

Military dictatorship of Chile (1973–90)

The **military dictatorship of Chile** (Spanish: *dictadura militar de Chile*) was an authoritarian military government that ruled Chile between 1973 and 1990. The dictatorship was established after the democratically-elected socialist government of Salvador Allende was overthrown by a CIA-backed *coup d'état* on 11 September 1973. During this time, the country was ruled by a *military junta* headed by General Augusto Pinochet. The military used the perceived "breakdown" of democracy and the economic crisis that took place during Allende's presidency to justify its seizure of power. The dictatorship presented its mission as a "national reconstruction."

The regime was characterized by the systematic suppression of political parties and the persecution of dissidents to an extent unprecedented in the *history of Chile*. Overall, the regime left over 3,000 dead or missing, tortured tens of thousands of prisoners,^[1] and drove an estimated 200,000 Chileans into exile.^[2] The dictatorship's effects on Chilean political and economic life continue to be felt. Two years after its ascension reactionary *neoliberal* economic reforms were implemented, in sharp contrast to Allende's leftist policies, advised by a team of free-market economists educated in American universities known as the *Chicago Boys*. Later, in 1980, the regime replaced the *Chilean Constitution of 1925* with a *new constitution*.

Pinochet's plans to remain in power were foregone in 1988 when the regime accepted democratic displacement in a *referendum* that opened the way for the *reestablishment of democracy* in 1990. However, the military remained out of civilian control in the years after the end of junta itself had lost power.^[3]

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Economy and free market reforms

Republic of Chile
<i>República de Chile</i>
1973–1990
 Flag Coat of arms
Anthem Himno Nacional de Chile

Capital
Santiago
Languages
Spanish
Government
Military dictatorship
President
 • 1974–90
Augusto Pinochet
President of the Junta
 • 1974–81
Augusto Pinochet
Legislature
Government Junta
Historical era
Cold War
 • Coup d'état
September 11, 1973
 • Constitution
March 11, 1981
 • Plebiscite
October 5, 1988
 • Transition to democracy
March 11, 1990
Population
 • 1973 est.
10,095,485

1975–81
 1982–83
 1984–90
 Evaluation
 Social consequences

Foreign relations

United States
 United Kingdom
 France
 Peru
 Spain
 Foreign aid
 Cuban involvement

Cultural life

Plebiscite and return to civilian rule

1988 plebiscite
 1989 general elections

Legacy

Notes

References

External links

1980 est. 1990 est.	11,178,817 13,187,821
Currency	Chilean escudo(1973–75) Chilean peso (1975–90)
Preceded by	Succeeded by
 Presidential Republic (1925–73)	Chilean transition to democracy 

Rise to power

Since 1970, after he narrowly won a three-way election, Chile was ruled by President Salvador Allende, the first democratically elected Marxist to become president of a Latin American country through open elections. The United States government actively attempted to destabilize the Allende government, with U.S. President Richard Nixon ordering extensive use of economic warfare for this purpose.^[4] The Nixon administration also used the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to mount a major destabilization campaign.^[5] As the CIA revealed in 2000, "In the 1960s and the early 1970s, as part of the US Government policy to try to influence events in Chile, the CIA undertook specific covert action projects in Chile ... to discredit Marxist-leaning political leaders, especially Dr. Salvador Allende, and to strengthen and encourage their civilian and military opponents to prevent them from assuming power."^[6] The CIA worked with right-wing Chilean politicians, military personnel, and journalists to undermine socialism in Chile.^[7]

On 15 April 1973, workers from the El Teniente mining camp had ceased working, demanding higher wages. The strike lasted 76 days and cost the government severely in lost revenues. One of the strikers, Luis Bravo Morales, was shot dead in Rancagua city. On June 29, the Blindados No. 2 tank regiment under the command of Colonel Roberto Souper, attacked La Moneda, Chile's presidential palace. Instigated by the anti-Marxist militia Patria y Libertad, the armoured cavalry soldiers hoped other units would be inspired to join them. Instead, armed units led by generals Carlos Prats and Augusto Pinochet quickly put down the coup attempt. In late July, 40,000 truckers, squeezed by price controls and rising costs, tied up transportation in a nationwide strike that lasted 37 days, costing the government \$6 million USD a day.^[8] Two weeks before the coup, public dissatisfaction with rising prices and food shortages led to protests like the one at the Plaza de la Constitución which had been dispersed with tear gas.^[9] Allende also clashed with Chile's largest circulation newspaper El Mercurio. Tax-evasion charges were trumped up against the newspaper and its director arrested.^[10] The Allende government found it impossible to control inflation, which grew to more than 300 percent by September,^[11] further dividing Chileans over the Allende government and its policies.

On August 22, 1973, the Chamber of Deputies passed, by a vote of 81 to 47, a resolution calling for President Allende to respect the constitution. The measure failed to obtain the two-thirds majority in the Senate constitutionally required to convict the president of abuse of power, but the resolution still represented a challenge to Allende's legitimacy. The military seized on the widespread discontent and on the Deputies' resolution to then launch the September 11, 1973 *coup d'état*, as troops surrounded La Moneda

Palace, Allende died later that day of self-inflicted gunshot wounds.^[12] The military installed themselves in power as a Military Government Junta, composed of the heads of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Carabineros (police). Once the Junta was in power, General Augusto Pinochet soon consolidated his control over the government. Since he was the commander-in-chief of the oldest branch of the military forces (the Army), he was made the titular head of the junta, and soon after President of Chile. The coup received active support from the CIA, and once the *junta* had taken over, the United States immediately recognized the new regime and helped it consolidate power^[5]

Dictatorship violence

Suppression of political activity

Following their takeover of power in 1973, the Government Junta formally banned the socialist, Marxist and other leftist parties that had constituted former President Allende's Popular Unity coalition.^[13] On September 13, the junta dissolved the Congress and outlawed or suspended all political activities in addition to suspending the 1925 constitution. All political activity was declared "in recess". Eduardo Frei, Allende's predecessor as president, initially supported the coup along with his Christian Democratic colleagues. Later, they assumed the role of a loyal opposition to the military rulers, but soon lost most of their influence.

