

The victims of Operation Condor

Bill Van Auken
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The indictment handed down by Judge Juan Guzman against former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in connection with Operation Condor includes brief biographies of the ten Chileans whose disappearance and murder he is accused of ordering.

While the ten represent a tiny fraction of the tens of thousands of people who were murdered, tortured and imprisoned during Pinochet's 17-year rule, the indictment provides a glimpse of the magnitude of the dictatorship's crimes and gives some insight into the types of people who were murdered by the US-backed military regime.

Among those the indictment describes as "permanently kidnapped" is Jorge Isaac Fuentes Alarcón, a 28-year-old sociologist and urban planner who was at the University of the North in Antofagasta at the time of the 1973 coup. He was seized by security forces in Paraguay in May 1975, after crossing the border from Argentina. Four months later, he was handed over to DINA, taken to Pinochet's torture chambers at Villa Grimaldi, and, after January 1976, never seen again.

Fuentes Alarcón was a member of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). During his university years, he was president of the Student Federation of the University of Concepcion. He was married and had a four-year-old son at the time of his disappearance.

"His family remember him as a being good at sports, a reader, who sang and played the guitar," the indictment states. "He was a man of solidarity, with principles and solid values, honest and transparent."

After the September 11, 1973 coup, he was hunted by the dictatorship because of his political activity and fled first to Argentina and then France. Acting as a courier for the MIR in exile, he returned to the region and was arrested on the Paraguayan-Argentine border.

Manuel Jesus Tamayo Martínez was a 22-year-old student leader and member of the Chilean Socialist

Party at the time of the coup. He was forced to flee into exile in Argentina in March 1976, just weeks before the military seized power in that country. He was living in the city of Mendoza at a residence set up by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees when he was seized in the street in a joint operation conducted by DINA and the Argentine military.

Taken with him were Luis Gonzalo Munoz, a 27-year-old accountant, who was also a member of the Socialist Party, and Juan Humberto Zape, 23, a lathe operator, who was a member of the Socialist Youth and president of the Federation of Students of Industrial and Technical Schools.

They were all taken back to Villa Grimaldi, where they disappeared.

Also rounded up in the joint Chilean-Argentine crackdown was Edgardo Enríquez Espinoza, 34, a leading member of the MIR, who was grabbed off the street in Buenos Aires. Witnesses saw him at various Argentine detention and torture centers. It is believed that he was also transported to Villa Grimaldi. He was never seen again.

Alexei Vladimir Jaccard Siegler was abducted by security forces in Buenos Aires in May 1977. A university student and sympathizer of the Communist Party, he was forced to flee Chile after the military coup, arriving in Switzerland at the end of 1973. There he continued his studies and married a fellow Chilean exile. He was arrested while making a stop in Argentina on his way to Chile to see his father, who was sick. Arrested with him were three other Chileans and five Argentine citizens who were members of a committee in solidarity with Chile. All of them are now listed among the disappeared.

Also included in the indictment is the case of Jacobo Stoulman Bortnik and his wife Matilde Pessa Mois, who were detained when they got off a plane at Ezeiza Airport in Buenos Aires in May 1977. They were

bundled into a truck and never seen again. Bortnik, a successful banker, was suspected by the dictatorship of handling funds that were destined for oppositionists inside Chile.

Julio Valladares Caroca was grabbed by secret police in Bolivia in July 1976. Four months later, he was taken to the Chilean border and handed over to DINA agents, never to be seen again. A member of the Socialist Party, he was 29 at the time of his disappearance. Before the military seized power, he worked as an accountant in the Agrarian Reform Corporation. Married and a father of two, he was studying agricultural engineering in Cuba at the time of the coup. He could not return to Chile, and could maintain contact with his family only by mail.

The murder victim named in the indictment is Rüter Correa Arce, brutally beaten and then killed by security agents in Santiago in May 1977. His body was found in the Mapocho River. Born in 1915, he had been a member of the Communist Party for 35 years. A professional telegraph operator, he was the leader of the union representing these workers before joining the government of Salvador Allende as an administrator in the Ministry of Transport.

After the coup, he ran a newspaper stand, which functioned as a letter drop for the clandestine Communist Party. While going home for lunch from the stand, he was grabbed off the street and murdered.



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