

A letter from a reader in Pakistan

"Pinochet the 'All-American' hero"

8 December 1998

There is great jubilation in Chile following the decision of the highest court in England to refuse to allow Pinochet immunity from prosecution. All those wronged by the general, including the relatives of thousands of Chileans put to death by this dictator, now hope to get justice if he is extradited to Spain. Members of the Chilean armed forces are very upset over this decision. For many years they have considered themselves above the law. Pinochet, in spite of his role as a mass murderer, was made senator-for-life and was never before held accountable for the killings of thousands of innocent Chileans.

Only time will tell whether the people of Chile will ever see justice, but documents declassified recently in the United States and relating to the military coup in Chile in September 1973 make horrifying reading. These documents show the hypocrisy of a super power that never tires of giving lectures on democracy and human rights. They can be found at <http://www.seas.gwu.edu/nsarchive/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8i.htm>

The Americans intervened in the 1964 elections to prevent Allende from coming to power, spending more money, according to the Church Committee investigation, than had been spent by the campaigns of the 1964 American presidential candidates Johnson and Goldwater. In 1970 there was a major campaign of disinformation. Chileans were led to believe that if Allende won mothers would be sending their children to Russia as slaves. The United States also threatened to destroy the Chilean economy if Allende won. This threat was carried out after the elections.

What was the crime of Allende for which he received this harsh treatment from the greatest democracy-loving country of the world? He was calling for minor redistribution of wealth to help the poor, including nutritional programs initiated for malnourished children. Allende also called for an end to the

subordination of Chile to the United States. A few days after Allende's 1970 victory Richard Nixon called in CIA Director Richard Helms, Henry Kissinger and others for a meeting on Chile. According to Helms there were two points of view. The soft line, in Nixon's words, was to 'make the Chilean economy scream'; the hard line was simply to 'aim for a military coup.' The ambassador to Chile, Edward Korry, was given the job of implementing the 'Soft Line.' He described his task as 'to do all within our power to condemn Chile and the Chileans to utmost deprivation and poverty.' There was a massive destabilization and disinformation campaign. The CIA planted stories in *El Mercurio*, the most prominent newspaper, and fomented labor unrest and strikes.

Drunk with power, the US government trampled over the wishes of the Chilean people. In September 1973, with US Navy ships on alert offshore, with 32 US observation and fighter planes landing in Argentina near the Chilean border and beneath a US-piloted airborne communications controlled system, US-trained extremists in the Chilean military overthrew the government. Allende and several cabinet members were killed. The universities were put under military control, opposition parties were banned and thousands of Chileans killed, maimed and tortured. Many of these including two Americans, Charles Horman and Frank Teruggi, were fingered as 'radicals' in lists provided by the CIA. The torture was well known to the Nixon administration. Henry Kissinger told the US ambassador, 'Don't give me any of these political science lectures. We don't care about torture. We care about important things.' Kissinger is also reported to have said, 'I don't see why we should have to stand by and let a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people.' This is indeed democracy redefined.

The declassified documents on Chile are just the tip of the iceberg. There are many more that are still buried in CIA files. An orgy of torture, rape and murder has been organized by the CIA in countries that refuse to toe its line. As one reads these documents the real face of the American regime is unmasked. It is not a very pretty sight.

Z.U I.Z.

Pakistan

3 December 1998

See Also:

A letter on WSWs coverage of Pinochet's arrest:

'I want to make people aware of the disastrous effects the policies of this so-called 'miracle economy' had on the lives of ordinary Chileans.'

[18 November 1998]

The significance of Pinochet's arrest and the lessons of the 1973 coup

Speech by Chris Marsden to the Sheffield public meeting

[5 December 1998]

Political lessons of the Chilean coup:

Statement issued by the Fourth International on September 18, 1973



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