Meanwhile, left-wing Christian Democrats like Radomiro Tomic were jailed or forced into exile.^{[14][15]} The Catholic Church, which at first expressed its gratitude to the armed forces for saving the country from the horrors of a "Marxist dictatorship" became, under the leadership of Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, the most outspoken critic of the regime's social and economic policies.

Human rights violations

The military rule was characterized by systematic suppression of all political dissidence. Scholars later described this as a "politicide" (or "political genocide").^[16] Steve J. Stern spoke of a politicide to describe "a systematic project to destroy an entire way of doing and understanding politics and governance."^[17]

The worst violence occurred within the first three months of the coup, with the number of suspected leftists killed or "disappeared" (*desaparecidos*) reaching several thousand.^[18] In the days immediately following the coup, the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs informed Henry Kissinger that the National Stadium was being used to hold 5,000 prisoners, and as late as 1975, the CIA was still reporting that up to 3,811 were still imprisoned there.^[19] Between the day of the coup and November 1973, as many as 40,000 political prisoners were held there.^{[20][21]} 1,850 of them were killed, another 1,300 are missing since then.^[21] Some of the most famous cases of *desaparecidos* are Charles Horman, a U.S. citizen who was killed during the coup itself,^[22] Chilean songwriter Víctor Jara, and the October 1973 Caravan of Death (*Caravana de la Muerte*) where at least 70 persons were killed. Among the most infamous methods of murder involved Pinochet's henchmen dropping pregnant women out of aeroplanes. He believed this was a way of avenging soldiers killed by Allende's supporters. He was quoted to have said "If you kill the bitch, you kill off the offspring."^[23] Other instances of systematic murder include Operation Colombo and Operation Condor.

Following the 1988 plebiscite, the Rettig Commission, a multipartisan effort by the Aylwin administration to discover the truth about the human-rights violations, listed a number of torture and detention centers (such as Colonia Dignidad, the ship Esmeralda or Víctor Jara Stadium), and found that at least 3,200 people were killed or disappeared by the regime. Later, the 2004 Valech Report confirmed the figure of 3,200 deaths but reduced the estimated number of disappearances. It tells of some



Book burning in Chile following the 1973 coup that installed the Pinochet regime.

“ He shut down parliament, suffocated political life, banned trade unions, and made Chile his sultanate. His government

28,000 arrests in which the majority of those detained were incarcerated and in a great many cases tortured.^[25] Some 30,000 Chileans were exiled,^{[26][27][28]} particularly to Argentina; however, they were followed in their exile by the DINA secret police, in the frame of Operation Condor which linked South American dictatorships together against political opponents.^[29] Some 20,000–40,000 Chilean exiles were holders of passports stamped with the letter "L" (which stood for *lista nacional*), identifying them as *persona non grata* and had to seek permission before entering the country.^[30] According to a study in Latin American Perspectives,^[31] at least 200,000 Chileans (about 2% of Chile's 1973 population) were forced into exile. Additionally, hundreds of thousands left the country in the wake of the economic crises that followed the military coup during the 1970s and 1980s.^[31] In 2003, an article published by the International Committee of the Fourth International claimed that "Of a population of barely 11 million, more than 4,000 were executed or 'disappeared,' hundreds of thousands were detained and tortured, and almost a million fled the country"^[32]

disappeared 3,200 opponents, arrested 30,000 (torturing thousands of them) ... Pinochet's name will forever be linked to the Desaparecidos, the Caravan of Death, and the institutionalized torture that took place in the Villa Grimaldi complex."

— Thor Halvorssen, president of the Human Rights Foundation National Review^[24]

Rudolph Rummel estimates 10,000 killed during Pinochet's regime, with 30,000 being the highest possible number.^[33] Rummel notes an estimate by Sivard that 3,000 miners were killed by the Chilean army in a dispute in 1987.^[34] Other sources place the number of all the victims of the dictatorship as high as 15,000 killed and 2,000 disappeared.^[35] In 1996, human rights activists announced they had presented another 899 cases of people who had disappeared or been killed during the dictatorship, taking the total of known victims to 3,197, of whom 2,095 were reported killed and 1,102 missing.^[36] In 2011, the Chilean government officially recognized 36,948 survivors of torture and political imprisonment, as well as 3,095 people killed or disappeared at the hands of the military government.^[37]



Some funeral urns of political activists executed by the Chilean military dictatorship, from 1973 to 1990, in the cemetery of Santiago

Leftist guerrilla groups and their sympathizers were also hit hard during the military regime. The MIR commander, Andrés Pascal Allende, has stated that the Marxist guerrillas lost 1,500–2,000 fighters killed or disappeared.^[38] Among the killed and disappeared during the military regime were at least 663 MIR guerrillas.^[39] The Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front stated that 49 FPMR guerrillas were killed and hundreds tortured.^[40]

