

Chile's pseudo-left government commemorates 50th anniversary of Pinochet's coup by appeasing far right

Mauricio Saavedra
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Chile's pseudo-left government headed by President Gabriel Boric marked September 11th's 50th anniversary of the bloody CIA-backed 1973 coup with a ceremony at the La Moneda presidential palace. The site had been bombarded by tanks and fighter jets on the day of the coup, which overthrew the elected Popular Unity coalition government of President Salvador Allende, who died in the midst of the attack.

Attending the ceremony were several Latin American heads of state identified with the so-called "Pink Tide," including Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico, Gustavo Petro of Colombia and Luis Arce of Bolivia. Both the current president of Uruguay, Luis Lacalle Pou, and his predecessor, the ex-Tupamaro José Mujica were in attendance, along with Portugal's Socialist Party Prime Minister Antonio Costa.

Washington, which was deeply involved in preparing the coup and supporting the bloodbath that it initiated, sent only Christopher Dodd, the ex-Democratic senator and lobbyist identified with the bailout of Wall Street, who was tapped by Biden last year to serve as his "special adviser for the Americas."

The ceremony was noteworthy for its boycott by the entire Chilean right, whose representatives issued statements justifying the coup. Meanwhile, a ceremony organized by the lower house of the Chilean parliament to pay homage to Allende on the 50th anniversary of his death was disrupted by members of the UDI (Independent Democratic Union), who attempted to make similar statements justifying the military overthrow led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet. The rest of the right-wing parties boycotted the session.

In a provocative move orchestrated by the Boric government, Carabineros Special Forces were deployed on Sunday 10, on the occasion of the traditional "march of the fallen" to the General Cemetery to commemorate the victims of Chile's 17-year military dictatorship.

"Those responsible for this violence are adversaries of the government," said Undersecretary of the Interior Manuel Monsalve, who was more concerned about three cops being injured than the hundreds of marchers who tried to defend themselves after being tear gassed and doused by water cannon.

At the beginning of the week, the government met with human rights groups to inform them that the route to the cemetery was going to be surrounded by a police perimeter in which only authorized groups could enter the fenced sector. It turned out that

the purpose of the fiasco was to provide a photo op for Boric to appear with the relatives of the executed, murdered and disappeared.

For the September 11th ceremony itself, another 2,000 Carabineros and Special Forces were mobilized, revealing just how far to the right the present administration, composed of the Stalinist Communist Party, the pseudo-left Broad Front and the Socialist Party, has shifted.

The Boric administration has accommodated its program evermore to the political heirs of the Pinochet regime, the president's conception of a "shared vision" being at the core of the 50th anniversary commemorations.

Two years ago, during the 2021 presidential election campaign, then candidate Boric said, "Mr. [ex-president Sebastian] Piñera, you have been warned, you are going to be prosecuted for the serious human rights violations committed under your mandate." Last Friday Boric was inviting the former president to La Moneda to sign a so-called "democratic" pact that would commit all parties "to value and take care of democracy, and to respect human rights in an unrestricted way."

Piñera did sign but only after setting his own conditions. Specifically, he demanded "respect for the Constitution and the laws, respect for the rule of law ... (and) our total and absolute commitment to condemn violence, and violence has many faces: political violence, as we knew it on October 18, 1973, but also organized crime, drug trafficking, terrorism ..."

It should be recalled that Piñera, in October 2019, literally declared "war" on the massive anti-capitalist demonstrations, calling a state of emergency and deploying troops onto the streets for the first time since Gen. Pinochet's 17-year fascist-military dictatorship.

In the months that followed, three dozen people were killed by the repressive forces, while 3,800 were hospitalized due to severe injuries caused by bullet wounds, tear gas canisters and beatings. Of the 11,389 men, women, adolescents and children detained, 2,146 reported some kind of sexual violence, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and excessive use of force.

In 2021 Amnesty International revealed that out of 10,813 complaints of human rights violations lodged at the Prosecutor's Office, only 14 cases had resulted in convictions against state

agents. The Childhood Ombudsman's Office reported that of the more than 3,470 children and adolescents who had suffered human rights violations only two cases had resulted in convictions.

