect on over-indebted Chile: its GNP fell again by 13 per cent in 1982 and 4 per cent in 1983. But these crises were overcome. Growth in other years was healthy, over 3 per cent: in most it soared, over 6 per cent (1977-1981, 1984, 1987-1989). And to the dismay of the Socialist doomsters who had envisaged a poverty-induced rising of the masses, the country's general standard of living rose dramatically. A comparison between living conditions in 1973 and now bears witness to what was achieved by Pinochet's and his advisers' radical turning away from socialism:

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1996</u>
GDP/Per capita (US\$ 1995)	1,775	4,737
Inflation	508 %	6.6 %
Infant mortality rates (per thousand births)	66	13
Access to drinking water (urban)	67%	98%
Life Expectations	64 years	73 years

(Source: T. Flores, Balance Economico del Regimen Militar 1974-1989, *Revista Libertad y Desarrollo*)

Those who draw attention to the deaths and disappearances, real and alleged, of the Pinochet years should have the honesty also to take into account the number of babies who survived, elderly people who stayed alive and houses which were supplied with running water - to name just a few of the material benefits of military rule. And as with Margaret Thatcher's, the effect of Pinochet's economic policies was not just to rescue the country from socialism but also to convert his once socialist or socialistic opponents to the benefits of free enterprise. Chile has thus not just become more prosperous, it is likely to *stay* more prosperous, because of what Pinochet accomplished.

Pinochet's third achievement - the restoration of democracy - could not have been accomplished without first establishing order and prosperity. But paradoxically it was also important for him to suppress political activity entirely for a number of years in order to make conditions safe for true democracy to re-emerge. One can, of course, argue about whether the time-scale envisaged by Pinochet was too protracted, that he should have handed power back to the party politicians earlier. This may be so: but on the other hand, it is worth recalling that as late as 1986 Chile was faced with a major threat of Cuban-backed terrorism, and that the world since the fall of the Berlin Wall and of the Soviet Union looks a good deal safer than it did during those years of Chile's military government.

Pinochet's policy of banning political activity for a number of years after the military coup was, though, surely in principle justified. As the earlier account of the period before 11 September 1973 shows, Chile was facing total polarisation and the real threat of civil war. Not just the whole of the Left but a substantial section of the Centre had become committed to economic and social policies which directly or indirectly led to the breakdown that brought the military into power. It was necessary to give time for tempers to cool, for political elements which were fundamentally opposed to lawful, constitutional order to be suppressed, and for a new generation of political leaders to emerge, able and willing to take over a modern, prosperous and stable Chile.

Which brings us to an important matter of terminology. The standard, abusive description of Pinochet as a "dictator" only has any justification if one is specifically referring to the original Roman concept of dictatorship, that is of a leader constitutionally summoned to take on all power for a limited period in order to cope with a grave emergency. Otherwise, it is extremely misleading. Pinochet's aim was temporarily to free Chile of all politics, even Right-wing politics. So he did not start up his own party or movement or even encourage other parties and movements. He relied on professional soldiers and economists and other non-political figures to run the country's affairs under his over-all control. Contrary to the more absurd news commentaries about him, he was and is not, of course, a fascist, being rather an old fashioned conservative nationalist and pragmatic believer in free enterprise. There was no totalitarian element in his rule, no attempt at ideological indoctrination, no personality cult - in fact nothing comparable with communism or fascism or Nazism, and nothing similar either to Castro's Cuba.

Once Pinochet and his colleagues (for the other member of the *junta* were not unimportant, particularly in the early years) had reestablished stability and created the framework for prosperity, they began to put in place the framework for a gradual return to ordinary politics.

In 1978 most of the "state of siege" special powers and the curfew were ended. For the first time civilians became the majority in the Cabinet.

There was also in 1978 a general amnesty for political prisoners about which something should be said because of its relevance to the "Pinochet case". The main beneficiaries of this amnesty were not Pinochet and the military but rather the Left, though you would hardly think it now. Under it 1475 left-wingers, previously condemned by military courts for subversive or terrorist activity, were released; so were 578 military and police personnel.. Far from being considered an obstacle to peace and reconciliation, the amnesty was widely welcomed as a generous move, notably in a statement by the archbishop of Santiago. This is particularly significant since by and large the Catholic hierarchy in Chile were hostile to Pinochet. (The present archbishop of Santaigo, fearful of the consequences of Pinochet's detention, has recently noted: "Whatever the outcome of the process, Chile will never be the same, and we will all carry the burden").