According to the Latin American Institute on Mental Health and Human Rights, 200,000 people were affected by "extreme trauma"; this figure includes individuals executed, tortured, forcibly exiled, or having their immediate relatives put under detention.^[41] 316 women have reported to have subject to rape by soldiers and

agents of the dictatorship, however the number is believed to much larger due to the preference of many women to avoid talking about this. Twenty pregnant women have declared to have suffered abortion due to torture.^[42] In the words of Alejandra Matus detained women were doubly punished, first for being "leftists" and second for not conforming to their ideal of women usually being called "perra" (lit. "bitch").^[43]

Several scholars including Paul Zwier,^[44] Peter Winn^[45] and human rights organizations^[46] have characterized the dictatorship as a police state exhibiting "repression of public liberties, the elimination of political exchange, limiting freedom of speech, abolishing the right to strike, freezing wages."^[47]

Fake combats

Starting in the late 1970s the regime begun to use a tactic of faking combats, usually known by its Spanish name: "falsos enfrentamientos".^[48] This meant that dissidents who were murdered outright had their deaths reported in media as if they had occurred in a mutual exchange of gunfire. This was done with support of journalists who "reported" the supposed events, in some cases the fake combats were also staged. The faked combat tactic ameliorated criticism of the regime implicitly putting culpability on the victim. It is thought that the killing of the MIR leader Miguel Enríquez in 1974 could be an early case of a faked combat. The

faked combats reinforced the dictatorship narrative on the existence of an "internal war" which it used to justify its existence.^[49] A particular fake combat event, lasting from September 8th to 9th 1983, occurred when forces of the CNI lobbed grenades into a house, detonating the structure and killing the two men and a woman who were in the building. The agents would later state, with help from the Chilean press, that the people in the house had fired on them previously from their cars and had escaped to the house. The official story became that the three suspects had caused the explosion themselves by trying to burn and destroy incriminating evidence. Such actions had the effect of justifying the existence of heavily armed forces in Chile. And by extension, justified the dictatorship's conduct against such "violent" offenders.^[50]

Politics and power within the dictatorship

Pinochet–Leigh conflict

In the 1970s junta members Gustavo Leigh and Augusto Pinochet clashed on several occasions beginning in the day of the 1973 Chilean coup d'état Leigh criticized Pinochet for having joined the coup very late and then pretending to keep all power for himself. In December 1974 Leigh opposed the proposal to name Pinochet president of Chile. Leigh recalls about that moment that, "Pinochet was furious, he hit the board, broke the glass, injured his hand a little and bled. Then, Merino and Mendoza told me I should sign, because if not the junta would split. I signed.". Leigh's primary concern was Pinochet's consolidating of the legislative and executive branches of government under the new government. In particular, Pinochet's decision to intact a plebiscite without formally alerting the other junta members.^[51] Leigh, although a fervent supporter of the regime and hater of marxist ideology, had already taken steps to separate the executive and legislative branches. Pinochet is said to have been angered by Leigh's continued founding of a structure to divide the executive and legislative branches, eventually leading to Pinochet consolidating power and Leigh being dumped from the regime.^[52] Leigh tried to fight his dismissal from the military and government junta but on July 24, 1978 his office was blocked by paratroopers. In accordance with legal rights established by the junta government, its members could not be dismissed without evidence of impairment. So the Pinochet and junta members had Leigh declared unfit.^{[53][54]} After a prolonged period of disagreements with Pinochet, Leigh was dismissed from the junta in 1978 and replaced by General Hernando Matthei.^[55]

Another dictatorship member critical of Pinochet, Arturo Yovane, was removed from his post as minister of mining in 1974 and appointed ambassador at the new Chilean embassy in Tehran.^[56]

Civilian collaborators

Over time the dictatorship incorporated civilians into the government. Many of the Chicago boys joined the government, and Pinochet was largely sympathetic to them. This sympathy, scholar Peter Winn explains, was indebted to the fact that the Chicago boys were technocrats and thus fitted Pinochet's self-image of being "above politics".^[57] Pinochet was impressed by their assertiveness as well as by their links to the financial world of the United States.^[57]

Another group of civilians that collaborated extensively with the regime were the Gremialists, whose movement started in 1966 in the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile.^[58] The founder of the Gremialist movement, lawyer Jaime Guzmán, never assumed any official position in the military dictatorship but he remained one of the closest collaborators with Pinochet, playing an important ideological role. He participated in the design of important speeches of Pinochet, and provided frequent political and doctrinal advice and consultancy.^[59]

According to scholar Carlos Huneeus the Gremialists and the Chicago Boys shared a long-term power strategy and were linked to each other in many ways.^[58] In Chile, it has been very hard for the outside world to fully understand the role that everyday civilians played in keeping Pinochet's government afloat. Partly because there has been scant research into the topic, partly because those who did help the regime from 1973 to 1990 have been unwilling to explore their own part. One of the exemptions being an Univision interview with Osvaldo Romo Mena, a civilian torturer in 1995, recounting his actions. Osvaldo Romo died while incarcerated for the murder of three political opponents. For the most part, civilian corroborators with Pinochet have not broken the code of silence held by the military of the 1970s to 1990s.^[60]

Constitution of 1980

Establishing a new constitution was a core issue for the dictatorship since it provided a mean of legitimization.^[3] For this purpose the junta selected notable civilians willing to join the draft commission. Dissidents to the dictatorship were not represented in the commission.^[61]

Chile's new constitution was approved in a national plebiscite held on September 11, 1980. The constitution was approved by 66% of voters under a process which has been described as "highly irregular and undemocratic."^[62] Critics of the 1980 Constitution argue that the constitution was created not to build a democracy, but to consolidate power within the central government while limiting the amount of sovereignty allowed to the people with little political presence.^[63] The constitution came into force on March 1, 1981.