This is ancient history for Boric, who agreed with Piñera that it was necessary to condemn violence in general. "Violence has to be left out of the democratic tools," Boric concurred, thus equating the legitimate strivings of the millions of students and workers that sought an end to extreme social inequality with the mass murder and torture carried out by the repressive forces, armed to the teeth to defend capitalism.

In an overture to the ultra-right and outright fascistic parties that opposed signing any pact that failed to explicitly blame Popular Unity for the coup, Boric said "we are going to make the effort so that all of us, without objections, but by a conviction for the future regarding the welfare of our homeland, commit ourselves together to value and take care of democracy, and to respect human rights in an unrestricted way."

Página 12 reported that the removal of Patricio Fernández as adviser for the commemoration events in July was a turning point for the right "who emphasize the spirit with which he (Fernández) intended to imbue the date."

In a televised interview "independent socialist" Fernández intimated that Pinochet and the military command acted with good intentions in launching the coup. "I believe that the main challenge we are facing at this point is that history will be able to continue discussing why it happened or what were the reasons and motivations for the coup d'état. ... What we could try to agree on is that events subsequent to that coup are unacceptable in any civilizing pact," he said. He had made similar statements before.

The Association of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared and the Association of Relatives of Executed Politicians, both dominated by the Stalinist Communist Party, and a number of Stalinist legislators demanded his resignation. But as *El País* rightly noted, Fernández was merely airing what has been the official line of the government—which includes the Stalinists—which effectively calls for coexisting with the right's favorable interpretation of the coup.

The government's eagerness to accommodate deeply authoritarian and anti-democratic political forces cannot be overstated. The pseudo-left and the Stalinists are both part of team "capitalism" but perform different functions according to a political division of labor. The Stalinists posture as the guardians of "human rights" and regularly criticize the right. But when capitalism is threatened, they all line up to defend it.

This is graphically exemplified by the latest government-sponsored bill passed in both houses of Congress, which criminalizes all forms of land seizures, including by the homeless; school occupations by university students; workplace and factory occupations and indigenous Mapuche actions reclaiming ancestral lands. The bill not only imposes hefty jail terms, but it grants property owners the right to use lethal force in defense of private property.

As the WSWs has noted, land occupations have deep significance in both the countryside and the urban centers. It became one of the revolutionary points of confrontation in the 1960s and early 1970s precisely because of the oligarchic and reactionary nature of the

Chilean bourgeoisie and its historical incapacity to resolve even the most basic democratic and social demands. Today Boric prepares "legal" justifications for repression in anticipation of a revolutionary eruption over the fundamental question of housing and land tenure. The permanent State of Exception, deploying the military against the marginalized Mapuche populations reclaiming ancestral lands, is part of this.

The anti-usurpation law comes on the heels of a plethora of other police state laws also approved by the so-called "left" legislators, including granting the military and police a license to kill and providing retroactive legal immunity from prosecution—10 Carabinero police have already been acquitted in several cases; greatly expanding the arsenal of Carabineros militarized police; ceding to the military an increased role in public order functions; deploying the military to protect "critical infrastructure" and allowing the armed forces and police to violently repel refugees attempting to cross the Peruvian and Bolivian borders.

In terms of foreign policy, the Boric government issued a groveling statement thanking the Biden administration for its declassification last month of two CIA files from September 8 and 11 further confirming what everyone already knew: that the intelligence agency kept the White House well-informed about the preparations for and execution of the coup. The Chilean government claimed that this gesture—which leaves volumes of far more incriminating files still under lock and key—"promotes the search for truth and reinforces our nation's commitment to democratic values."

What "democratic values"? After all, Chile is just one of dozens of nations that continue to suffer from US imperialism's aggression, including regime change, assassination plots, military interventions, invasions and wars. Yet even before assuming office, the ex-student radical Gabriel Boric was demonstrating his bona fides and speaking on behalf of Washington's foreign policy objectives against Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba in the region. Since taking office, he has faithfully lined up with Washington's war drive against Russia.

On the 50th anniversary of the coup d'état, the Chilean masses are confronted with the same fundamental political and economic conditions that gave rise to it. Apruebo Dignidad's police-state measures are in preparation for an eruption of the class struggle and immense social convulsions arising from the deep crisis of the world economy and its impact on Chile.



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