At about this time (1978-79) a new constitution was prepared in cooperation with a committee of distinguished figures; it was published on 8 August 1980. A highly charged political campaign then preceded a plebiscite in which 66 per cent approved the proposals : the new constitution accordingly went into effect in March 1981. As part of the terms of this new constitutional settlement, Pinochet himself was to remain in power for a transitional eight-year period, at the end of which a single candidate would be chosen by the *junta* and presented for popular endorsement in a further referendum. If that candidate did not receive 50 per cent of the vote, there would follow open multi-candidate elections. In April 1987 the ban on public meetings by political parties was lifted and campaigning began. On 5 October 1988 at the ensuing referendum Pinochet, the *junta's* candidate, won the endorsement of 44 per cent of voters - 7 per cent more than Allende in 1970 - but insufficient to stay in office. President Pinochet immediately respected the constitution and announced that he was stepping down. At the ensuing elections in 1989 the Opposition Christian Democrat candidate, Patricio Aylwin, was victorious. Democracy had thus first been saved and then later fully restored - thanks to the vilified "dictator" against whom the vituperation still continues unabated.

Order, stability, legality and prosperity are the most important elements of Pinochet's legacy to Chile. They were achieved at a cost, some of which was probably avoidable, but most of which was not. The famous Russian dissident, Vladimir Bukovsky, once observed in relation to the old proverb (much quoted by Marxists) to the effect that "you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs", that he, Bukovsky, had seen plenty of broken eggs under communism but never tasted any omelette. Some eggs - too many, probably - were also broken under Pinochet; but surely Latin America never saw a larger omelette.

Vladimir Bukovsky, in fact, received his freedom when he was exchanged by Pinochet for the Chilean Communist leader, Luis Corvalan. While Bukovsky was subject in the Gulag to severe mental and physical torture, Luis Corvalan, apprehended by the Chilean military when hiding under his bed at the time of the coup, has never claimed to have been so treated in his detention camp on Dawson Island. And, as a final bitter-sweet comment on the comparison, all the while that Corvalan was in Moscow, diligently planning Pinochet's overthrow, the Chilean government was regularly sending him his monthly pension.

The injustice that has befallen Senator Pinochet, when he paid one too many visits to Britain, is nicely symbolised in this contrast between the treatment of Corvalan and of Bukovsky, representing the contrast between the millions who have lived more or less tolerable lives under pro-Western authoritarian rule on the one hand, and the hundred or so millions who have lost their lives altogether under Marxist regimes on the other. Yet while Augusto Pinochet is treated as a monstrous former dictator, Fidel Castro, for example, is still hailed as a respected world leader.

In spite of the between 15,000 and 17,000 Cubans executed by firing squads, the more than a hundred million people sent at one time or another to camps, prisons and forced labour, and the thousands who have drowned trying to escape, the Cuban tyrant seems immune from serious censure, let alone prosecution³⁴. But Pinochet is imprisoned, his supporters harrassed and his personal staff humiliated. Castro took over one of the wealthiest states in Latin America and will leave it utterly impoverished. Pinochet returned Chile from the abyss of economic collapse and created a Chilean economic miracle. Forty years on, Castro shows no sign of yielding power to democracy; Pinochet established a constitution, obeyed it and accepted the will of the electorate.

All those who demand that Senator Pinochet be "brought to justice" should reflect on such things and reflect too that he, like anyone else, has the right to have the full facts known and considered by those who would otherwise leap to judgement based largely on prejudice and ignorance. A man is innocent until proved guilty, it has sometimes seemed, unless he committed the one truly unforgivable sin - that is, to defeat communism openly, totally, and permanently in a country on which it had set its sights.

At the beginning of this pamphlet it was noted that, for all the deeply damaging consequences, the Pinochet affair has had the benefit of focusing British public opinion on fundamental questions about the role of nation states and the authority of democratically elected politicians. It is also, paradoxically, true that, whatever any particular court decides, the verdict of history on Pinochet is now likely to be more favourable than if he had been left to live and die in peaceful obscurity in Chile. This is because those who do understand something of what was at stake some twenty-five years ago in that distant country have been forced to tell the world about it. And it is just possible that the world, for its part, may listen and even learn.

³⁴ Figures from P. Fontaine, "L' Amerique latine a l'epreuve des communismes", in *Le Livre noir du communisme* (Paris, 1997), pp. 707-725.

Appendix A:

Violent Deaths under Allende

(This portion of the document will be available shortly)

Appendix B:

"Plan Z"

(This portion of the document will be available shortly)