Removal of César Mendoza

In 1985, due to the Caso Degollados scandal ("case of the slit throats"), General César Mendoza resigned and was replaced by General Rodolfo Stange.^[55]

Youth policy

One of the first measures of the dictatorship was to set up a Secretaría Nacional de la Juventud (SNJ, National Youth Office). This was done on October 28 1973, even before the Declaration of Principles of the junta made in March 1974. This was a way of mobilizing sympathetic elements of the civil society in support for the dictatorship. SNJ was created by advise of Jaime Guzmán, being an example of the dictatorship adopting a Gremialist thought.^[64] From 1975 to 1980 the SNJ arranged a series of ritualized acts in cerro Chacarillas reminiscent of Francoist Spain. The policy towards the sympathetic youth contrasted with the murder, surveillance and forced disappearances the dissident youth faced from the regime. Most of the documents of the SNJ would have been destroyed by the dictatorship in 1988.^[64]

Opposition

Attacks on military personnel

One of the counter-Pinochet government organizations was named MIR, Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, and it conducted several operations against the Pinochet government until the late 1980s. MIR assassinated the head of the Army Intelligence school, Lieutenant Roger Vergara, with machine gun fire in the late 1970s. The MIR also executed an attack on the base of the Chilean Secret Police (Centro Nacional de Informacion), as well as several attempts on the lives of carabinero officials and a judge of the Supreme Court in Chile.^[65] Throughout the beginning years of the dictatorship the MIR was low-profile, but in August 1981 the MIR successfully killed the military leader of Santiago, General Carol Urzua Ibanez. Attacks on Chilean military official increased in the early 1980s, with the MIR killing several security forces personnel on a variety of occasions through extensive use of planted bombs in police stations or machine gun use^[66]

Church opposition to human rights violations

Jornadas de Protesta Nacional

Economy and free market reforms

After the military took over the government in 1973, a period of dramatic economic changes began. The Chilean economy was still faltering in the months following the coup. As the military junta itself was not particularly skilled in remedying the persistent economic difficulties, it appointed a group of Chilean economists who had been educated in the United States at the University of Chicago. Given financial and ideological support from Pinochet, the U.S., and international financial institutions, the Chicago Boys

advocated laissez-faire, free-market, neoliberal, and fiscally conservative policies, in stark contrast to the extensive nationalization and centrally-planned economic programs supported by Allende.^[67] Chile was drastically transformed from an economy isolated from the rest of the world, with strong government intervention, into a liberalized, world-integrated economy, where market forces were left free to guide most of the economy's decisions.^[67]

From an economic point of view, the era can be divided into two periods. The first, from 1975 to 1982, corresponds to the period when most of the reforms were implemented. The period ended with the international debt crisis and the collapse of the Chilean economy. At that point, unemployment was extremely high, above 20 percent, and a large proportion of the banking sector had become bankrupt. The following period was characterized by new reforms and economic recovery. Some economists argue that the recovery was due to an about-face turnaround of Pinochet's free market policy, since he nationalized many of the same industries that were nationalized under Allende and fired the Chicago Boys from their government posts.^[68]



Estadio Nacional de Chile as a concentration camp after the coup.

1975–81

Chile's main industry, copper mining, remained in government hands, with the 1980 Constitution declaring them "inalienable,"^[69] but new mineral deposits were open to private investment.^[69] Capitalist involvement was increased, the Chilean pension system and healthcare were privatized, and Superior Education was also placed in private hands. One of the junta's economic moves was fixing the exchange rate in the early 1980s, leading to a boom in imports and a collapse of domestic industrial production; this together with a world recession caused a serious economic crisis in 1982, where GDP plummeted by 14%, and unemployment reached 33%. At the same time, a series of massive protests were organized, trying to cause the fall of the regime, which were efficiently repressed.

1982–83

In 1982-1983 Chile witnessed a severe economic crisis with a surge in unemployment and a meltdown of the financial sector.^[70] 16 out of 50 financial institutions faced bankruptcy.^[71] In 1982 the two biggest banks were nationalized to prevent an even worse credit crunch. In 1983 another five banks were nationalized and two banks had to be put under government supervision.^[72] The central bank took over foreign debts. Critics ridiculed the economic policy of the Chicago Boys as "Chicago way to socialism".^[73]

1984–90

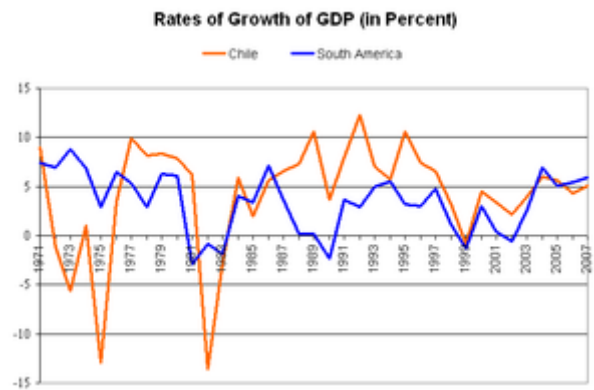
After the economic crisis, Hernán Büchi became Minister of Finance from 1985 to 1989, introducing a return to a free market economic policy. He allowed the peso to float and reinstated restrictions on the movement of capital in and out of the country. He deleted some bank regulations, and simplified and reduced the corporate tax. Chile went ahead with privatizations, including public utilities and the re-privatization of companies that had briefly returned to government control during the 1982–83 crisis. From 1984 to 1990, Chile's gross domestic product grew by an annual average of 5.9%, the fastest on the continent. Chile developed a good export economy, including the export of fruits and vegetables to the northern hemisphere when they were out of season, and commanded high export prices.

Evaluation

Initially the economic reforms were internationally praised. Milton Friedman wrote in his *Newsweek* column on 25 January 1982 about the Miracle of Chile. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher credited Pinochet with bringing about a thriving, free-enterprise economy, while at the same time downplaying the junta's human rights record, condemning an "organised international Left who are bent on revenge."

With the economic crises of 1982 the "monetarist experiment" was widely regarded a failure.^[74]

The pragmatic economic policy after the crises of 1982 is appreciated for bringing constant economic growth.^[75] It is questionable whether the radical reforms of the Chicago Boys contributed to post-1983 growth.^[76] According to Ricardo Ffrench-Davis, consultant of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the 1982 crises as well as the success of the pragmatic economic policy after 1982 proves that the 1975–1981 radical economic policy of the Chicago Boys actually harmed the Chilean economy.^[77]



Chilean (orange) and average Latin American (blue) rates of growth of GDP (1971–2007).

Social consequences

The economic policies espoused by the Chicago Boys and implemented by the junta initially caused several economic indicators to decline for Chile's lower classes.^[78] Between 1970 and 1989, there were large cuts to incomes and social services. Wages decreased by 8%.^[79] Family allowances in 1989 were 28% of what they had been in 1970 and the budgets for education, health and housing had dropped by over 20% on average.^{[79][80]} The massive increases in military spending and cuts in funding to public services coincided with falling wages and steady rises in unemployment, which averaged 26% during the worldwide economic slump of 1982–85^[79] and eventually peaked at 30%.

In 1990, the LOCE act on education initiated the dismantlement of public education.^[69] According to Communist Party of Chile member and economist Manuel Riesco Larraín:

"Overall, the impact of neoliberal policies has reduced the total proportion of students in both public and private institutions in relation to the entire population, from 30 per cent in 1974 down to 25 per cent in 1990, and up only to 27 per cent today. If falling birth rates have made it possible today to attain full coverage at primary and secondary levels, the country has fallen seriously behind at tertiary level, where coverage, although now growing, is still only 32 per cent of the age group. The figure was twice as much in neighbouring Argentina and Uruguay, and even higher in developed countries—South Korea attaining a record 98 per cent coverage. Significantly, tertiary education for the upper-income fifth of the Chilean population, many of whom study in the new private universities, also reaches above 70 per cent."^[69]

The junta relied on the middle class, the oligarchy, domestic business, foreign corporations, and foreign loans to maintain itself.^[81] Under Pinochet, funding of military and internal defence spending rose 120% from 1974 to 1979.^[82] Due to the reduction in public spending, tens of thousands of employees were fired from other state-sector jobs.^[82] The oligarchy recovered most of its lost industrial and agricultural holdings, for the junta sold to private buyers most of the industries expropriated by Allende's Popular Unit government.

Financial conglomerates became major beneficiaries of the liberalized economy and the flood of foreign bank loans. Large foreign banks reinstated the credit cycle, as the Junta saw that the basic state obligations, such as resuming payment of principal and interest installments, were honored. International lending organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Inter-American Development Bank lent vast sums anew.^[79] Many foreign multinational corporations such as International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT), Dow Chemical, and Firestone, all expropriated by Allende, returned to Chile.^[79]

Foreign relations

Having come to power with the self-proclaimed mission of fighting communism, Pinochet found common cause with the military dictatorships of Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and later, Argentina. The six countries eventually formulated a plan that became known as Operation Condor, in which one country's security forces would target active Marxist subversives, guerrillas, and their alleged sympathizers in the allied countries.^[83] Pinochet's government received tacit approval and material support from the United

States. The exact nature and extent of this support is disputed. (See U.S. role in 1973 Coup, U.S. intervention in Chile and Operation Condor for more details.) It is known, however, that the American Secretary of State at the time, Henry Kissinger, practiced a policy of supporting coups in nations which the United States viewed as leaning toward Communism.^[84]

The new junta quickly broke off the diplomatic relations with Cuba and North Korea that had been established under the Allende government. Shortly after the junta came to power, several communist countries, including the Soviet Union, North Vietnam, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, severed diplomatic relations with Chile (however, Romania and the People's Republic of China both continued to maintain diplomatic relations with Chile^[85]). The government broke diplomatic relations with Cambodia in January 1974^[86] and renewed ties with South Korea in October 1973 and with South Vietnam in March 1974.^[87] Pinochet attended the funeral of General Francisco Franco, dictator of Spain from 1936–75, in late 1975.

Chile was on the brink of being invaded by Argentina (also ruled by a military government) as the Argentina Junta started the Operation Soberania on 22 December 1978 because of the strategic Picton, Lennox and Nueva islands at the southern tip of South America on the Beagle Canal. A full-scale war was prevented only by the call off of the operation by Argentina due to military and political reasons.^[88] But the relations remained tense as Argentina invaded the Falklands (Operation Rosario). Chile along with Colombia, were the only countries in South America to criticize the use of force by Argentina in its war with the U.K. over the Falkland Islands. Chile actually helped the United Kingdom during the war. The two countries (Chile and Argentina) finally agreed to papal mediation over the Beagle canal that finally ended in the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1984 between Chile and Argentina (*Tratado de Paz y Amistad*). Chilean sovereignty over the islands and Argentinian east of the surrounding sea is now undisputed.

In 1980, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos had invited the entire Junta (consisting at this point of Pinochet, Merino, Matthei, and Mendoza) to visit the country as part of a planned tour of Southeast Asia in an attempt to help improve their image and bolster military and economic relations with the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, and Hong Kong. Due to intense U.S. Pressure at the last minute (while Pinochet's plane was halfway en-route over the Pacific), Marcos cancelled the visit and denied Pinochet landing rights in the country. Pinochet and the junta were further caught off guard and humiliated when they were forced to land in Fiji to refuel for the planned return to Santiago, only to be met with airport staff who refused to assist the plane in any way (the Fijian military was called in instead), invasive and prolonged customs searches, exorbitant fuel and aviation service charges, and hundreds of angry protesters who pelted his plane with eggs and tomatoes. The usually stoic and calm Pinochet became enraged, firing his Foreign Minister Herman Cubillos, several diplomats, and expelling the Philippine Ambassador.^[89] ^[90] Relations between the two countries were restored only on 1986 when Corazon Aquino assumed the presidency of the Philippines after Marcos was ousted in a non-violent revolution, the People Power Revolution.

United States

The U.S. provided material support to the military regime after the coup, although criticizing it in public. A document released by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 2000, titled "CIA Activities in Chile", revealed that the CIA actively supported the military junta after the overthrow of Allende and that it made many of Pinochet's officers into paid contacts of the CIA or U.S. military, even though some were known to be involved in human rights abuses.^[91]

The U.S. was significantly friendlier with Pinochet than it had been with Allende, and continued to give the *junta* substantial economic support between the years 1973–79, while simultaneously expressing opposition to the junta's repression in international forums such as the United Nations. The U.S. went beyond verbal condemnation in 1976, after the murder of Orlando Letelier in Washington D.C., when it placed an embargo on arms sales to Chile that remained in effect until the restoration of democracy in 1989. Presumably, with international concerns over Chilean internal repression and previous American hostility and intervention regarding the Allende government, the U.S. did not want to be seen as an accomplice in the junta's "security" activities. Prominent U.S. allies Britain, France, and West Germany did not block arms sales to Pinochet, benefitting from the lack of American competition.^[92]

United Kingdom

Chile was officially neutral during the Falkland War, but the Chilean US-built Westinghouse long-range radar deployed at Punta Arenas, in southern Chile, gave the British task force early warning of Argentinian air attacks, which allowed British ships and troops in the war zone to take defensive action.^[93] Margaret Thatcher said that the day the radar was taken out of service for overdue maintenance was the day Argentinian fighter-bombers bombed the troopships *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Tristram*, leaving approximately 50 dead and 150 wounded.^[94] According to Chilean Junta and former Air Force commander Fernando Matthei, Chilean support included military intelligence gathering, radar surveillance, British aircraft operating with Chilean colours and the safe return of British special forces, among other things.^[95] In April and May 1982, a squadron of mothballed RAF Hawker Hunter fighter bombers departed for Chile, arriving on 22 May and allowing the Chilean Air Force to reform the No. 9 "Las Panteras Negras" Squadron. A further consignment of three frontier surveillance and shipping reconnaissance Canberras left for Chile in October. Some authors suggest that Argentina might have won the war had she been allowed to employ the VIth and VIIIth Mountain Brigades, which remained guarding the Andes mountain chain.^[96] Pinochet subsequently visited Margaret Thatcher for tea on more than one occasion.^[97] Pinochet's controversial relationship with Thatcher led Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair to mock Thatcher's Conservatives as "the party of Pinochet" in 1999.

France

Although France received many Chilean political refugees, it also secretly collaborated with Pinochet. French journalist Marie-Monique Robin has shown how Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's government secretly collaborated with Videla's junta in Argentina and with Augusto Pinochet's regime in Chile.^[98]

Green deputies Noël Mamère, Martine Billard and Yves Cochet on September 10, 2003 requested a Parliamentary Commission on the "role of France in the support of military regimes in Latin America from 1973 to 1984" before the Foreign Affairs Commission of the National Assembly, presided by Edouard Balladur. Apart from Le Monde, newspapers remained silent about this request.^[99] However, deputy Roland Blum, in charge of the Commission, refused to hear Marie-Monique Robin, and published in December 2003 a 12 pages report qualified by Robin as the summum of bad faith. It claimed that no agreement had been signed, despite the agreement found by Robin in the Quai d'Orsay.^{[100][101]}

When then Minister of Foreign Affairs Dominique de Villepin traveled to Chile in February 2004, he claimed that no cooperation between France and the military regimes had occurred.^[102]

Peru

Reportedly one of Juan Velasco Alvarado's main goal was to militarily reconquer the lands lost by Peru to Chile in the War of the Pacific.^[103] It is estimated that from 1970 to 1975 Peru spent up to 2 Billion USD (roughly 20 Billion USD in 2010's valuation) on Soviet armament.^[104] According to various sources Velasco's government bought between 600 and 1200 T-55 Main Battle Tanks, APCs, 60 to 90 Sukhoi 22 warplanes, 500,000 assault rifles, and even considered the purchase of a British carrier Centaur-class light fleet carrier HMS Bulwark.^[104]

The enormous amount of weaponry purchased by Peru caused a meeting between former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Pinochet in 1976.^[104] Velasco's military plan was to launch a massive sea, air, and land invasion against Chile.^[104] In 1999, General Pinochet claimed that if Peru had attacked Chile during 1973 or even 1978, Peruvian forces could have penetrated deep south into Chilean territory, possibly military taking the Chilean city of Copiapó located half way to Santiago.^[103] The Chilean Armed Forces considered launching a preventive war to defend itself. Though, Pinochet's Chilean Air Force General Fernando Matthei opposed a preventive war and responded that "I can guarantee that the Peruvians would destroy the Chilean Air Force in the first five minutes of the war".^[103] Some analysts believe the fear of attack by Chilean and US officials as largely unjustified but logical for them to experience, considering the Pinochet dictatorship had come into power with a coup against democratically elected president Salvador Allende. According to sources, the alleged invasion scheme could be seen from the Chilean's government perspective as a plan for some kind of leftist counterattack.^[105] While acknowledging the Peruvian plans were revisionistic scholar Kalevi J. Holsti claim more important issues behind were the "ideological incompatibility" between the regimes of Velasco Alvarado and Pinochet and that Peru would have been concerned about Pinochet's geopolitical views on Chile's need of naval hegemony in the Southeastern Pacific.^[106]

“ Chileans should stop with the bullshit or tomorrow I shall eat breakfast in Santiago. ”

—Juan Velasco Alvarado^[107]

Spain

Francoist Spain had enjoyed warm relations with Chile while Allende was in power. Pinochet admired and was very much influenced by Francisco Franco, but Franco's successors had a cold attitude towards Pinochet as they did not want to be linked to him.^{[108][109]} When Pinochet traveled to the funeral of Francisco Franco in 1975 the President of France Valéry Giscard d'Estaing pressured the Spanish government to refuse Pinochet to be at the crowning of Juan Carlos I of Spain by letting Spanish authorities know that Giscard would not be there if Pinochet was present. Juan Carlos I personally called Pinochet to let him know he was not welcome at his crowning.^[110]

Foreign aid

The previous drop in foreign aid during the Allende years was immediately reversed following Pinochet's ascension; Chile received US\$ \$322.8 million in loans and credits in the year following the coup.^[111] There was considerable international condemnation of the military regime's human rights record, a matter that the United States expressed concern over as well after Orlando Letelier's 1976 assassination in Washington DC. (Kennedy Amendment, later *International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976*).

Cuban involvement

After the Chilean military coup in 1973, Fidel Castro promised Chilean revolutionaries far-reaching aid. Initially Cuban support for resistance consisted of clandestine distribution of funds to Chile, human rights campaigns at the UN to isolate the Chilean dictatorship, and efforts to undermine US-Chilean bilateral relations. Eventually Cuba's policy changed to arming and training insurgents. Once their training was completed, Cuba helped the guerrillas return to Chile, providing false passports and false identification documents.^[112] Cuba's official newspaper, Granma, boasted in February 1981 that the "Chilean Resistance" had successfully conducted more than 100 "armed actions" throughout Chile in 1980. By late 1980, at least 100 highly trained MIR guerrillas had reentered Chile and the MIR began building a base for future guerrilla operations in Neltume, a mountainous forest region in southern Chile. In a massive operation spearheaded by Chilean Army Para-Commandos, security forces involving some 2,000 troops, were forced to deploy in the Neltume mountains from June to November 1981, where they destroyed two MIR bases, seizing large caches of munitions and killing a number of MIR commandos. In 1986, Chilean security forces discovered 80 tons of munitions, including more than three thousand M-16 rifles and more than two million rounds of ammunition, at the tiny fishing harbor of Carrizal Bajo, smuggled ashore from Cuban fishing trawlers off the coast of Chile.^[113] The operation was overseen by Cuban naval intelligence, and also involved the Soviet Union. Cuban Special Forces had also instructed the FPMR guerrillas that ambushed President Augusto Pinochet's motorcade on 8 September 1986, killing five bodyguards and wounding 10.^[114]

Cultural life

The coup brought Chilean cultural life into what sociologist Soledad Bianchi has called a "cultural blackout".^[115] The government censored non-sympathetic individuals while taking control of mass media.^[115] The formerly thriving Nueva canción scene suffered from the exile or imprisonment of many bands and individuals.^[115] A key musician, Víctor Jara, was tortured and killed by elements of the military.^[115] According to Eduardo Carrasco of Quilapayún in the first week after the coup, the military organized a meeting with folk musicians where they announced that the traditional instruments charango and guena were banned.^[115]



Charango, a musical instrument banned by the dictatorship.

Nueva Cancion resurfaced in Chile once again in 1975 due to the efforts of musicians who had been active before the coup. This was music of resistance and solidarity a style that aimed to keep the memory of the Allende years alive.

The 1980s saw an invasion of Argentine rock bands into Chile. These included Charly García, the Enanitos Verdes, G.I.T. and Soda Stereo among others.^[116] Contemporary Chilean rock group Los Prisioneros complained against the ease with which Argentine Soda Stereo made appearances on Chilean TV or in Chilean magazines and the ease they could obtain musical equipment for concerts in Chile.^[117] Soda Stereo was invited to Viña del Mar International Song Festival while Los Prisioneros were ignored despite their popular status.^[118] This situation was because Los Prisioneros were censored by media under the influence of the military dictatorship.^{[117][118]} Los Prisioneros' marginalization by the media was further aggravated by their call to vote against the dictatorship on the plebiscite of 1988^[118]

“ For Chile to become once again the land of poets, and not the land of murderers!

— Sol y Lluvia^[119]

Experimental theatre groups from Universidad de Chile and Pontifical Catholic University of Chile were restricted by the military regime to performing only theatre classics.^[120] Some established groups like Grupo Ictus were tolerated while new formations like Grupo Aleph were repressed. This last group had its members jailed and forced to go into exile after performing a parody on the 1973 Chilean coup d'état.^[120] In the 1980s a grassroots street theatre movement emerged.^[120]

The dictatorship promoted the figure of Nobel laureate Gabriela Mistral who was presented as a symbol of "submission to the authority" and "social order".^[121]

Plebiscite and return to civilian rule

1988 plebiscite

According to the transitional provisions of the 1980 Constitution, a plebiscite was scheduled for October 5, 1988, to vote on a new eight-year presidential term for Pinochet.

During the last years of dictatorship the commander in chiefs of the navy, air force and Carabineros disassociated themselves from Pinochet expressing their wishes that a civilian should represent the regime in the 1988 plebiscite.^[3] Pinochet however imposed himself as candidate and when he lost the other junta members regarded it as Pinochet's personal defeat. The fact the dictatorship respected the results is attributed to pressure from the big business, the international community and unease with extended Pinochet-rule within the dictatorship.^[3]

The Constitutional Court of Chile ruled that the plebiscite should be carried out as stipulated by the Law of Elections. That included an "Electoral Space" during which all positions, in this case two, *Sí* (yes), and *No*, would have two free slots of equal and uninterrupted TV time, simultaneously broadcast by all TV channels, with no political advertising outside those spots. The allotment was scheduled in two off-prime time slots: one before the afternoon news and the other before the late-night news, from 22:45 to 23:15 each night (the evening news was from 20:30 to 21:30, and prime time from 21:30 to 22:30). The opposition *No* campaign, headed by Ricardo Lagos, produced colorful, upbeat programs, telling the Chilean people to vote against the extension of the presidential term. Lagos, in a TV interview, pointed his index finger towards the camera and directly called on Pinochet to account for all the "disappeared" persons. The *Sí* campaign did not argue for the advantages of extension, but was instead negative, claiming that voting "no" was equivalent to voting for a return to the chaos of the UP government.

Pinochet lost the 1988 referendum, where 56% of the votes rejected the extension of the presidential term, against 44% for "*Sí*", and, following the constitutional provisions, he stayed as President for one more year. The presidential election was held on December 1989, at the same time as congressional elections that would have taken place in either case. Pinochet left the presidency on March 11, 1990 and transferred power to political opponent Patricio Aylwin, the new democratically elected president. Due to the same transitional provisions of the constitution, Pinochet remained as Commander-in-Chief of the Army until March 1998.

1989 general elections

From the 1989 elections onwards the military had officially left the political future of the country to civilians to be elected. Pinochet did not endorse any candidate publicly. Former dictatorship minister Hernán Büchi ran for president as candidate of the two right-wing parties RN and UDI. He had little political experience and was a relatively young (40 years) technocrat credited for Chile's good economic performance in the later half of the 1980s. The right parties faced several problems in the elections: there was considerable infighting between RN and UDI, Büchi had only very reluctantly accepted to run for president and right-wing politicians struggled to define their position towards the Pinochet regime. In addition to this right-wing populist Francisco Javier Errázuriz Talavera ran independently for president and made several election promises Büchi could not match.^[3]

The centre-left coalition Concertación was rather united and confident. Its candidate Patricio Aylwin, a Christian Democrat, behaved as if he had won and refused a second television debate with Büchi. Büchi attacked Aylwin on a remark he had made concerning that inflation rate of 20% was not much and he also accused Aylwin of making secret agreements with the Communist Party of Chile, a party that was not part of Concertación.^[3] Aylwin spoke with strength about the need to clarify human rights violations but did not confront the dictatorship for it, in contrast Büchi as a regime collaborator lacked any credibility when dealing with human right violations.^[3]

Büchi and Errázuriz lost to Patricio Aylwin. The electoral system meant that the largely Pinochet-sympathetic right was overrepresented in parliament such way that it could block any reform to the constitution. This over-representation was crucial for UDI to obtain places in parliament and secure its political future. Pinochet declared to be satisfied with the election. The far-left and the far-right performed poorly in the election.^[3]

Legacy

Following the restoration of Chilean democracy and during the successive administrations that followed Pinochet, the Chilean economy has prospered, and today the country is considered a Latin American success story. Unemployment stands at 7% as of 2007, with poverty estimated at 18.2% for the same year both relatively low for the region.^[122]

The "Chilean Variation" has been seen as a potential model for nations that fail to achieve significant economic growth.^[123] The latest is Russia, for whom David Christian warned in 1991 that "dictatorial government presiding over a transition to capitalism seems one of the more plausible scenarios, even if it does so at a high cost in human rights violations."^[124]

On his 91st birthday on 25 November 2006, in a public statement to supporters, Pinochet for the first time claimed to accept "political responsibility" for what happened in Chile under his regime, though he still defended the 1973 coup against Salvador Allende. In a statement read by his wife Lucia Hiriart, he said, *Today, near the end of my days, I want to say that I harbour no rancour against anybody, that I love my fatherland above all. ... I take political responsibility for everything that was done.*^[125] Despite this statement, Pinochet always refused to be confronted to Chilean justice, claiming that he was senile. He died two weeks later while indicted on human rights and corruption charges, but without having been sentenced.

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